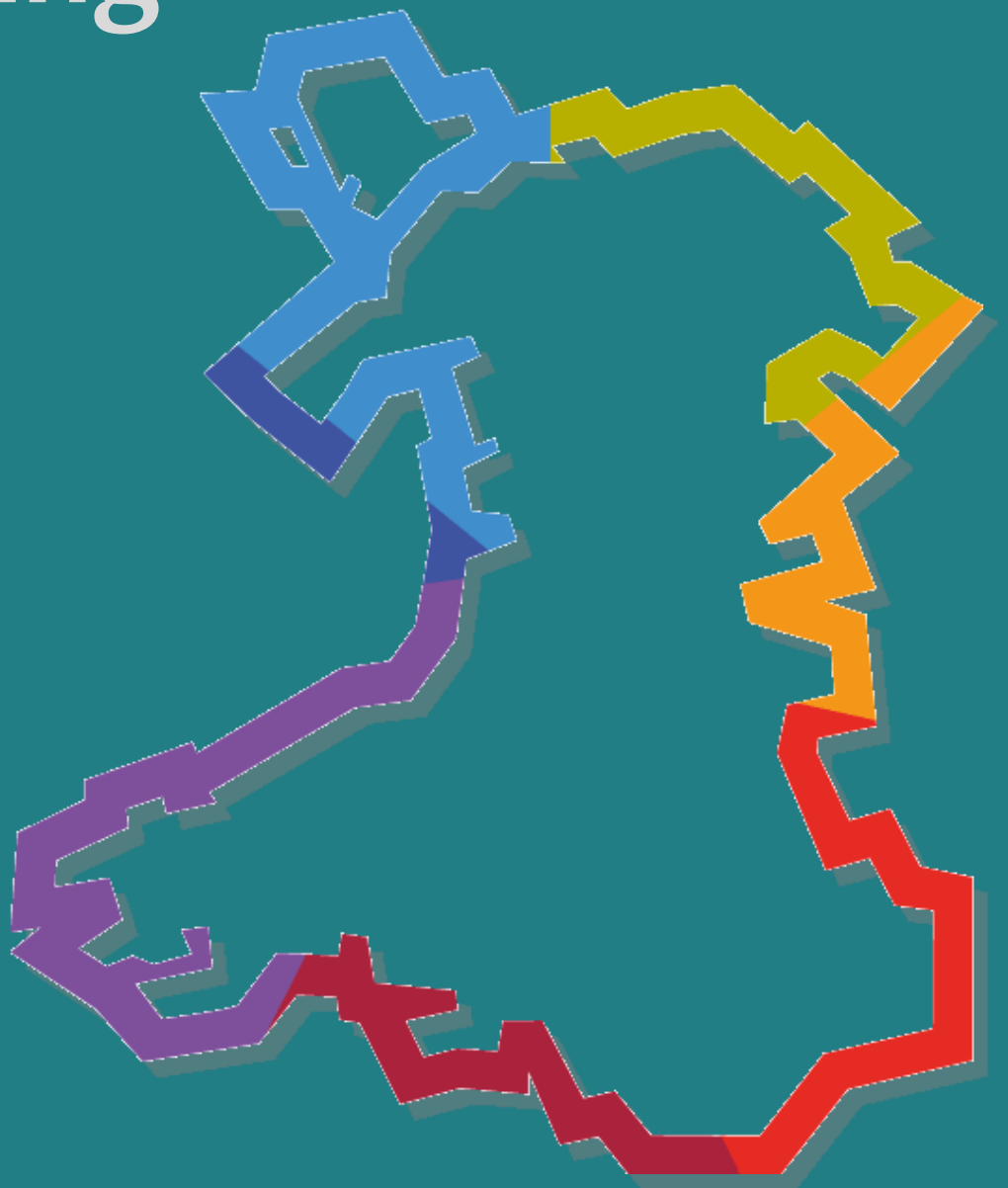


Carmarthenshire

Assessment of Local Well-being





Contact Us:

PSB Support Team
Tîm Cynorthwyo BGC

By Telephone:
01267 234567

By Email:
info@thecarmarthenshirewewant.wales
gwybodaeth@sirgaragarem.cymru



**LLESIANT
CENEDLAETHAU'R DYFODOL
WELL-BEING OF
FUTURE GENERATIONS**



Bwrdd Gwasanaethau Cyhoeddus

SIR GÂR • CARMARTHENSHIRE

Public Services Board

CONTENTS

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	8
What is Well-being?.....	9
What is the Well-being of Future Generations Act?	9
How did we undertake the Assessment?	11
A Regional Approach	11
Regional Data.....	11
The Impact of COVID-19.....	12
Engagement and Consultation.....	12
Sustainable Development Principle	13
Key Themes	14
New Beginnings	14
Childhood	14
Youth	14
Adulthood.....	15
Ageing Well	16
West Wales.....	17
Region.....	17
CARMARTHENSHIRE CONTEXT.....	21
Carmarthenshire Context	22
National Well-being Indicators.....	26
NEW BEGINNINGS.....	27
Welcome to the world.....	28
Birth weight.....	28
Immunisation Rates	28
Breastfeeding.....	29

Family foundations	29
Equal and ambitious start in life.....	30
Childcare provision	30
National Well-being Indicators.....	32
CHILDHOOD	33
Strong Foundations	34
Welsh-medium Education.....	35
Childhood challenges.....	35
Adverse Childhood Experiences	35
Children known to social services	36
Child Poverty	37
Childcare	38
Growing up healthy	39
Play.....	39
Obesity.....	39
Childhood concerns	40
National Well-being Indicators.....	41
Growing independent adults.....	43
Broadening horizons.....	43
Welsh-medium education.....	43
Examinations.....	43
Elective Home Education.....	44
Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).....	44
First Independence	45
Smoking.....	45
Substance misuse	45
Sex and relationships.....	45
Making Connections	46
Young carers	47
Migration of young people.....	47
Involving our Young People	48
Mental Health.....	48

ADULTHOOD.....	50
Well-being.....	51
Making ends meet	51
Income.....	51
Poverty	52
Employability.....	53
Working age population.....	54
Job creation and retention.....	54
Claimant count.....	54
Well-being in work	55
Qualifications and training	55
Lifestyle choices.....	56
Exercise and physical activity	56
Smoking.....	56
Obesity.....	56
Alcohol and substance misuse	57
Part of a community	57
Community Cohesion.....	58
Hate Crime.....	59
Community Safety.....	59
Domestic abuse.....	60
Feeling safe	61
Housing.....	62
Affordable housing	62
Homelessness	63
Cultural activities.....	64
Arts, museums and heritage	64
Welsh language.....	65
Mental Health.....	65
Mental Health.....	65
Suicides.....	67
Carers.....	68

Environment.....	70
Natural Resources.....	70
Sustainable Land Management	70
Air Quality.....	71
Wildfires.....	71
Flooding.....	71
Waterways.....	72
Waste.....	72
Ecosystem Resilience.....	72
Climate Change	73
National Well-being Indicators.....	74
AGEING WELL.....	77
Population projections	78
Outdoor Spaces and Buildings	78
Transport.....	79
Transport Links	79
Housing.....	80
Housing stock suitability.....	80
Social Participation	80
Communities	80
Loneliness.....	80
Respect and Social Inclusion	81
Volunteering.....	81
Civic Participation and Employment	81
Working	81
Communication and Information.....	83
Community Support and Health Services.....	83
Health	83
Adult Social Care	84
Dementia	85
Mental Health.....	85
Mobility.....	85

Falls	85
Life Expectancy	85
Deaths and Causes	86
National Well-being Indicators	87
NEXT STEPS	88
The Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan	90
Regional working	90

INTRODUCTION



What is Well-being?

Well-being means different things to different people. Well-being is closely linked to quality of life; being comfortable, healthy, happy and safe. Public bodies have a duty, under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, to improve well-being in their local area. This latest Well-being Assessment is the first step in helping us plan our collaborative approach to do that.

What is the Well-being of Future Generations Act?

The Well-being of Future Generations Act was introduced in April 2016 with the intention to create the Wales we want for now and in the future. Within this Act, Public Services Boards (PSBs) were created to encourage co-production and joined up working from public bodies, to improve the social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being in their area. Each PSB must have representation from:

- Local Authority
- Local Health Board
- Fire and Rescue Authority
- Natural Resources Wales.

Other partner organisations may be invited, in Carmarthenshire these are:

- Coleg Sir Gâr
- University of Wales Trinity Saint David
- Dyfed Powys Police
- Dyfed-Powys Police and Crime Commissioner
- Department for Work & Pensions
- Carmarthenshire Association of Voluntary Services
- Welsh Government
- National Probation Service
- Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

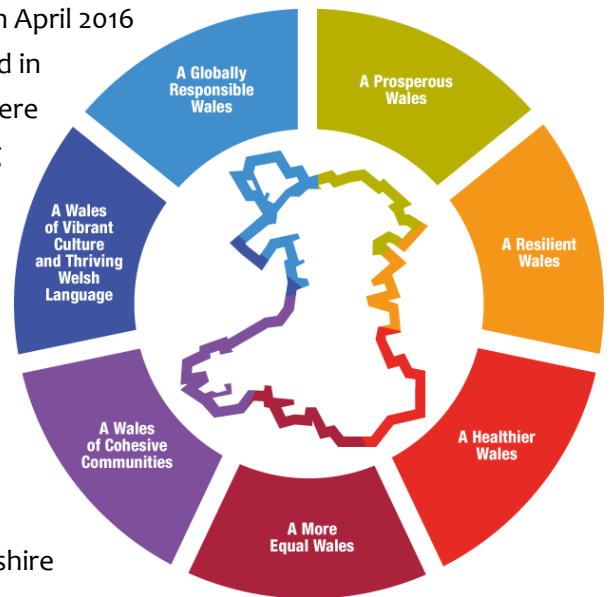


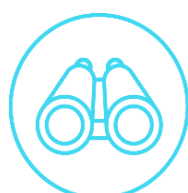
Figure 1: Future Generations National Well-being Goals

The Act defines seven national Well-being Goals:

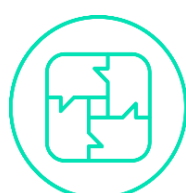
Goal	Description
A prosperous Wales	An innovative, productive and low carbon society which recognises the limits of the global environment and therefore uses resources efficiently and proportionately (including acting on climate change); and which develops a skilled and well-educated population in an economy which generates wealth and provides employment opportunities, allowing people to take advantage of the wealth generated through securing decent work.
A resilient Wales	A nation which maintains and enhances a biodiverse natural environment with healthy functioning ecosystems that support social, economic and ecological resilience and the capacity to adapt to change.
A more equal Wales	A society that enables people to fulfil their potential no matter what their background or circumstances (including their socio-economic circumstance).
A healthier Wales	A society in which people’s physical and mental well-being is maximised and in which choices and behaviours that benefit future health are understood.
A Wales of cohesive communities	Attractive, safe, viable and well-connected.
A Wales of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language	A society that promotes and protects culture, heritage and the Welsh language, and which encourages people to participate in the arts, and sports and recreation.
A globally responsible Wales	A nation which, when doing anything to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales, takes account of whether doing such a thing may make a positive contribution to global well-being.

One of the requirements of a PSB is to prepare a Local Well-being Plan every five years, using a Well-being Assessment to feed into the planning phase. This is the second Assessment that the Carmarthenshire PSB has undertaken.

Through all of this work the PSB must follow the ‘sustainable development principle’ - ensuring that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. To apply the sustainable development principle, public bodies must follow the five ways of working:



Long Term



Integration



Involvement



Collaboration



Prevention

This will ensure that we work better together, learn from previous mistakes and use future thinking to tackle some of the challenges we are facing. Further information on applying the five ways of working is seen on page 13.

How did we undertake the Assessment?

A Regional Approach

Carmarthenshire PSB has worked collaboratively locally and regionally to produce this assessment. Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire PSB's have worked in partnership to share resources, expertise and capacity in order to reduce the duplication of work. Officers from the three PSBs and Regional Partnership Board (RPB)/West Wales Care Partnership have worked together to develop a consistent methodology and approach which would culminate in three Well-being Assessments (one for each PSB) and a Population Needs Assessment for the RPB. Under this network, the following regional groups were set up at different stages of the assessments' delivery to lead on specific elements of work:

- Joint Methodology Sub-Group
- Engagement Group & Survey Sub-Group
- Data / Writing Group

Working in this way ensured that the assessments' production was collaborative (between public sector partners and the third sector) in terms of data provision, analysis and interpretation.

A Regional Framework Methodology was developed, highlighting how we undertook the assessments regionally and the ways in which the well-being themes for each PSB area were identified. A Regional Engagement and Consultation Framework was produced which outlines how we conducted the engagement and consultation on the assessments at a regional level. Please see the Carmarthenshire PSB website for more information on these.

Carmarthenshire County Council has led on the production of the Assessment on behalf of the Carmarthenshire PSB. The role of the Council was to coordinate all steps in the process – the engagement, the situation and response analysis and the writing - and this approach was also adopted regionally in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

Regional Data

Carmarthenshire, Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire's PSBs worked together on a desktop data gathering exercise to understand well-being in the three local areas. A wide range of local, regional and national sources were considered. The data review exercise helped to build an understanding of the area's context, challenges and priorities to be considered as part of the situation and response analysis. It also began to highlight the areas needed to be prioritised in the Assessment and which were included as part of our futures thinking.

By working collaboratively across the West Wales region, we were also able to identify cross-boundary well-being issues across the three PSB areas, such as climate change, child poverty and

housing affordability. The identification of these regional issues will support well-being planning across West Wales following publication of the assessments in 2022.

The Impact of COVID-19

The COVID-19 pandemic has had an impact on the production of this Well-being Assessment, and in particular the ability to assess well-being. The pandemic has raised some new issues relating to well-being and brought some existing issues to the fore.

In assessing well-being, there is a trade-off between the short-term COVID-19 impact and the longer-term future trends that existed prior to the pandemic. To help to counter the skewing of trends towards the immediate COVID-19 response, the assessment draws reference to the specific impacts of the pandemic separately where they are known. At the time of writing, we are still learning about the impacts, which presents one of the largest data gaps in the assessment.

Engagement and Consultation

The Assessment was 'engagement led' to ensure that the views of our residents were the main drivers for producing the document, placing them at the heart of the next Well-being Plan. In preparing for the engagement, workshops were held with regional PSB partners in May and June 2021 to explore their ideas on how to conduct the engagement and the actual content of the regional Well-being Survey and stakeholder events. The engagement activities were developed based on these views, some examples of which were the desire to include more open-ended questions in the Well-being Survey, run the survey in September after the summer holidays and conduct a specific schools survey to record responses from younger people.






Engagement and consultation will be carried out over two steps:

Initial engagement – this was carried out in order to inform the writing of the first draft of the Well-being Assessment. This stage took place from June - October 2021.

Consultation on the draft assessment – a consultation exercise will take place on the draft assessment during the winter of 2021/22.

Sustainable Development Principle

To assist in adhering to the sustainable development principle we have applied the five-ways of working through the development of this assessment. The table below provides details of how we have threaded the ways of working into our approach:

 <p>Long Term</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continuation of the Public Service Board / Regional Partnership Board Network to build on collaboration and involvement for the future. • Futures thinking questions included in the survey. • Consideration and analysis of future trends information where available • Development of “Gorwel” – helps bridge the data gaps over the medium and longer-term. The assessment will be updated as new information and statistics is made available.
 <p>Integration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment will be used by a range of partners and stakeholders to plan for future service delivery. It will be essential for those partners to integrate and align their developments and provision in order to address some of the wider population well-being matters raised in the assessment • On-going engagement between partners will be essential in order to align and ensure collective action can be taken forward to respond to the assessment findings • Sharing of organisational intelligence in order to inform local service planning and response will be key going forward.
 <p>Involvement</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demographic mapping was undertaken, hard to reach groups and those with protected characteristics were prioritised for virtual stakeholder events. • The Life Stages Model utilised by the PSB’s in the region allows us to recognise the interrelationships between the different needs based on the various life stages but also the interdependency. The golden thread of the national well-being goals will also drive this response and on-going involvement will be essential as the revised well-being plan is developed and implemented. • The involvement of residents and stakeholders has been extensive and integral to our engagement exercises. This represents the beginning of an ongoing conversation about well-being in Carmarthenshire. • More than 1000 residents and stakeholders have been involved in the process with several opportunities for the general public to express their views. • The PSB is keen to ensure that this dialogue continues during the next well-being plan and that individual PSB members also share the findings of their involvement work with service users, residents and other stakeholders in order to respond fully to issues raised.
 <p>Collaboration</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assessment undertaken in collaboration with a wide range of PSB partners, local and regional. • Worked as a West Wales Cluster to deliver the Assessment under the PSB/RPB Network. • Developed Regional Well-being Survey and Regional Stakeholder Toolkit. • Close collaboration with Hywel Dda University Health Board and the West Wales Care Partnership. • Regional Well-being Co-ordinator employed to oversee the delivery of the assessments and ensure consistency in our approach.
 <p>Prevention</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many of the interventions to respond to the population needs identified in the assessment will need to be driven with a focus on preventative action. The key with many of the challenges identified is early recognition and intervention in order to stop matters escalating and creating greater demand. • We can use the assessment to target areas where preventative work can be undertaken through collective action across PSB partners.

Key Themes

The responses gathered from the various forms of engagement for the assessment have been looked at alongside analysis of various sources of data and research. Clear themes have been identified in our county which will allow us to target areas of need when we move from the Assessment to Planning phase over the course of the next year.

New Beginnings

Rates of low birth weight babies have fallen and are lower than the Welsh average.

Birth rates have reduced by 10% over the last 5 years.

Immunisation rates have been increasing yet remain lower than the national average.

An increased number of children have been attending Flying Start placements, a majority of these children are exceeding expected milestones by 2 years of age.

Childcare settings are finding recruitment of staff difficult, particularly for Welsh medium staff.

Breastfeeding rates have risen across Hywel Dda University Health Board region.

Childhood

Children were impacted by not seeing their friends or extended families during lockdowns.

A quarter of our parents who have English as their first language stated that they would support their children through a Welsh medium education in our regional survey.

There has been an increase in children classified as “children in need” by social services. This is likely exacerbated by pressures exerted on families by the COVID-19 pandemic.

Almost a third of children are living in poverty.

Parents and carers have identified that the cost of childcare can be prohibitive.

Levels of childhood obesity are amongst the worst in Wales.

From engagement with schools young people expressed that they were highly concerned about COVID-19, climate change, jobs, poverty and the environment.

Youth

Bullying and cyberbullying were key issues raised in engagement with young people.

School closures during the pandemic had a significant impact on the well-being of young people.

Substance misuse by young people roughly follows the national average.

Accessibility to areas to socialise with friends has a positive impact on the well-being of young people.

Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales service support 214 young carers in the county. Young carers disproportionately suffer from anxiety and feelings of isolation.

There has been an increase in the highest grades achieved by pupils undertaking GCSEs and A-Levels.

The gap between attainment of pupils who receive Free School Meals and those who do not has widened.

Access to training and jobs has been identified as a key local issue by young people.

Young people are also concerned about levels of homelessness and domestic violence.

Adulthood

Over a third of our households continue to live in poverty.

In-work poverty is an increasingly common problem.

The cost of living is rising across the UK, with more working families experiencing poverty.

Levels of reported exercise and physical activity are amongst the highest in Wales.

In most areas of Carmarthenshire levels of smoking have significantly reduced.

We have the fifth worst figure for adults who report fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours.

Carmarthenshire has a high number of adults who are overweight or obese.

The percentage of adults who drink more than recommended guidelines has increased and is one of the highest in Wales.

The referrals received for support with alcohol and drug issues has reduced, as a result of the pandemic.

Over 70% of our residents agree that there is good community cohesion in their local area.

Carmarthenshire remains one of the safest areas of the UK.

Engagement with our communities highlighted 'feeling safe' as a key issue in their area.

Outdoor refuse fires have been continuously increasing over the last 5 years.

Road traffic collisions remain high - this is affected by our large network and high traffic flow within the county.

There has been a 27% increase in the average house price between 2016 and 2021.

Levels of homelessness and those at risk of homelessness are high in the county.

Carmarthenshire has the most Welsh speakers in Wales.

Carmarthenshire has one of the highest suicide rates in Wales.

Mental ill health remains a significant concern for many adults.

Referrals for domestic abuse have significantly increased since the pandemic and show no sign of decline.

Climate change and the nature emergency are the significant challenges in our time.

Risk of flooding affects many residential properties in the county.

Water pollution, from nitrates and phosphorus, is affecting water quality.

Carmarthenshire has one of the highest rates of fly tipping in Wales, incidences have increased fourfold over the last four years.

Ageing Well

51.3% of older adults report that they are in good health, less than the Welsh average.

Older people in Carmarthenshire feel the pressures of the loss of public transport systems that many rely upon to maintain independence.

A high percentage of older people volunteer in their local communities.

Contrary to the trend seen across Wales, less over 50s in Carmarthenshire are in paid work.

The move to an increasingly digital world has the potential to leave some feeling left behind and compound issues of loneliness.

The ageing population in Carmarthenshire and Wales is forecasted to create additional pressures for the NHS.

Dementia diagnosis rates are projected to significantly increase in the next 15 years.

The cost of residential and nursing care is high, approximately £33,500 a year. This creates stress and uncertainty for those who require care.

KEY REGIONAL WELL-BEING THEMES

The collaborative working we have undertaken during the production of this assessment with regional partners has given rise to a number of cross-boundary or regional issues affecting the whole of the West Wales Region. Carmarthenshire has regional partners in West Wales - Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.

The Regional Data Group, responsible for the analysis and writing of this round of assessments, has identified the following key regional themes based on the data available, the results of the regional well-being survey and the findings of the stakeholder events conducted during the summer of 2021. The aim is to help clarify the collective challenges we face now and in the future.

West
Wales
Region

Poverty and
In-Work
Poverty

Increase in
Child Poverty

Lower than
average
earnings

Rising living
costs

Population
Change

Affordable
Housing

Affordable &
Accessible
Childcare

Increase in
Dementia

Climate
change

Loss of
biodiversity

Renewable
energy
capacity

Decrease in
participation in
arts, culture or
heritage
activities

Opportunities to
use and promote
the Welsh
Language

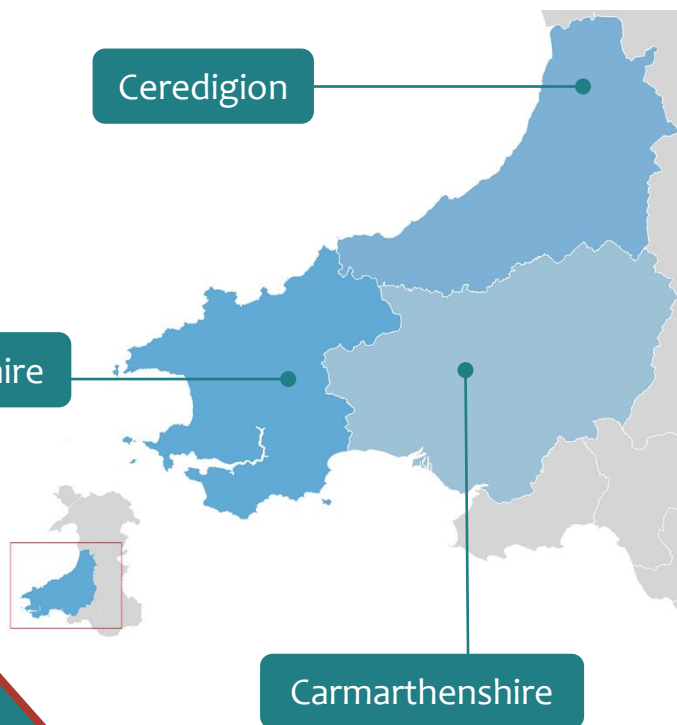
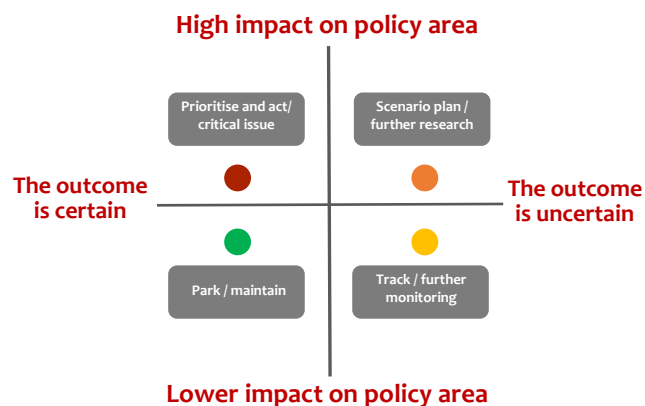


Figure 2: Adapted from HDUHB document

- Cultural Well-being ●
- Environmental Well-being ●
- Social Well-being ●
- Economic Well-being ●

We have used the *PSB Futures Impact/Certainty Matrix* to provide an indicative assessment of the main themes identified in the Assessment. The aim is to provide context to the findings by providing an initial assessment based on the core data set and the engagement conducted during the summer of 2021. The matrix assesses the themes according to the level of **priority** and their **certainty** of happening, as defined in the sample to the right.



Description	Park or Maintain	Track/ Further monitoring	Scenario plan/ Further research	Prioritise/ Critical issue for area
New Beginnings				
Rates of low birth weight babies have fallen and are lower than the Welsh average.	●			
Birth rates have reduced by 10% over the last 5 years.		●		
Immunisation rates have been increasing yet remain lower than the national average.		●		
An increased number of children have been attending Flying Start placements.	●			
Childcare settings are finding recruitment of staff difficult, particularly for Welsh medium staff.			●	
Breastfeeding rates have risen across Hywel Dda University Health Board region.	●			
Childhood				
Children were impacted by not seeing their friends or extended families during lockdowns.		●		
A quarter of our parents who have English as their first language stated that they would support their children through a Welsh medium education.		●		
There has been an increase in children classified as “children in need” by social services.			●	
Almost a third of children are living in poverty.				●
Parents and carers have identified that the cost of childcare can be prohibitive.		●		
Levels of childhood obesity are amongst the worst in Wales.			●	
From engagement with schools young people expressed that they were highly concerned about COVID-19, climate change, jobs, poverty and the environment.		●		

Youth

Bullying and cyberbullying were key issues raised in engagement with young people.			●	
School closures during the pandemic had a significant impact on the well-being of young people.		●		
Substance misuse by young people roughly follows the national average.		●		
Accessibility to areas to socialise with friends has a positive impact on the well-being of young people.	●			
Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales service support 214 young carers in the county.		●		
There has been an increase in the highest grades achieved by pupils undertaking GCSEs and A-Levels.	●			
The gap between attainment of pupils who receive Free School Meals and those who do not has widened.			●	
Access to training and jobs has been identified as a key local issue by young people.		●		
Young people are concerned about levels of homelessness and domestic violence.			●	

Adulthood

Over a third of our households continue to live in poverty.				●
In-work poverty is an increasingly common problem.				●
The cost of living is rising across the UK, with more working families experiencing poverty.				●
Levels of reported exercise and physical activity are amongst the highest in Wales.	●			
In most areas of Carmarthenshire levels of smoking have significantly reduced.	●			
We have the fifth worst figure for adults who report fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours.			●	
Carmarthenshire has a high number of adults who are overweight or obese.			●	
The percentage of adults who drink more than recommended guidelines has increased and is one of the highest in Wales.			●	
The referrals received for support with alcohol and drug issues has reduced, as a result of the pandemic.		●		
Over 70% of our residents agree that there is good community cohesion in their local area.	●			
Carmarthenshire remains one of the safest areas of the UK.	●			
Engagement with our communities highlighted 'feeling safe' as a key issue in their area.		●		

Outdoor refuse fires have been continuously increasing over the last 5 years.			●	
Road traffic collisions remain high.			●	
There has been a 27% increase in the average house price between 2016 and 2021.		●		
Levels of homelessness and those at risk of homelessness are high in the county.			●	
Carmarthenshire has the most Welsh speakers in Wales.		●		
Carmarthenshire has one of the highest suicide rates in Wales.				●
Mental ill health remains a significant concern for many adults.		●		
Referrals for domestic abuse have significantly increased since the pandemic.			●	
Climate change and the nature emergency are the significant challenges in our time.				●
Risk of flooding affects many residential properties in the county.			●	
Water pollution, from nitrates and phosphorus, is affecting water quality.				●
Carmarthenshire has one of the highest rates of fly tipping in Wales.			●	
Ageing Well				
51.3% of older adults report that they are in good health, less than the Welsh average.		●		
Older people in Carmarthenshire feel the pressures of the loss of public transport systems.			●	
A high percentage of older people volunteer in their local communities.	●			
Contrary to the trend seen across Wales, less over 50s in Carmarthenshire are in paid work.		●		
The move to an increasingly digital world has the potential to leave some feeling left behind.		●		
The ageing population in Carmarthenshire is forecasted to create additional pressures for the NHS.		●		
Dementia diagnosis rates are projected to significantly increase in the next 15 years.				●
The cost of residential and nursing care is high, approximately £33,500 a year. This creates stress and uncertainty for those who require care.			●	

CARMARTHENSHIRE CONTEXT



Carmarthenshire Context

The 2020 mid-year population estimates (ONS) give Carmarthenshire a total population of 190,073 residents, making it the 4th largest local authority in Wales and increasing by almost 9% since 2001.

Carmarthenshire borders Pembrokeshire to the West, Ceredigion to the North, Powys to the East, and both Neath Port Talbot and Swansea to the South-East. The Brecon Beacons National Park covers approximately 9% of Carmarthenshire, with approximately 1% of Carmarthenshire's population estimated to reside within the National Park.

The population of Wales is expected to rise by 2.7% by 2028, with the population of Carmarthenshire projected to rise approximately in line with that of Wales at 2.4% by 2028. Our projected population by 2028 is 192,100.

Although our population growth rate of 8.0% since 2001 now exceeds the national rate, it continues to be lower than neighbouring Pembrokeshire (10.6%) and Swansea (10.3%). However, it retains a higher growth rate than Neath Port Talbot (6.3%), Powys (4.8%), and Ceredigion (-3.2%). Net internal migration continues to be the dominant driver of population change in the county.

Our most recent data on the age profiles of domestic migrants presents a continuing trend of predominantly student populations migrating out of Carmarthenshire, with little evidence of return in the 20-29 young adult age groups. The net inflow is highest in the 30-65 age range and corresponds with an average higher net inflow of 0-14 year-olds. This is likely due to family age migration.

In terms of migration linkages between Carmarthenshire and surrounding areas, the largest positive net exchanges have been with Swansea, Ceredigion and Neath Port Talbot. For the outflow, the dominant net outflow has been to Cardiff, with smaller net outflows to Bristol; both influenced by the annual migration of students to higher education.

In the 2011 Census results, there was a significant decline in the number of Welsh speakers in our county, from 50.3% in 2001 to 43.9% in 2011. This is the first time in the county's history that the percentage has fallen below half of our population.

It should be noted that there is no longer a single ward in Carmarthenshire where over 70% of the population speak Welsh. During the ten years between the Censuses, the wards of Pontyberem, Llannon, Gorslas and Quarter Bach have fallen below this percentage. The pattern of decrease is seen across the county, but the main fall appears to have been in the Amman Valley between 2001 and 2011.

The highest percentage of Welsh speakers is now seen among the school-age population with the percentage of our older population falling significantly with each decade. The lowest percentage of Welsh speakers in Carmarthenshire is seen in the 25-44 age group. This is

significant as it is the age group most likely to raise families and make use of the Welsh language within our workplaces.

2011 Census results show that 76% of the population of Carmarthenshire were born in Wales and just 1.9% are from non-white ethnic backgrounds. However, according to the Local Labour Force Survey / Annual Population Survey (2021), 4% of Carmarthenshire's population is from a Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic background. We do note caution when using this information, as the survey is based on a smaller sample of population and on demographic trends that pre-date the COVID-19 pandemic. To supplement our evidence however, a total of 4,730 EU residents living in our county applied to the EU Settlement Scheme by the 30 June 2021 deadline; this is 2.5% of the current estimated population of Carmarthenshire.

The Carmarthenshire population is one of the sparsest in Wales at just 78 people per km² who live across a diverse county of both urban and rural communities. There are three major towns of Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford which are home to 25% of the population.

Carmarthenshire has a diverse range of scenic and historic attractive landscapes, from open uplands to rolling lowland farmland. These local landscapes contribute to a sense of pride, culture, and local identity. People's experience and interaction with the environment can also positively affect health and well-being.

During 2020, 27,691 households in Carmarthenshire were classed as living in poverty which is a slight increase on the previous year of 27,576. Poverty is defined as when a "household income is less than 60% of the GB median income" (in 2020 less than £19,967).

The 2019/20 National Survey for Wales showed that 11.3% of participating households in Carmarthenshire were classed as living in material deprivation. This is below the Welsh average of 12.9% and a reduction on the previous year's figure of 13.5%. Due to COVID-19, there is no updated data available for the measure.

According to the 2019 Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) which is the official measure of relative deprivation for small areas in Wales, Carmarthenshire has 3 areas within the 100 most deprived areas in Wales. These are Tyisha ranked as 17th most deprived area in Wales, followed by Glanymor in 68th and Bigyn in 84th position.

For the purposes of this assessment, six community areas have been identified across Carmarthenshire based on Upper Super Output Areas (USOA's), a map of which can be found here. Where relevant this assessment will highlight key issues affecting community areas and any significant differences between them.

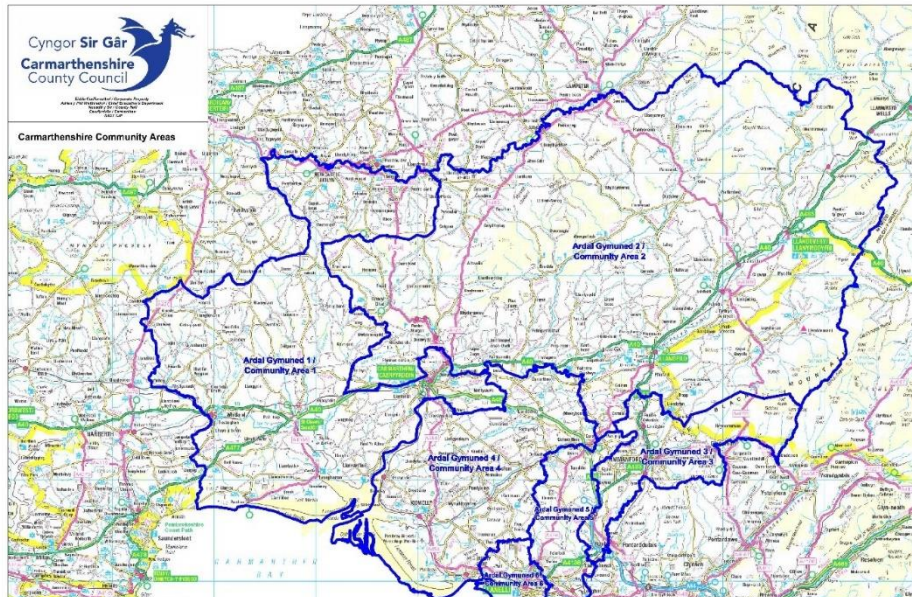


Figure 3: Carmarthenshire Upper Super Output Areas

Community Area 1 (Population 32,054)	Community Area 2 (Population 33,840)	Community Area 3 (Population 30,108)
Carmarthen Town North	Abergwili	Ammanford
Carmarthen Town South	Carmarthen Town West	Betws
Cenarth	Cilycwm	Garnant
Laugharne	Cynwyl Elfed	Glanaman
Llanboidy	Cynwyl Gaeo	Hendy
Llangeler	Llandeilo	Llandybie
Llangunnor	Llandovery	Pontaman
Llansteffan	Llanegwad	Quarter Bach
St. Clears	Llanfihangel Ar Arth	Saron
Trelech	Llanfihangel Aberbythych	Tycroes
Whitland	Llangadog	
	Llanybydder	
	Manordeilo & Salem	
Community Area 4 (Population 32,742)	Community Area 5 (Population 30,923)	Community Area 6 (Population 30,406)
Burry Port	Bynea	Bigyn
Glyn	Dafen	Elli
Gorslas	Felinfoel	Glanymor
Kidwelly	Llangennech	Hengoed
Llanddarog	Llannon	Lliedi
Llangyndeyrn	Llwynhendy	Tyisha
Pembrey	Penygroes	
Pontyberem	Swiss Valley	
St. Ishmael		
Trimsaran		

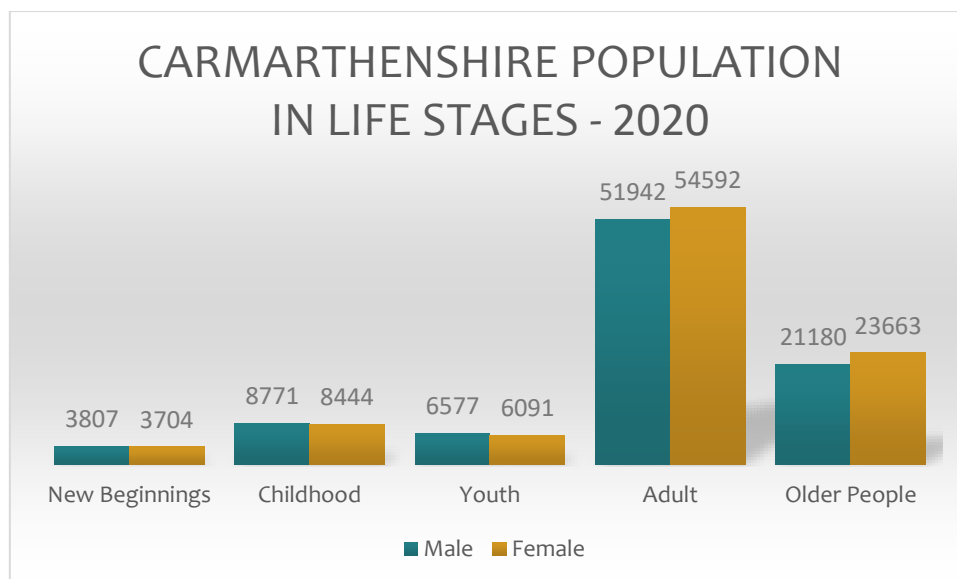


Figure 4: Life Stages

The figures from the 2020 mid-year population estimates shows that, whilst the 6 community areas are rather similar in population for ‘New Beginnings’, ‘Childhood’, ‘Youth’ and ‘Adult’, it shows clearly that there are less older people living in Community Area 6 than any other area - over 32% less than Community Area 2 which has the highest number of older people living in its community.

	New Beginnings	Childhood	Youth	Adult	Older People
Community Area 1	1,183	2,759	1,952	17,624	8,536
Community Area 2	1,139	2,873	2,289	18,738	8,801
Community Area 3	1,168	2,799	2,051	16,945	7,145
Community Area 4	1,126	2,720	2,221	18,025	8,650
Community Area 5	1,308	3,014	2,290	17,716	6,595
Community Area 6	1,309	2,954	2,108	18,069	5,966

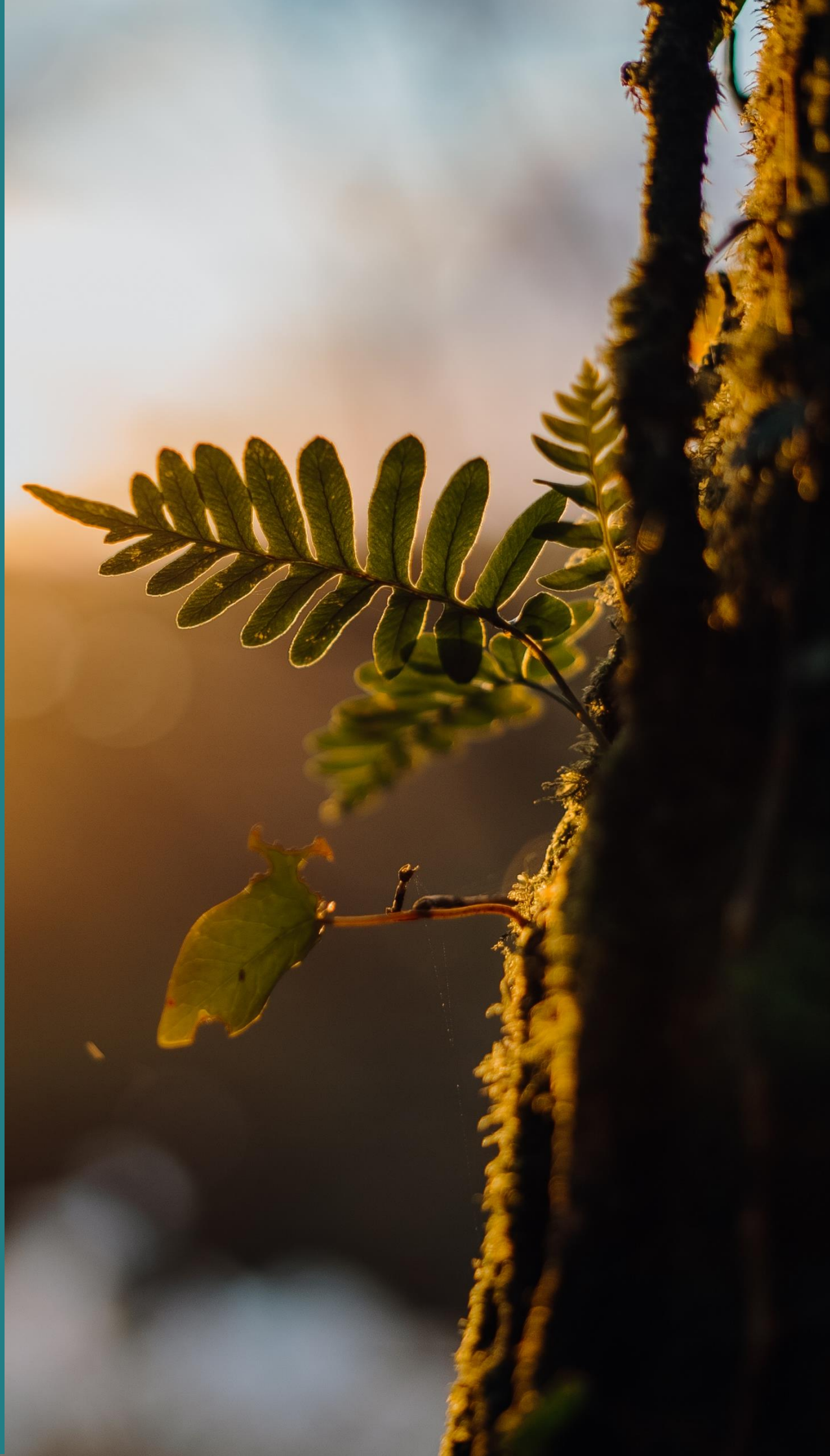
National Well-being Indicators

Welsh Government introduced a suite of 46 National Well-being Indicators to measure progress against the 7 national well-being goals of the Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. Although these are national measures intended to progress overall levels of well-being across Wales (see Welsh Government's [latest report published 30th September 2021](#)), Carmarthenshire PSB has undertaken an exercise to assess current performance against these well-being measures where data is available at Local Authority level, to provide clearer insight into levels of well-being in our county.

The National Well-being Indicators will be featured under the relevant life stages as part our assessment.

As at October 2021, Carmarthenshire have ten measures in the red zone (amongst the worst results in Wales) including 'homeless prevention' and '% of properties with a high or medium risk of flooding'. There are nineteen measures in the green zone (amongst the best results in Wales) including '% adult smokers' and 'Capacity of renewable energy equipment installed'. A number of measures have seen a significant change in year-on-year results, for example the proportion of children aged 4 to 5 years who are overweight or obese has increased from 26.6% in 2017/18 to 30.4% in 2018/19 therefore moving from 12th to 18th position amongst the worst figures in Wales.

NEW BEGINNINGS



Welcome to the world

Children learn and develop more from birth to five years old than at any other time in their lives. A baby’s earliest experiences shape their brain development and have a lifelong impact on mental health and well-being, so it is critical that all children get the best start in life.

Birth weight

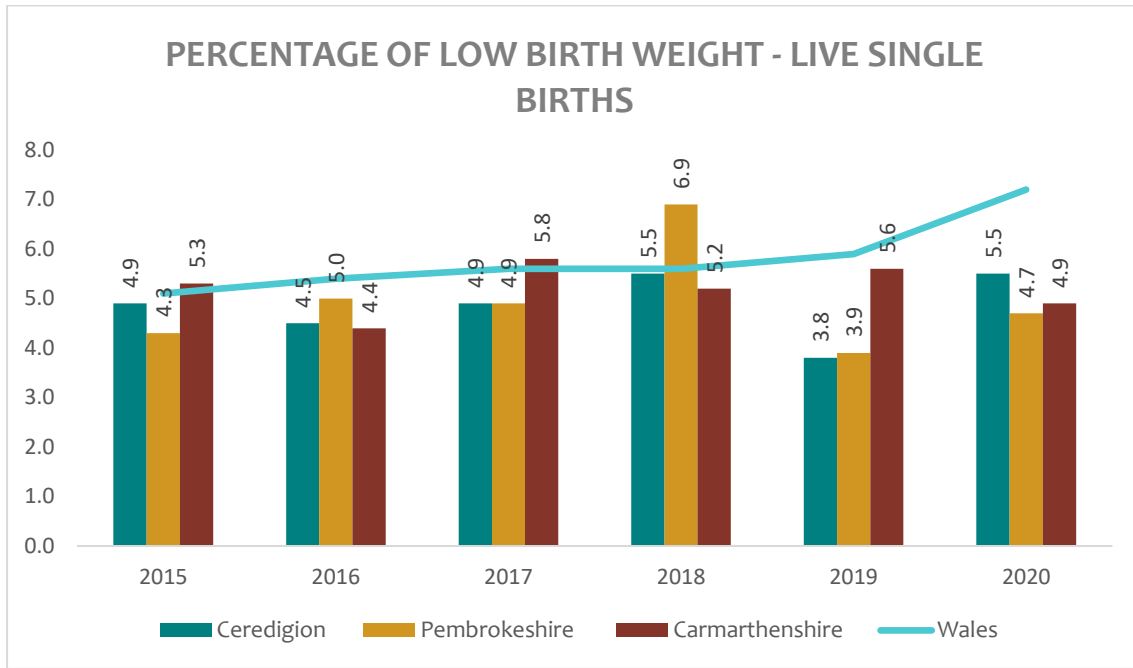


Figure 5: Low birth weight

Low birth weight can result in health and social disadvantages throughout childhood and adult life, and it is pleasing to note that the number of low-birth-weight babies in Carmarthenshire remains low. Since 2018, Carmarthenshire’s rate of low birth weight babies has been lower than the Wales rate and for 2020 was the 3rd lowest in Wales when it fell to 4.9% compared to the Welsh average of 6.1%.

Figures from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) indicate that the birth rate for Carmarthenshire has reduced by over 10% from 2015 to 2019 when it fell to 1,656. This pattern is reflected across the whole of Wales.

Immunisation Rates

Immunisation rates for children aged 4 and under continue to increase, seeing a rise of 5% between April 2016 and 2019 to 86.5%. However, our rates continue to be below the latest Welsh average of 88%. Areas of lower uptake continue to be targeted and it is hoped that ongoing increases will be seen as people are more aware of the importance of being vaccinated, as a result of the pandemic.

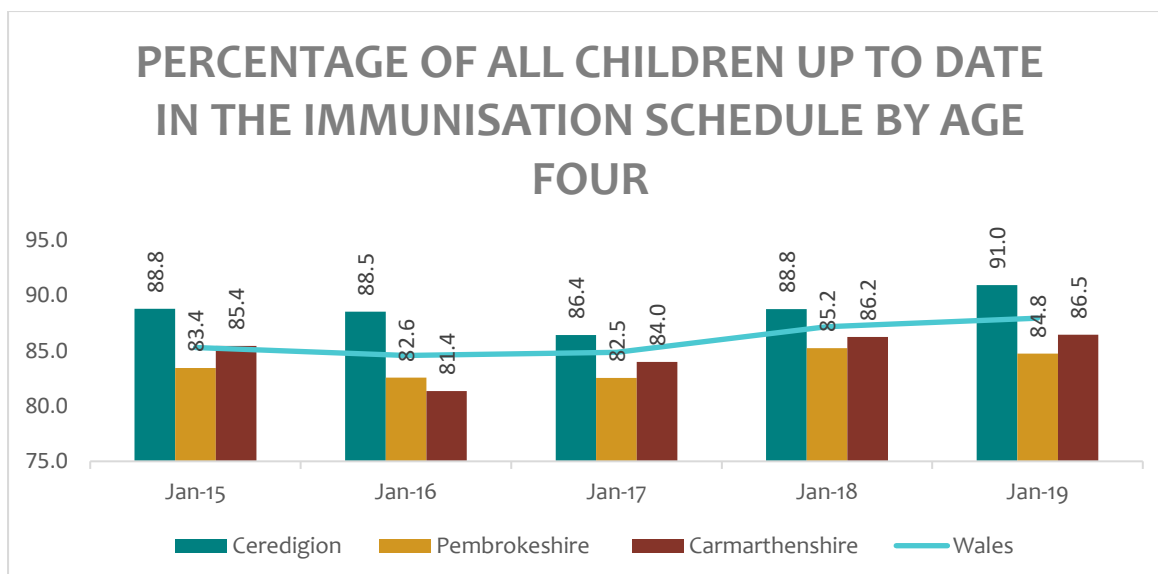


Figure 6: Immunisation rates

Breastfeeding

Breastfeeding is recommended exclusively for the first 6 months of a child's life and continued until at least 2 years of age. Breastfeeding rates at birth continue to rise throughout the Hywel Dda University Health Board (HDUHB) area. However, a decline in the rate of mothers breastfeeding for longer than six months has been observed. Breastfeeding has been shown to have positive health outcomes for both baby and mother, reducing rates of asthma, infection, types of cancer, obesity and more. Breastfeeding rates are higher amongst older mothers.

Family foundations

Families are the founding environment that we all experience as individuals and as such the well-being of the family as a unit has a huge influence on the well-being of the individuals within it.

Research has shown that antenatal classes which focus on preparing parents for the changes and challenges of parenthood as well as the birth itself have resulted in more positive outcomes for mother and baby, through improving maternal knowledge and confidence therefore having a positive impact on the families' psychological well-being (Spinelli, 2003). This demonstrates the importance of support networks, early intervention, and education in fostering positive family relationships at this early stage.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

Conversations held by West Wales Action for Mental Health (WWAMH) have noted that there is an increased need for mental health support for new parent/parents. The impact the last 18 months has had on new parents and babies without access to face-to-face health visiting, new parent groups, family support and social activity, has been significant.

Responses from the Well-being survey from those who were pregnant or had a baby in the last six months indicated that their main concern was not having access to healthcare or other support that they needed as close to home as possible or available through technology.

Equal and ambitious start in life

The early years in a child's life are known as the 'foundation years' as they create the foundations on which the rest of life is built, and they remain the time when we have most opportunity to make a difference. To ensure that all people in Wales can reach their full potential, they need to have equality of opportunity. This means addressing not only social and economic inequality but also environmental inequality. Environmental inequalities may be defined as the unequal impact of environmental influences on health and well-being or the unequal access to ecosystem services.

These environmental influences include early-years education or care settings, housing, public spaces, environmental planning, travel and transport, access to nature and environmental problems, such as poor air quality or climate change causing increased energy costs. As well as ensuring children have an equal start in life it is also important that families, communities and services work to ensure each child has the best possible start in life, equipping them with the right tools to develop themselves into thriving children, young people and eventually adults.

Not all children have the same start in life and extra support is provided for those disadvantaged by being born in the most deprived areas. Flying Start is the Welsh Government targeted Early Years programme for families with children under 4 years of age in some of the most disadvantaged areas of Wales. It aims to mitigate the impact of deprivation and poverty on families through the delivery of services in the first 1,000 days of a child's life. In Carmarthenshire, there has been a steady increase in attendance levels at our Flying Start establishments which provide free childcare placements for eligible 2–3-year-olds to help them prepare for school. Pre-pandemic figures showed an attendance rate of just under 80% of those eligible to receive flying start support.

Childcare provision

Attendance at a quality pre-school (aged 0-3) is shown to improve outcomes for children throughout their life course. A longitudinal study funded by the Department of Education found benefits of pre-school attendance included more positive attitudes towards education, improved social behaviour, higher attainment and a reduced risk of worried behaviour. The study found this was particularly significant for children from disadvantaged backgrounds, children with Additional Learning Needs and boys aged 11 (Taggart, 2015). In Carmarthenshire there are currently 252 registered childcare providers providing 4,751 registered places. Of these, 134 (53%) of the providers and 2,737 (58%) of the places are Welsh-medium. The table below gives a further breakdown with the figures in brackets showing those registered as Welsh-medium.

Setting type	Registered providers	Registered places
Childminders	105 (36)	791 (295)
Full day care (Day Nurseries)	39 (10)	1,461 (395)
Full day care (Cylchoedd/Playgroups)	29 (27)	560 (525)
Sessional care	35 (29)	602 (513)
Out of school care	44 (32)	1,337 (1,009)
Total	252 (134)	4,751 (2,737)

In 2020-21, the number of registered childcare providers has increased by 3 and childcare places by 155 compared to the previous year which is encouraging when considering the challenges faced by providers during the pandemic.

The number of Welsh-medium childcare settings has decreased by 5 childcare settings with a loss of 91 Welsh-medium places in 2020-21.

While some of the sector provided care for the children of key workers, Mudiad Meithrin and Cylchoedd remained closed between March 2020 and September 2020 which impacted on the availability of Welsh-medium registered childcare places. A number of providers have had to close permanently during 2020-21 following the impact of the pandemic, including one main Welsh-medium provider who offered Welsh-medium childcare and part time education for 3-year-olds. As restrictions have risen, several nurseries and carers stopped providing, and it has been a huge challenge to re-establish provision to reach the levels that stood before the pandemic.

Many providers are currently unable to attract and recruit qualified childcare staff which has a direct impact on the availability of Welsh-medium childcare. Issues in relation to recruitment were seen prior to the pandemic with providers reporting that finding qualified Welsh-medium staff was a difficulty. There is evidence of staff leaving the sector and starting a new career outside childcare, noting staff fatigue due to Covid regulations and service requirements as potential reasons. Mudiad Meithrin also advertises a high number of vacancies for Cylch leaders and assistant posts across the county, and lack of recruitment will also have a negative impact on Welsh-medium registered childcare places for the future. During the last five years, we have seen more Welsh childcare staff leaving the childcare sector to become Learning Assistants within schools, teachers or nurses. Childcare for many is seen as the beginning of a career progression for individuals.

We saw a reduction in the number of Meithrin playgroups in Carmarthenshire before the pandemic in 2019/20 – 57 compared to the previous year's 60. The number of children attending Meithrin playgroups has continued to reduce steadily and reduced from 1,606 to 1,307 in the same period. These reductions could be due to parents accessing full day care rather than sessional childcare, especially following the introduction of the Childcare Offer for Wales to support working parents by providing fully funded childcare for 3- to 4-year-olds. Increasingly, Cylchoedd have changed their registrations from sessional to Full Day Care providers, responding to the needs of working parents and some are expanding to provide services during the school holidays.

There has been an increasing trend in the number of pupils in Carmarthenshire who transfer from the Meithrin Playgroups to a Welsh language school. Despite a fall in 2019/20 to just over 93% from 94.5%, there has been an increase from 87% in 2015/16. A number of initiatives may have contributed to this – Cymraeg 2020, the Welsh Government target to have 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050, the Carmarthenshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Camau – the Welsh skills programme to support the childcare sector staff to develop and adopt new Welsh language skills to give early years children every opportunity to play through the medium of Welsh.

The last Childcare Sufficiency Assessment (2017-22) identified that insufficient childcare places were available, particularly Welsh medium places. The next CSA in 2022 will consider the results of the recent Welsh Government National Parent Survey which received over 800 responses from Carmarthenshire parents. It will look to assess the adequacy of the current provision, ensuring that all needs are catered for in terms of language delivery and location. This has come to the forefront as some parents' needs have changed due to the impact of the pandemic. With more people now working from home, this could change the demand for and desired location of their childcare.

Evidence from our survey in terms of a Prosperous Carmarthenshire, highlights lack of sufficient and affordable childcare as a key concern. Of those who responded that were expecting or had a baby in the last six months, accessing childcare was a key element in them being able to access a variety of employment opportunities and the possibility of starting a new business, so that they could provide a stable income for their families.

National Well-being Indicators

Noted below are the National Well-being Indicators and associated local indicators relevant for the New Beginnings life stage

Ref No	Indicator Definition	Year	Rank out of 22 Authorities	Score, Welsh average and Change since last result	
				Carms	Welsh Avg
1	% of low-birth -weight babies	2020	3 rd	4.9% Improved	6.1%
2a	Male life expectancy at birth	2017-19	12 th	78.3 years Improved	78.5 years
2b	Male inequality gap in life expectancy Sloped Index of Inequality (SII) in years	2015-17	16 th	7.3 years Declined	7.4 years
2c	Female life expectancy at birth	2017-19	12 th	82.4 years Improved	82.3 years
2d	Female inequality gap in life expectancy Sloped Index of Inequality (SII) in years	2015-17	5 th	3.4 years Improved	6.1 years

CHILDHOOD



Strong Foundations

Our childhood years are key to our development and can impact on our well-being in future years, having lifelong effects on many aspects such as obesity, heart disease and mental health, to educational achievement and economic status. Giving every child the best start in life is crucial to reducing inequalities across our lives so early intervention is key to long term health and well-being.

It is therefore paramount that we create school environments that nurture children's behavioural and educational attributes from early on as this can impact well-being across the spectrum for children as they grow.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

As part of our involvement work, we met virtually with seven local schools. Many of the pupils were members of School Councils, Eco Councils and were Global Goalkeepers. Our conversations were structured around happiness, things that were important to them and their hopes for the future.

Schools play a key role in supporting pupils through their life journeys. As part of our involvement work, our pupils explained the support that is in place, including the use of Speakr, as an online tool to support them to note their feelings and concerns. Pupils were very clear on where they could access support and the importance of their local school and education through the Covid-19 came through clearly. Our children explained that their schools and the staff had given them a sense of safety and security during the lockdowns.

Our local conversations support the detailed research undertaken by the Children's Commissioner for Wales, *Coronavirus and Me: A nationwide survey of the views and experiences of children and young people in Wales (January 2020)*. Almost 20,000 children and young people took part in the research.

The research outlines how difficult life has been for our children and young people and specific feedback from children aged 3-7 notes how they missed their friends, families, and experiences.

Our young people noted the importance of their local communities, and the majority could see themselves staying in their respective areas in the future.

“Dwi'n caru fy Ysgol, a dwi eisiau gwneud yn siŵr bod fy mhlant i yn ddisgyblion yma.”

Climate change was a concern and pupils in our rural areas explained that they had enjoyed seeing nature reappear during the first and second lockdown and that seeing aeroplanes in the sky again had reminded them of the action needed.

Welsh-medium Education

The Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for Carmarthenshire 2022-2032 aims to ensure significant growth in Welsh-medium education and training, to increase the number of people of all ages who become fluent in Welsh, English and other Languages.

The vision is for Carmarthenshire to be a county where the Welsh language is a living, prosperous and vibrant language in bilingual, strong, and sustainable communities. Welsh-medium education is of course fundamental to the Welsh Government's National Strategy, Cymraeg 2050: A million speakers.

According to annual School Census figures at pupil level, the percentage of 7-year-olds assessed in Welsh (first language) has remained relatively constant between 2016 (54%) and 2021 (58%), with the 2021 cohort at 57%. For 11-year-olds, the percentage has remained constant between 41% and 45%, with the 2021 percentage being 45%. For 13-year-olds (year 9), the percentage has remained constant between 41% and 43%, with the 2021 percentage being 42%.

Childhood challenges

Adverse Childhood Experiences

We need to seek to build healthy relationships, families, and communities. During school years, children experiencing Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) may display a heightened emotional state of anxiety and consequently be distracted from educational pursuits, resulting in poor educational attainment.

Early in 2016, Public Health Wales published the first Welsh ACEs study. Examples of ACEs include physical or sexual abuse or where there is mental health, parental separation or alcohol or drug abuse in the household.

The study revealed that 47% of adults in Wales have suffered at least one ACE in their childhood and 14% suffered four or more. It highlighted the correlation between harmful experiences in childhood and poor well-being outcomes in adulthood.

The study results show that compared to those who experienced no harmful experiences, people who experienced four or more harmful experiences in childhood were four times more likely to experience high-risk drinking in adulthood, be six times more likely to be a smoker and five times more likely to have low mental well-being. ACEs are associated with poor educational achievement and the development of a wide range of other harmful behaviours too, such as risky sexual behaviour, violence and crime. They are also linked to the development of diseases such as diabetes, mental illness, cancer, and cardiovascular disease, and ultimately to premature mortality.

Factors that can reduce the risk of outcomes related to poor well-being in those who suffered four or more ACEs include positive relationships, community support and cultural connections.

There is also a strong correlation between sports participation in childhood and lower lifetime mental illness.

Home Office funding from the 'Early Action Together Programme' benefited our county by creating a foundation of understanding across partner agencies including a common use of terms and understanding of resilience factors to counteract the effects of ACEs. This was achieved through multi-agency training events. We have adopted a strengths-based approach when undertaking assessments to ensure that resilience factors feature within any intervention plan.

Children known to social services

The number of children who are looked after by the local authority in Carmarthenshire is the lowest in Wales. In March 2021, there were 148 Looked After Children, which equates to 40 per 10,000 population compared to the Welsh average of 115. This number has significantly reduced, steadily decreasing year on year since 2014 as more families have been supported to stay together. This has been despite the increased challenges faced due to the COVID-19 pandemic. This is positive news as looked after children are more likely to have been exposed to multiple risks associated with poor long-term outcomes before entering care and are more likely to report emotional well-being issues and perform less well at a school.

The poorer mental health and well-being outcomes for these young people can be a result of past experience of abuse, neglect and difficult relationships as well as the potential trauma of the process of being taken into care and experiences such as frequent or short notice moves between placements.

The fall in numbers is a result of our continued focus on preventative work, with robust systems in place to keep children safe in the home, preventing them from being looked after where possible and appropriate.

The number of children on the child protection register was 78 at March 2021, a similar number to the previous two years. It does tend to fluctuate and had increased to 95 at end September 2021, with recent times proving to be very challenging due to the pandemic. Families have faced difficulties in relation to safeguarding issues when under lockdown and adhering to restrictions. Domestic abuse has also increased substantially during 2020/21 and features highly in cases of children on the register. The register is important in monitoring children at risk of harm and maintains a safety plan that keeps them safely at home wherever possible.

A reduction has also been seen in the number of Children in Need – now known as being in receipt of care and support. These children are getting support from the statutory service but remain living at home. In our county, there were 764 on 31 March 2021 compared to 809 in 31 March 2016 when the last Well-being Assessment was completed. The latest figure was an increase from 589 in March 2020 after a period of year-on-year reductions. This is attributable to the pandemic as families have faced increased struggles, including an increase in domestic incidents resulting in more children needing support.

During the pandemic there was also less availability of preventative services providing face-to-face support for families and so there has been a decrease in the number of cases being able to be stepped down from statutory services in 2020/21 to these preventative services. Numbers have also increased as the nature of referrals for support has been increasingly complex so statutory support has been needed and some families opted out of receiving support during the pandemic waiting for restrictions to lift and therefore resulting in an increased number of cases at the end of March 2021.

Child Poverty

Carmarthenshire is now seeing its highest levels of child poverty in recent years which is a similar pattern across Wales. In 2020, 31.3% of our children aged up to 15 were living in households with less than 60% of the average income before housing costs. This was just above the Welsh average of 30.6%. An increasing trend has been seen over the last six years and our levels have remained higher than the Welsh average each year.

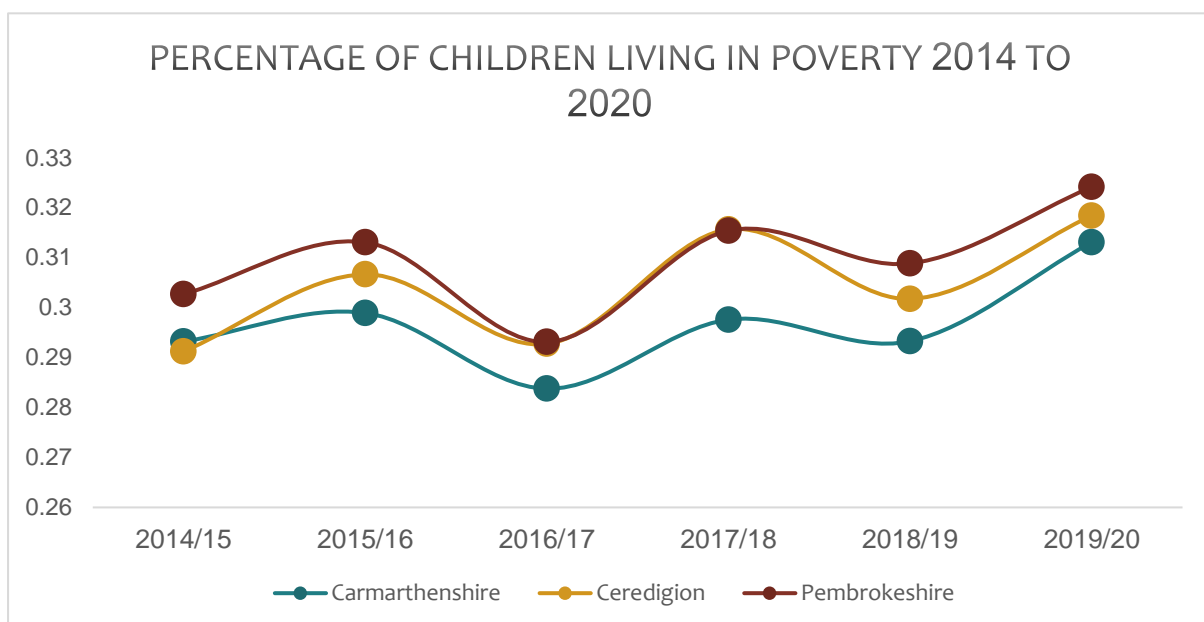


Figure 7: Graph of children living in poverty

Two of our wards – Tyisha and Glanymor – were in the top 20 worst wards for childhood poverty in Wales, both at 41.3%.

The number of children living in workless households is 8.8%; a rate which has seen significant annual reductions in recent years from over 15% in 2015. The county is still ranked 2nd lowest and is well below the Welsh average of 13.5. This is a positive trend with more households seeing parents in employment but should not be treated in isolation of the fact that more children are living in poverty within our county, regionally and nationally in Wales.

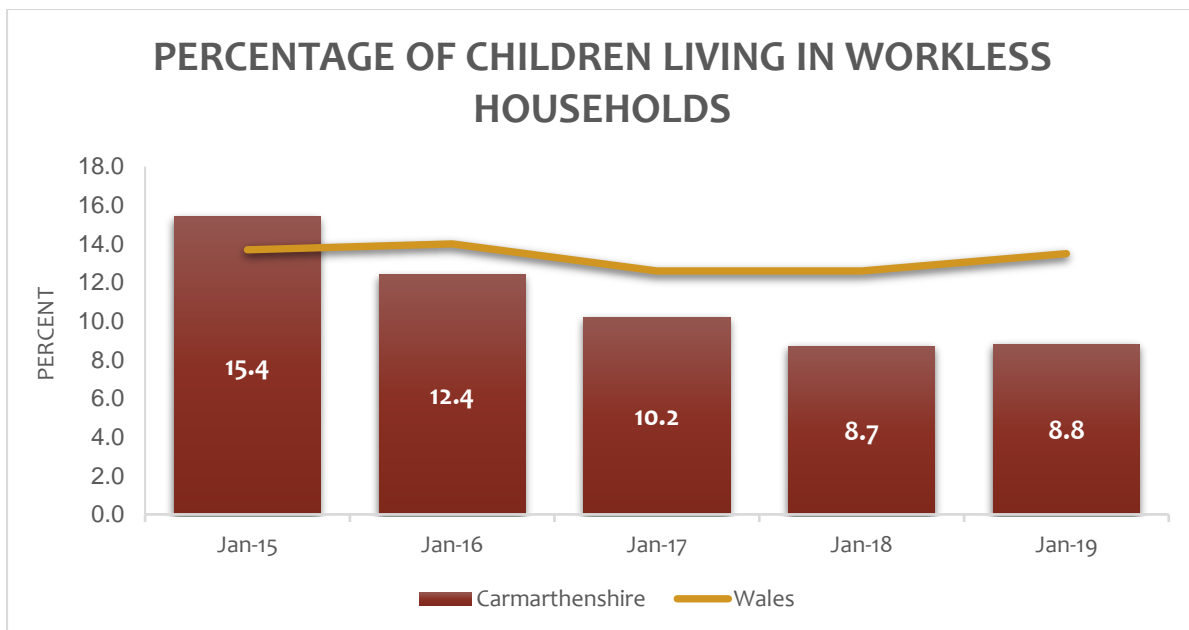


Figure 8: Graph of children living in workless households.

However, it is concerning to see Future Trends Report data to 2020 which shows that the rate of poverty in households, where all working age adults are in work, has increased. This shows a concerning trend that being in work does not necessarily pull households out of poverty.

Research shows that children growing up in workless households experience consistently poorer outcomes in relation to educational attainment and cognitive ability than their counterparts whose parents are always working. Those whose parents had been out of work for two or three years while they were growing up spent more time not in education, employment, or training between ages 15 to 18 than children from households of different employment compositions (Schoon, 2012). However longitudinal evidence indicates that there are often several risk factors at play which create negative outcomes and well-being for children from workless households. It is therefore important that we view these issues in context to gain a holistic understanding and therefore develop accurate responses and preventative measures to challenges posed to the well-being of children now and in future.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

Poverty was a key issue affecting the well-being of year 7 pupils from Ysgol Bro Dinefwr and was the second highest concern about their local area as they grow up, as seen later in this section.

Childcare

Our latest Childcare Sufficiency Assessment in 2019 identified that cost was the most important factor (27.8%) identified by the 33% of parent/carers who were not using registered childcare. This number is an increase on the 27% who did not access paid childcare in the 2017 assessment. Costs

have continued to increase, both pre- and post-pandemic with rises in wages and pensions and also additional cleaning and equipment needed since 2020.

Family and friends provided informal childcare for those 33% of parent/carers who were not using registered childcare.

Consultation carried out with 102 grandparents highlighted the growing role grandparents are playing in providing informal childcare with 90% providing childcare on a regular basis - 41% looking after their grandchildren once or twice a week and 33% providing childcare for 3 or 5 days a week. 43% stated they were providing more childcare this year compared with the previous year.

Growing up healthy

Play

The latest Play Sufficiency Assessment in 2019 identified that playing outside was the most popular setting for children. Although the top place to play was at home/friend's house (79%), other preferred places were the garden or friends' garden (68%), play area (58%) and local grassy area (42%).

However, it was also found that 56% of the parents/carers worry about their children's safety but still let them out to play and 31% often worry and find it difficult to let them out to play. This was an increase from 44% worrying about their child's safety in the 2016 assessment.

The main barrier to playing and hanging out reported by parents of year 5 and year 8 pupils was road traffic (70%), then litter/dog mess/broken glass (33%) and other adults (27%).

Encouraging children to play and providing high quality play opportunities for all children also contributes to developing resilience which in turn will help mitigate the negative effects of ACEs. Play is also a means of reducing the inequalities between children living in families that can afford costly play activities and those that cannot.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

In our conversations with primary school children, being able to play safely in open green spaces was very important. This was consistent in pupils in both rural and urban schools and many noted that this was very important for them and their families for the future.

Obesity

Carmarthenshire is the 5th worst county in Wales for levels of childhood obesity. The latest figures show a concerning spike in obesity in children, following a downward trend which had been seen since 2014/15. In 2018/19, almost a third of children aged 4 to 5 were overweight or obese. Our figure of 30.4% for this period showed a 4% rise on the previous year and was 3.5% higher than the Welsh average.

Obesity causes ill health including diseases of the heart and circulation as well as some cancers and causes early death. There is an increased rate of Type 2 diabetes among obese children. Evidence shows that 80% of children who are obese at age 4-5 years remain obese into adulthood. This is a particular concern as estimates suggest that being overweight reduces life expectancy by about three years and being obese reduces life expectancy by 10 years.

Obesity is more prevalent in deprived areas. A 6.2% difference is seen between the prevalence of obesity in children of this age living in the least deprived quintile compared to those living in the most deprived quintile in Wales and there is evidence that this gap is growing.

One of the key ways to tackle levels of obesity in children is encouraging them to engage in physical activity. The Sports Wales School sports survey in 2018 showed an increase in the percent of children in Carmarthenshire taking part in at least three occasions of activity per week from 46.9% in 2015 survey. We improved our ranking from the 16th to the 10th highest in Wales. When taking part in team sports, our pupils noted that they felt free and without worry.

Childhood concerns

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

Our youth service engaged with 160 year 7 pupils from Ysgol Bro Dinefwr in October 2021 to talk to them about their views on well-being.

When asked about what had affected their well-being, COVID was the issue that had had the most impact with 142 mentions. The young people had felt isolated and very lonely and were affected by not being able to see their friends or leave the house due to lockdown restrictions. They had enjoyed having quality family time but were concerned about future lockdowns.

Climate change was the next highest area of concern (130) with strong views expressed. The engagement was carried out as part of a wider discussion surrounding climate change on that day. We are confident that the views of our young people are well represented but context should be considered in this instance. This was followed by depression and anxiety (102) from being in lockdown and not communicating with others. There were also concerns raised about fitting in with their peers. Other issues raised were bullying and cyber bullying over social media (93), poverty (76) with some saying that their families needed more money for food and clothes and body dysmorphia (67) with boys and girls talking about how they feel about their body or appearance.

Bullying also affects young people's mental health, emotional well-being, sense of self and their ability to connect to society which, if extreme and sustained enough can have lifelong consequences. In addition, the complicated bi-directional nature of mental health and bullying, i.e., some young people are bullied as a result of their mental health issues and some young people develop mental health issues as a consequence of being bullied, means that some of the most vulnerable children are at increased risk of long-term impacts.

When asked what help they needed, getting support was the key suggestion (135) and although they mentioned different people, they could get support from, they were very unsure who to reach out to. It was clear that the young people needed one trusted adult that they could confide in (73).

A concerning issue raised was wanting more money for food (71) as several young people were worried about the effect it was having on their family. Help with bullying (62) was also an issue and stemmed back to having a trusted person to talk to. Outdoor learning (52) was suggested as they felt they could express themselves better and learn more.

When asked what their biggest concerns were about their local area as they grow up, the top issue raised by the young people was jobs (118) followed by poverty (112) and the environment (105). Other concerns discussed were housing (21) and community spaces (12).

The biggest problem facing the world right now was climate change according to the young people (122), followed by nature emergency (20), famine (15) and war (3).

National Well-being Indicators

Noted below are the National Well-being Indicators and associated local indicators relevant for the Childhood life stage:

Ref No	Indicator Definition	Year	Rank out of 22 Authorities	Score, Wales average and Change since last result	
				Carms	Welsh Avg
5a	Proportion of children aged 4 to 5 years who are overweight or obese	2018-19	18 th	30.4% Declined	26.9%
5b	At least three occasions per week of extra-curricular and community sport. (Schoolyears 3-11)	2018	10 th	47.7% Improved	47.6%
7a	Average "Capped 9" score for all Year 11 Pupils	2019-20	6 th	367.2 score Improved	354.4 score
7b	Average "Capped 9" score for non-FSM (Free School Meals) Year 11 pupils	2019-20	6 th	384.2 score Improved	376.2 score
7c	Average "Capped 9" score for FSM Year11 pupils	2019-20	6 th	315.6 score Improved	298.9 score
7d	% gap between FSM and non FSM pupils on the "Capped 9" score	2019-20	7 th	19.6% Improved	22.9%
18b	% of children living in workless households	2019	2 nd	8.8% Improved	13.5%

YOUTH



Growing independent adults

The transition from childhood to adolescence is a challenging one which brings a number of changes and fluctuations in our experiences and understandings of well-being and its influences. A key part of adolescence is forging our identity and individuality which is influenced by a multitude of relationships, external factors, hormones, hobbies and interests. Having plenty of opportunities to gain new experiences and learn new things throughout adolescence.

Broadening horizons

Support for our school children to gain the skills and learning they need to lead happy, healthy, fulfilling lives has continued in difficult circumstances.

Welsh-medium education

Carmarthenshire continues to develop robustly as a bi-lingual authority with inspiring Welsh-medium education offered to all learners. Schools, families and learners are effectively supported as they progress along the language continuum, with Welsh Language centres providing a high standard of Welsh language immersion support.

Examinations

Formal examinations for A Level, AS and GCSEs for summer 2021 were cancelled by the Welsh Government. Schools and colleges used their professional judgement to determine learners' grades for qualifications, using a range of evidence from the specification content their students had been taught. As 2021 was a unique year due to the pandemic, this will need to be taken into consideration when comparing results.

In 2021, there was an increase in A Level entries and an upward trend across all grades. An increase in the number of grades being awarded A* or A was seen with a rise of 8.5% at A* and 5.3% for A*-A grades.

Whilst there was a decrease in the number of AS entries in 2021, the level of attainment sees an upward trend in comparison to 2019. Similarly, an upward trend was evident in 2021 across all grades at GCSE.

The last published average score based on the best 9 exam results including English, Welsh and maths, for Year 11 pupils during 2019/20 (2018/19 Academic Year) is 367.2 where girls had an average score of 378.5 and boys 356.4. This is an improvement on the previous year and well above the Welsh average of 354.4

While the educational attainment of children in Wales has improved overall, children living in deprivation show poorer attainment on all performance measures and is particularly prevalent in the attainment of grades A*-A. The gap is seen to increase as pupils progress through school. The gap between the average score for best exam results of young people living in deprivation (measured by eligibility for free school meals) and young people who do not receive free school meals is measured. The percentage gap in our county was 19.6, the 7th lowest, compared to the

Welsh average of 22.9. The work is ongoing to look at how to measure progress and well-being across all our learners and this continues to be a development area.

Compulsory education is changing in Wales. The changes will fully come into force from September 2022 with a new curriculum and it will be interesting to see the impact of this on attainment levels. The new curriculum is being introduced as attainment levels in Wales and levels of achievement do not meet expectations or societal needs. The new curriculum aims to provide young people with the skills they will need in the future. The delivery of this ambitious change will be an opportunity to prepare young people for the world of work through the development of softer skills. The involvement of businesses with schools will be essential going forward and will build on the successful Business Class and Education Business Exchange programmes.

Elective Home Education

During the pandemic, an increase has been seen in the number of children being home schooled in Carmarthenshire. Numbers are currently at 455 (November 2020, up from 284 in November 2018. Welsh Government funding has been utilised to provide additional support for electively home educated learners. Welsh lessons are also continuing to be offered to home educated young people and are split into three groups: Beginners, Intermediate and Advanced. Feedback from parents notes that the pandemic has given them confidence to fully transition to elective home education.

Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Work continues towards ensuring all young people are in education, employment or training. Reducing the number of NEET young people reduces the effects of poverty and the wider cost to society of support services, reliance on benefits and offending. It is essential to maximise the life opportunities of children, ensuring that as many young people as possible can progress to school Sixth forms, Further Education Colleges, apprenticeships, training provision or work.

During 2019/20 Academic Year, 32 school leavers (1.8%) were recorded as NEET. While this still remains just above the Welsh average, it is half the number reported in the last well-being assessment of 69 pupils (3.4%). This significant reduction could be attributed to the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework which focuses on the early identification of 'at risk' individuals and promotes targeted support for those that need it.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

Carmarthenshire school pupils were also comparative to the national average in terms of their general well-being, with an average of 85% of pupils being satisfied with their lives. About three quarters of pupils felt generally supported in terms of their emotional needs, with 35% of pupils reporting having been bullied, which is also directly comparable with the national average. Bullying and cyber bullying over social media was also a key issue raised by 7 pupils from Ysgol Bro Dinefwr when asked about what affected their well-being as part our engagement work in 2021. More information on the engagement event is available in the childhood section.

First Independence

Throughout adolescence, as curiosity meets opportunity, there are various experiences on offer to young people, not all of which can have positive outcomes or effects on well-being. #

Smoking

Responses from the 2017/2018 School Health Research Network (SHRN) suggest that the Carmarthenshire figures on all school pupils who currently smoke less than once a week were very low, at 2%. The highest percentage was 5% for year 11 pupils.

E-cigarette use was significantly higher with 43% of year 11 pupils noting that they had tried them. Alcohol use was the only behaviour where Carmarthenshire pupils admitted to a slightly higher use than the national average, with 49% of all pupils admitting to drinking alcohol, 3% higher than the national average. This figure is as high as 78% in year 11 pupils, again 3% higher than the national average. Cannabis use was very low with only 3% of all pupils reporting having used cannabis in the last 30 days. However, 18% of all pupils noted that they had been offered cannabis in the last 12 months.

Substance misuse

The pandemic and resulting lockdowns and schools' closures had a significant impact on numbers getting support for substance misuse due to the reduced access to young people and schools and colleges being one of their main sources of referrals.

During 2020/21, the young person substance misuse service in Carmarthenshire received 45 referrals for young people aged under 18. This was a 37% drop on the 71 referrals received for the same period in 2019-20.

During the same reporting period, there were 37 young person assessments, which was a 40% reduction on the 62 assessments completed in 2019/20.

The two main substances recorded for referrals received by young person services during the same reporting period were cannabis which came top at 52%, followed by alcohol at 28%.

On average our brains keep growing and developing into our mid-20s. Taking drugs and drinking alcohol can affect the development of the brain, particularly the prefrontal cortex, the area of the brain used for decision making. Taking drugs at an early age increases the chances of becoming addicted. There is also an increased chance of developing health problems later in life, such as heart disease, high blood pressure and sleep disorders.

Sex and relationships

According to the SHRN data from 2017/18, a quarter of the county's school pupils in year 11 reported having had sexual intercourse which was the same as the national average, and the most common age for having had sexual intercourse for the first time being 15 years of age, the same as the national average. 15% of those who had had sexual intercourse reported having had sex for the first time when younger than 14, which is 5% lower than the national average.

While pregnancy and parenthood are positive choices for some young people, for others, unintended pregnancy can have negative social and psychological consequences. Having children at a young age can affect the health and well-being of young women and can limit educational and career prospects. Socio-economic disadvantage can be both a cause and an effect of young parenthood.

The teenage pregnancy rate is decreasing in Carmarthenshire and is currently at 14.8 per 1,000 females aged under 18. This figure is below the Welsh average of 18.9.

Making Connections

‘Hanging out’ with friends is a significant factor in young people experiencing positive well-being with 84% of year 8 pupils stating that ‘hanging out’ made them feel happy in the Carmarthenshire Play Sufficiency Assessment 2019. Hanging out also made young people feel active (52%), excited (44%) and free (40%). 48% hang out with friends most days and 28% hang out a few days a week.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

A total of 6436 or 67% of students across 12 schools in our county took part in a School Health Research Network (SHRN) survey in 2017/18. The survey was also underway in our schools during September 2021, with results expected during 2022. Data covered pupils’ behaviours in the following areas - food, fitness and physical activity, well-being and emotional health, substance use and misuse and sex and relationships. The data from 2017/18 generally revealed that Carmarthenshire pupils were comparable to the national average in almost all areas surveyed.

The survey found that younger pupils were generally more likely to engage in healthy behaviours regarding food, fitness and physical activity. For example, 65% of year 7 pupils were likely to eat breakfast every day compared to 46% of year 11 pupils. Younger pupils were also more likely to be physically active and less likely to be sedentary. This reflected the national average across the age groups.

The most popular activity (69%) was chatting and being with friends followed by playing ball games (37%) and exploring (30%). Young people liked to hang out outside – their favourite place was on the streets near home (24%), football field or sports pitch (12%) and local grassy area or field (11%).

Physical activity has positive impacts on lifetime well-being but during COVID, a general decrease has been seen in children’s levels of physical activity. The decrease has been comparatively greater for children living in low-income areas.

Young carers

According to the 2011 Census, 1,803 young people (aged up to 24 years) were providing unpaid care in Carmarthenshire. Research has shown that young carers are more likely to achieve poorer educational outcomes – which is a key determinant of later well-being. Carers aged 16–18 are twice as likely to be NEET compared to their peers. In Wales in 2020, 45% of young carers reported that they were not able to spend enough time on their schoolwork and 58% felt that their education was suffering. 36% of young adult carers said that their education was suffering, impacting on their hopes and opportunities for the future.

In 2019/20, 87 young carers were supported by social services. Figures dropped to 71 in 2020/21, during lockdown, but referrals have significantly increased since April 2021. During 2020/21, the Carers Trust Crossroads West Wales service, who work with young carers referred on to them by social services, supported 151 young people aged under 18 and 63 young adult carers aged up to 25. The service also noted a decline in referrals during the initial stages of the pandemic, but the support required by those already on the service rose significantly and has continued to stay high despite the ease in restrictions. Many have found their caring role to have increased during this time due to the increased isolation and the loss of respite care. This is only being added to as more families are being asked to take on higher caring roles to ease the pressures on hospitals and cover for the lack of social care packages available. These pressures are largely showing themselves in a decline in the mental health of young carers, with them feeling more isolated and a significant number struggling to balance their caring role with their education. Research has shown that almost half (45%) of young adult carers suffer from mental health problems.

Common issues that have been raised by young carers upon referral are anxiety as well as a sense of isolation and a lack of understanding amongst their peers and teachers. In response, Crossroads West Wales recently established a team to visit schools and colleges to educate the staff and pupils about Young Carers and the support that can be offered to them, with the aim of improving knowledge and understanding.

Migration of young people

The average migration of the population of Carmarthenshire over the last 5 years:

Age Range	In	Out	Net
0-15	581	487	+94
16-24	910	990	-80
25-44	1273	1180	+93
45-64	756	565	+191
65+	405	307	+98

Table 1: Net Migration

The only age range that has had an average net migration over the last five years is in the 16-24 range. Young people often look further afield for education and training as they approach their

20s. Flying the nest is a normal part of becoming an independent adult; however, it is important to attract young people to learn and work in the area. According to the Future Trends Report, it is forecasted that there will be a reduction in the population of under 25s across the country as well as in Carmarthenshire. The ageing population forecast for Carmarthenshire could result in less people available to work in the care sector.

Involving our Young People

The importance of access to training and jobs was highlighted by the Carmarthenshire Youth Council in Autumn 2020, in the annual 'Make Your Mark' event, the biggest UK youth consultation. Young people voted online to cast one vote for the topic they cared about most in their county and a topic which was the most important for them in the UK. In Carmarthenshire, the local issue with the most votes (21.3%) were access to training and jobs. 'Jobs' was also the top concern raised by Year 7 pupils from Ysgol Bro Dinefwr when asked about their concerns about their local area as they grow up. More information on the engagement event is available in the childhood section.

The second local issue was homelessness with 20.9%, see the adulthood section for further information. Domestic violence was the 3rd highest with 17%. The Carmarthenshire Youth Council has also voted for domestic abuse as their priority issue for this year, wanting to research the topic to give a young people's perspective on the issue.

Domestic violence has a devastating impact on the well-being of children and young people that can continue to affect their adult lives. This has been recognised by the recent Domestic Abuse Act, which recognises children as victims themselves.

Mental Health

Concerns over mental health has also been a key issue raised by young people. In the 'Make Your Mark' consultation, supporting their mental health was voted the topic of most importance to the UK, by a third of our Youth Council representatives. During the well-being session held with the Police & Crime Commissioner's Youth Forum with five young people from Carmarthenshire, mental health featured highly in the comments made. When asked what well-being means to you, two of the four comments made by the young people were around mental health – one about looking after their mental health daily and the other related to the importance of mental health during the pandemic when they had not been able to socialise and interact and learn from others. When asked about concerns for the future, one of the five people spoke about mental health and needing the tools to recognise when things may be going wrong.

Research by the Children's Commissioner for Wales shows that the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted significantly on the emotional and mental health of young people. When agreeing with the negative statements as part of the survey, 63% of 12–18-year-olds agreed that they were worried about falling behind with learning and 61% agreed that they were worried about how the pandemic could affect their qualifications.

It is also important to highlight that many 12–18-year-olds did not know where to go for help and support for their mental health, beyond their friends and family.

Other than mental health, when asked about future concerns, the other four members of the Police & Crime Commissioner’s Youth Forum, spoke about the environment – beaches, climate change, wildlife and pollution. Taking action on the Climate Emergency was also voted for by the Carmarthenshire Youth Council as their 3rd highest topic of most importance in the UK, with 9% of the votes, as noted in the Adulthood section.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

The following concerns are reflected in the prosperous section of the 2021 Well-being Survey. Lack of affordable housing (57%) (346 responses) and suitable job opportunities (52%) (312 responses) were the two biggest concerns amongst respondents on the economy in the future. Respondents aged 16-24 stated their concerns were:

- Lack of suitable job opportunities (71%)
- Lack of training and skills that fit the needs of the local economy job/market (71%)
- Lack of affordable housing (71%)

Although the loss of young people from the county was not a specific concern, if the relevant training and skills required in the current economic market is not met along with suitable job opportunities and affordable housing then we will suffer from losing our youth to other areas/countries.

The two biggest concerns in relation to the thriving language and culture of Carmarthenshire is house prices being unaffordable for local people 72% (413 recipients) and young people moving out of the local area/Wales to study/work 56% (322 recipients)

The other key issue for the UK, raised by our Youth Council was ‘free university’ which was second with 23%.

ADULTHOOD



Our adult years are when we are physically mature and at our physical peak. During adulthood, we start to settle down and become more stable emotionally. As we progress through adulthood, we become more autonomous, further establishing ourselves as an independent person with our own life.

Well-being

Well-being findings results from the Office of National Statistics (ONS) 2019/20, so pre-pandemic, show that there is an increase in people feeling anxious and a decrease in the number feeling happy and satisfied, levels which are worse than those for across Wales and the UK. The number feeling life is worthwhile has a general upward trend and is currently equal to the scores for Wales.

Making ends meet

On 31 March 2021, the Socio-economic Duty came into force in Wales. The overall aim of the duty is to deliver better outcomes for those who are living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society – this means that they are facing socio-economic disadvantage.

The Duty places a legal responsibility on bodies when they are taking strategic decisions to have due regard to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

Income

The median annual household income of £28,186 for Carmarthenshire is below that of the Wales figure of £28,999. Figures in Carmarthenshire are now the 9th lowest in the whole of Wales, compared to being the 7th lowest when the last Well-being Assessment was completed five years ago. Our gross disposable income per head in 2018 was £16,813, 12th lowest compared to rest of Wales but below the Welsh average of £17,100.

Income levels vary across the county, and it is important to note the gap of over 22% between the highest and lowest Community Area figures; from Community Area 2 with £31,455 which is well above Carmarthenshire and Wales figures, to Community area 6 with £25,770. The disparity between levels of poverty across the community areas ranges from 30% of households living in poverty in Community Area 2 compared to 39.5% in Community Area 6.

Of the 10% (190) most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Wales, 5 are within our county. The top 4 are within Community Area 6 and the 5th in Community Area 5:

LSOA	Carmarthenshire Ranking	Wales Ranking	Community Area
Tyisha 2	1	17	6
Glanymor 4	2	68	6
Bigyn 4	3	84	6
Tyisha 3	4	144	6
Llwynhendy 3	5	172	5

Poverty

Over a third of our households continue to live in poverty which is a concern. However, it is positive to note that the percentage of households in Carmarthenshire living in poverty has reduced by 2% in the last five years since the last Well-being Assessment. In 2020, 33.8% (27,691) of Carmarthenshire households were living in poverty, and this continues to be above the Welsh average of 32.9%. This ranges from 30% in Community Area 2 to just under 40% in Community area 6.

Poverty and deprivation have serious detrimental effects, impacting across all aspects of well-being. It limits the opportunities and prospects for children and young people and damages the quality of life for all. Poverty is too often an intergenerational experience which poses a significant threat to experiencing positive well-being both now, and in the future.

Department for Work and Pensions data on the percentage of each age group in Wales living in relative income poverty shows that 22% of working-age adults in Wales (2017-2020) were living in relative income poverty. This percentage remains steady in Wales but is still above that seen for other UK countries.

As food prices, energy bills and general costs continue to rise across the UK it is becoming harder for households to stay above the poverty line. This is compounded by the fact that wages are not rising to meet the extra costs. This means that more working households are experiencing poverty.

An estimated 144,504 households are at risk of being in fuel poverty in Wales, spending between 8% and 10% of their household income on fuel costs. This is equivalent to 11% of households in Wales. Data is not held regarding the estimated levels of fuel poverty by local authority area.

Our conversations with representatives from the Gypsy and Traveller Community have noted concern in terms of fuel poverty amongst the population. Fuel poverty is an area we would like to explore further, especially in context of our protected groups.

Employability

Increasing employability is fundamental to tackling poverty and reducing inequalities. It has a significant impact on our health and ability to function in our everyday lives.

Information from the Annual Population and Labour Force Survey March 2021 shows the percentage of employment in different sectors within the county.

1: Managers, directors and senior officers	10%
2: Professional occupations	19%
3: Associate professional & technical occupations	11%
4: Administrative & secretarial occupations	8%
5: Skilled trades occupations	12%
6: Caring, leisure & other service occupations	14%
7: Sales & customer service occupations	9%
8: Process, plant & machine operatives	7%
9: Elementary occupations	10%

Data from Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES) 2019 indicated that the majority of posts in Carmarthenshire are full-time (63%) and the leading employment industries are human health and social work activities and wholesale and retail trade, repair of motor vehicles and motorcycles and manufacturing.

Commuting patterns from the Annual Population Survey 2020 indicate that 62,600 people live and work within Carmarthenshire, 16,200 commute out of Carmarthenshire for work and 14,900 commute into the area for work. These figures could, of course, have changed dramatically since the pandemic.

According to Stats Wales in March 2021 Carmarthenshire has the third lowest rate in respect of employment compared to the rest of Wales. Employment rates have reduced from 71.7% in March 2020 to 68.6% (year ending March 2021). This is amongst the lowest in Wales and below the national average of 72.2%. However, these figures are not unexpected and demonstrate how challenging this year has been for the labour market, the highest employment rate is located in Monmouthshire 78.3%

The difference between the employment rate of disabled and non-disabled residents in Carmarthenshire continues to be a concern. The employment rate for those without a disability

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

In our conversations with the Carmarthenshire Disability Partnership, members discussed economic and social well-being and highlighted the fact that many disabled people were continuing to shield and did not have the confidence that public spaces were safe. This was seen as a potential barrier to employment and in accessing services for support to return to employment and training.

(77.1%) continues to be considerably higher than those with a disability (49.7%). This is a disability employment gap of 27.4 percentage points which is below the national average disability employment gap of 30.8. This is an improvement on the situation five years ago when the gap in the employment rate was 34.4 percentage points locally.

Working age population

Carmarthenshire has seen a downward trend of working aged people who are economically active since 2017 from 79% to 74% in 2020. This is opposite to the increase seen across Wales. This decline in our county significantly increased in 2020, which is likely attributable to the pandemic whereby labour force participation has been under significant stress. Perceptions of key sectors and work in general have been detrimentally affected with wider national level research suggesting that Wales will continue to see rising economic inactivity levels through to 2023. The Future Trends Report forecasts a continued decline in the working age population (16-64) in Wales of 2% by 2043.

Job creation and retention

On a positive note, we saw an increase of 23% in the number of jobs created in Carmarthenshire between 2001 and 2018 - the third highest increase across Wales and the highest seen in the more rural counties. The main sectors recruiting before 2018 were health and social care, retail, education and tourism and hospitality, what could be classified as the foundational economy sectors. This aligns with the fact that there are less workless households in Carmarthenshire than previously. It should be noted that this has not come with a decrease in levels of poverty as poverty in households has increased even where all working age adults are in work - as noted in the childhood section.

However, challenges have been seen during the pandemic in this area with a cumulative total of 26,900 jobs supported by the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme at various times since it started. The furlough rate decreased at a consistent rate from January 2021. There were still 2,960 individuals on furlough in the county in August 2021.

Recruitment levels, however, in recent months have exceeded pre-pandemic levels as the period of economic recovery has progressed. Vacancies are concentrated in Health and Social Care, Tourism and Hospitality, Transport and Logistics and Construction. A number of key sectors are reporting that they are currently experiencing acute recruitment challenges with anecdotal evidence suggesting that attributable reasons include the pandemic, Brexit, perceptions of sectors and unattractive working conditions.

Claimant count

The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in the county has declined in the last 12 months from 0.8% of the working age population in September 2020 to 0.4% in August 2021. The highest rate in that month of 0.8% was located in Felinfoel situated in Community Area 5 and Garnant within Community Area 3.

The Jobseekers' Allowance claimants for the community areas for August 2021 indicates that Community Area 1 had the lowest rate in the county with 0.2% whereas Community Areas 3 and 6 had a higher rate, 0.6% and 0.5% respectively, compared to the figure for Wales of 0.3%.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

As part of our involvement work, we met with service users and providers from our Armed Forces community. Organisations from across the region noted an increase in contact from Veterans in terms of job retention, furlough and the economic impact on their households. Many service users had faced challenges in terms of their mental health and some situations had triggered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD). It also became apparent that even though Veterans want to retrain, the pandemic has had an impact on educational and training opportunities. Service providers highlighted that the full impact of the pandemic had not yet been seen and that the Armed Forces community needs clear and consistent advice through the transition period, as life returns to a level of normality.

There have also been delays in applications for financial support and benefits, which has led to an increase in requests for emergency support for food and basic staples for families. Delays have also been seen across the region in terms of housing benefit which could potentially lead to an increase in homeless Veterans owing to emergency provision in housing coming to an end.

Well-being in work

Being happy in work is important for well-being and the latest figures in April 2019 showed that the percentage of people moderately or very satisfied with their jobs was 79% - but this was over 3% lower than both the figure two years previously and the Welsh average. This ranked Carmarthenshire the 6th lowest in Wales. A number of factors can affect job satisfaction therefore it is difficult to determine the exact cause of falling rates in the county.

Qualifications and training

In Carmarthenshire, we have seen an increase in the level of qualification at National Qualification Framework (NQF) Level 3 since 2015 to a figure of over 62% in 2020, which is just above the Welsh average. For those reaching NQF level 4 or above in Carmarthenshire, figures have increased slightly from 33.7% in 2015 to 40.7% in 2020, just below the average in Wales (41.4%). The number with no qualifications is continuously reducing, with Carmarthenshire ranked 10th in 2020 with 6.6% compared to the Welsh average of 7.3%.

Increasing qualifications levels will continue to be a key policy area for Welsh Government as skills levels are a key determinant of economic growth. A number of interventions delivered via EU Structural Funds within the county such as ReAct, Cam Nesa and Skills for Industry are focussed on upskilling and reskilling individuals. Additional factors could be possible improved

progression routes within education, increased investment in lifelong learning and targeted interventions for young people aged 16-24 at risk of becoming NEET.

Lifestyle choices

Lifestyle choices impact on our future health and well-being. Carmarthenshire residents compare well to the rest of Wales in some areas such as smoking and physical activity, however, there are a number of lifestyle choices where we compare poorly.

Exercise and physical activity

We have the 4th lowest figure for reporting exercise or physical activity for less than 30 minutes per week – 27.6% compared to the Welsh average of 33%. We rank 6th highest at 35.1% for the percentage participating in sporting activity 3 times or more a week but this remains below the Welsh average of 32.2%.

Smoking

We have seen a year of year drop in smoking rates since 2013/14 and now rank 6th with only 16% of our population smoking in 2019/20. However, there are areas in the Health Board area where rates of smoking have not changed, for example, in parts of Llanelli, 27-31% of the adult population still smoke. Smoking rates are nearly 3 times higher in the most deprived fifth of Wales compared to the least deprived fifth of Wales. The gap has narrowed in the last 8 years.

The reduction in smoking is due to legislation in Wales to reduce access to and visibility of tobacco products and reduce exposure to tobacco smoke in enclosed spaces and cars carrying children and increased investment in smoking cessation services in both health care and community settings.

A slight reduction has been seen in the use of e-cigarettes by adults to 6.7%. We remain the 7th highest in Wales, just above the Welsh average.

We have the 5th worst figure in Wales for the percentage of adults who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours at 12.4% and worse than the previous result of 8.8% and the Welsh average of 10%.

Obesity

Being overweight and obese has an impact on life expectancy, morbidity, mortality and health and social care costs. According to the National Survey for Wales Carmarthenshire has the 7th highest number of adults who are overweight or obese (18/19&19/20) of 63.6%, this is an increase of almost 6 percentage points from a result of 57.8% in 16/17&17/18. The current figure is well above the Welsh average of 59.9%. When looking at the obesity rates in isolation, we have the 6th highest obese adult population – 28.2% (18/19&19/20), an increase of almost 6 percentage points since 16/17&17/18.

Mild obesity is associated with the loss of 1 in 10 potential disease-free years during middle and later adulthood (40-75), and severe obesity the loss of 1 in 4. This increasing loss of disease-free years as obesity becomes more severe occurs in both sexes, among smokers and non-smokers, the physically active and inactive, and across socio-economic groups.

Studies have also demonstrated a relationship between adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) and adult obesity. Persons who had experienced four or more categories of childhood exposure, compared to those who had experienced none, had 1.4-to-1.6-fold increase in physical inactivity and obesity. As with children, higher incidences of overweight and obesity are also found in adults who live in more deprived areas.

Before the pandemic, national initiatives encouraged more activity and participation in healthy diet and raising awareness of health risks, such as 'Healthy Weight, Healthy Wales'.

Obesity is an area we would like to research further.

Alcohol and substance misuse

In 2018/19 & 2019/20, we had the 3rd highest percentage of adults in Wales who drink more than the recommended guidelines. This was an increase of 1.5 percentage points to 21.5 since 2017/18 & 2018/19 compared to the Welsh average of 18.6%.

As a result of the pandemic and subsequent lockdowns, a reduction was seen in both the number of referrals received for support with alcohol and drug issues and the number of assessments completed in 2020/21 compared with the figures for 2019-20.

In 2020/21, the number of alcohol referrals was 540, a reduction of 3.75%, with 525 assessments undertaken, 10.5% fewer than in 2019/20. For drug referrals, the figure was 553, 1% lower and 552 assessments were done, a reduction of 2%.

Impacts were also seen on the number of cases where treatment was completed. During the same period, the figure was 431 for alcohol, which shows an 18% reduction, and 389 for drugs, a fall of 12%.

The three main substances clients were referred into adult drug and alcohol services for support with, in 2020/21 were alcohol, which came top at 35%, followed by heroin at 13.4% and cannabis at 10.2%.

Part of a community

Well-being is affected by the area in which you live and according to the 2020/21 National Survey for Wales almost 90% of our residents are satisfied with their local area as a place to live. Over 90% are satisfied with their ability to get to/access the facilities and services they need which is a significant increase on the previous figure of 75% in 2018/19 now ranking 4th out of the 22 local authorities in Wales.

Community Cohesion

According to the 2020/21 National Survey for Wales, our residents feel they live in cohesive communities with almost 70% agreeing that there is good community cohesion in their local area, an improvement on the previous figure of just over 50% in 2018/19 and very close to the Wales average. Almost 80% feel that people in their local area treat each other with respect, higher than the Wales average of 75%.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

Recent consultation in 2020 with representatives from a number of sectors of the community showed overall positive opinions towards current community cohesion in Mid and South-West Wales. Focus groups were held with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities; EU (non-Welsh) citizens, rural and isolated communities, first language Welsh speakers, Gypsy / Traveller Communities, Syrian Refugees, LGBTQ+ people, disabled people and/or people with health conditions and young people. 77% of the interviewees referred to community cohesion as good. It was recognised that there was potential for improvement and perceived “tensions”, or “problems”.

63.7% perceived Brexit as having a negative impact on community cohesion in Mid and South-West Wales. However, positive attitudes were shown towards the impact of COVID-19 on community cohesion although there were concerns about the longevity of the positive impacts, with concerns around different rising negative impacts. 67.3% of survey respondents believed that community cohesion had either improved (40%) or not changed (27.3%) since the beginning of the pandemic.

As part of our Well-being Assessment consultation work, our Black, Asian, and Minority Ethnic residents were equally concerned with threats of extremism, prejudice and hate crime. In terms of community cohesion, our Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender community noted concern regarding community resources being closed, prejudice and lack of investment in their local community.

Raising concern about unfair treatment and to Report a hate crime were the top two things that Carmarthenshire residence would consider doing to help make things fairer for everyone in their community when asked as part of the 2021 Well-being Survey.

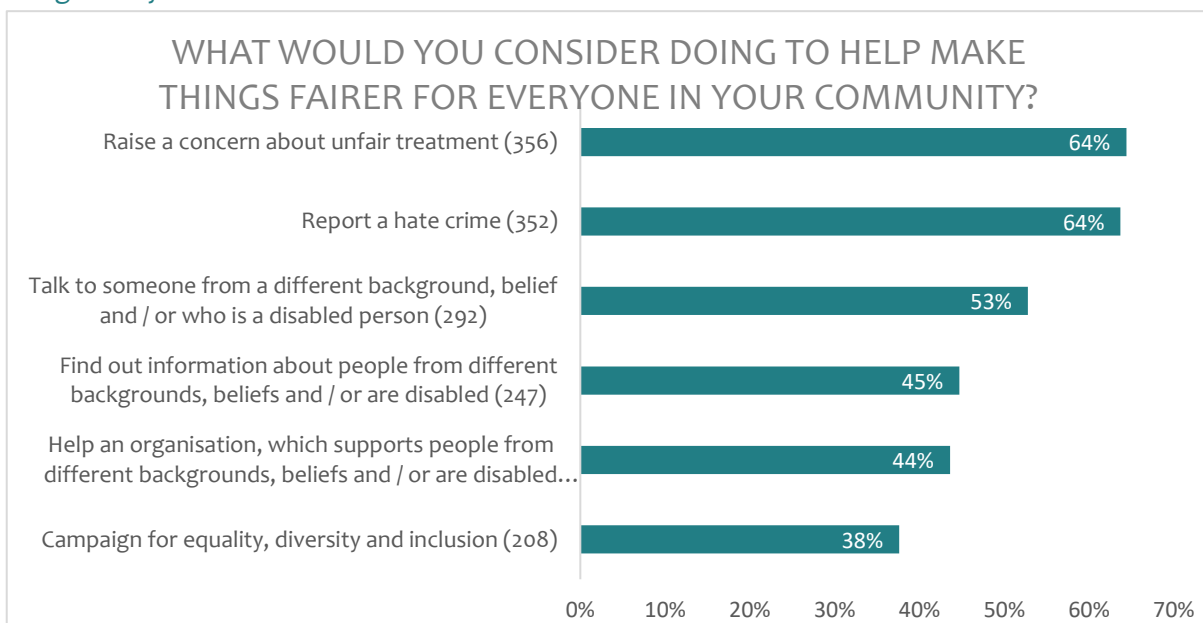


Figure 9: Survey Responses

Hate Crime

Victim support has seen an 11% increase in the number of people seeking support after experiencing a hate crime during 2020-21 compared to 2019-20. The majority of these incidences were race and nationality related (71%), an increase on the previous year.

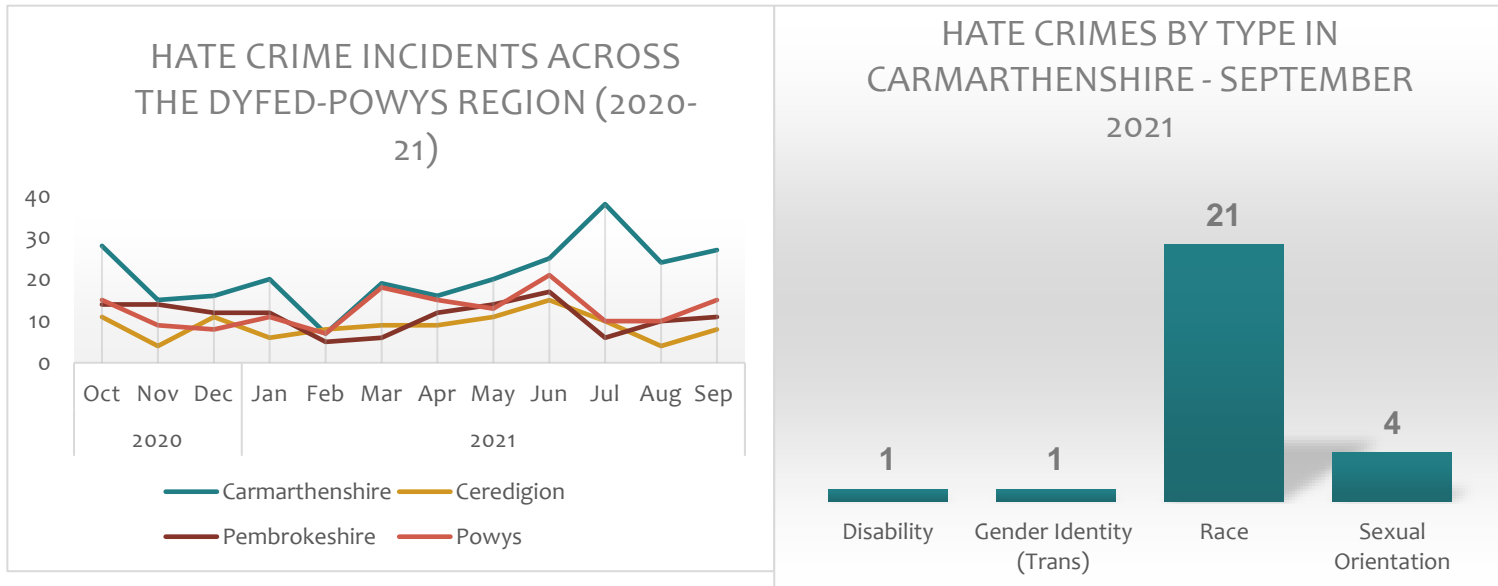


Figure 10: Hate Crime Figures; source Victim Support

Community Safety

The county remains one of the safest areas in the UK and Dyfed-Powys the safest Police Force area in England and Wales with the lowest crime rates. Of 22 local authority areas, Carmarthenshire ranks 9th safest with a rate of 65.18 crimes per 1,000 population.

There were 12,305 crimes reported in the county in 2020/21, a slight increase of 1% on the previous year. Increases were seen in relation to violence against the person – up from 5,147 to 5,770; drug offences – up from 680 to 896; and public order offences – from 852 to 1,211. It is noted that the increase in violence against the person is primarily due to a change in recording of harassment and stalking offences. The increase in drug offences will have been affected by the increased proactivity by the police during the lockdown period.

Of the 10% (190) most deprived Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in Wales, six are within Carmarthenshire in terms of Community Safety. This domain considers deprivation relating to living in a safe community and covers actual experience of crime and fire, as well as perceptions of safety whilst out and about in the local area. Not surprisingly these cover the three community areas of our biggest three towns of Llanelli, Carmarthen and Ammanford.

LSOA	Carmarthenshire Ranking	Wales Ranking	Community Area
Tyisha 2	1	17	6
Carmarthen Town South 1	2	19	1
Elli 2	3	30	6
Ammanford 2	4	43	3
Tyisha 3	5	86	6
Glanymor 4	6	97	6

Crime Volumes 2020-2021 by Community Area

Crime Volumes by Community Area 2020/2021	Community Area 1	Community Area 2	Community Area 3	Community Area 4	Community Area 5	Community Area 6
Arson & Criminal Damage	207	143	217	174	207	412
Burglary by Dwelling	39	39	48	63	57	143
Burglary by non-dwelling	21	12	15	20	14	40
Drug Offences	188	87	155	77	116	271
Miscellaneous Crimes against Society	58	41	54	34	47	77
Possession of a weapon	21	5	17	3	13	29
Public order offences	236	109	188	157	160	322
Robbery	1	1	1	3	3	14
Sexual offences	56	52	75	59	50	110
Theft	345	139	147	126	187	464
Vehicle offences	26	33	53	29	61	112
Violence against another person	805	601	829	836	1915	1616
Annual Total	2003	1262	1799	1581	2830	3610

According to the 2020/2021 crime figures received from Dyfed Powys Police, Community Area 6 has the highest level of recorded crime with violence against a person being the highest of all. The area includes the wards of Bigyn, Elli, Glanymor, Hengoed, Lliedi and Tyisha which are located in some of our most deprived areas within the county.

Domestic abuse

Police recorded crime figures note that there were 2,779 victims of domestic abuse between 1st November 2020 and 31st October 2021 in Carmarthenshire. While the reported crime figures remain similar to the previous year, there has been a significant increase in the numbers of referrals to specialist domestic abuse services since the pandemic. This includes a high focus on community-based support and support for children and young people. Numbers have steadily increased throughout the pandemic and show no sign of decline.

This is an area we would like to research further.

The pandemic has had a significant impact on the nature and severity of domestic abuse. Lockdown and restrictions resulted in isolation and cut individuals off from support networks,

opportunities for disclosure and access to face-to-face support. We cannot begin to estimate the true impact this has had on the lives of individuals, or the increased levels of abuse suffered. It is evident that throughout the pandemic and during periods following the easing of restrictions, referrals have spiked and continue to rise. It is not known if this a temporary increase in demand or will be a sustained increase in need.

There has been an increased complexity in support needs seen with mental health issues contributing to individuals needing longer and more intense periods of support. Housing has also been identified as a key issue in increasing complexity around support due to a lack of move on and second stage accommodation and a general lack of domestic abuse specific supported accommodation that meets diverse and individual needs of individuals.

The specialist support providers are managing to meet current demand through increased capacity funded by very short-term funding via a variety of sources and the good will of their committed teams. However, this is not sustainable. The impact on the workforce of the increased caseloads and in complexity also needs to be considered. There is a national issue around recruitment into the field with a lack of qualified candidates.

Feeling safe

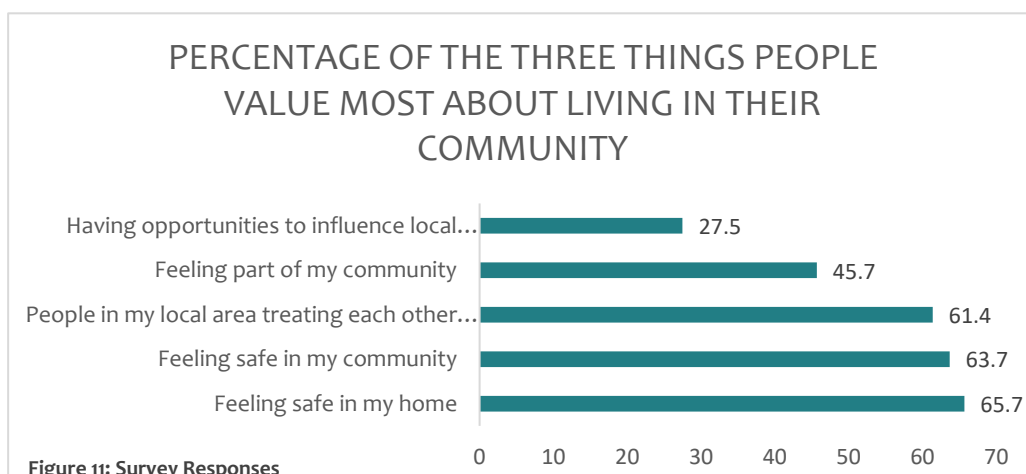
However, importantly, in terms of public perception of safety, the National Survey for Wales 2018/19 figures show that the number feeling safe was 76.1%, ranking 7th of the 22 Local Authorities. That figure was lower than the previous survey in 2016/17 of 76.9% when we ranked 6th. Responses from the Well-being survey indicated that people Feeling safe in their home and in their community were the highest things people valued about living in their communities.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSES

In response to their concerns in respect of community cohesion, respondents stated that they were mainly concerned with:

- Lack of investment in their communities (72%)
- Community resources being closed down (66%)
- The voice of local communities not being heard (54%)

Respondents from Community Area 5, those aged 45-54 and those who were expecting or had a baby in the last 6 months were mainly concerned with 'feeling unsafe and afraid of crime'.



A slight increase has been seen in the number of incidents of fire with 543 incidents during 2020/21 compared to 530 the previous year. The main incident category was ‘outdoor refuse’ related with 137 incidents, of which 90 were categorised as deliberate. These outdoor refuse related fires have continuously increased over the last 5 years and are now higher than the number of dwelling fires. The higher number of incidents take place between March and May.

The number of deliberate fires is on the increase in Carmarthenshire with 220 incidents in 2020/21 compared to 143 in 2016/17. The highest number of deliberate fires in Carmarthenshire in the latest figures was in Community Area 6 which consists of Glanymor and Tyisha wards. The areas of Carmarthen Town North, Cynnwyl Gaeo, Cilycwm and Llandoverly, in Community Areas 1 and 2, have no records of deliberate fires for this period, although the numbers in Community Area 2 are on the increase as shown in the table below:

Deliberate Fires by Community Areas	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21	Total per Community Area over 5 years
Community Area 1	10	18	14	15	10	67
Community Area 2	8	7	15	9	22	61
Community Area 3	24	23	28	29	46	150
Community Area 4	22	20	42	20	27	131
Community Area 5	34	51	47	65	41	238
Community Area 6	45	59	48	58	74	284
Total	143	178	194	196	220	

Table 2: Deliberate Fires

The number of road traffic collisions in Carmarthenshire have been consistently high at around 200 per year between 2016/17 and 2019/20 but a significant reduction was seen during 2020/21 when the figure was 117. This coincides with the number of people Killed or Seriously injured on Carmarthenshire roads which halved to 55 during 2020/21. COVID-19 lockdown during 2020 has had a dramatic effect on this data with far less traffic on the roads. However, despite the reduction, we still have the 3rd highest number of people killed or seriously injured on our roads which, at 3468km or 2155 miles, is the second largest network and the third most trafficked in Wales. As the number of vehicles return to pre-pandemic volumes, it is likely that an increase in the number of people killed or seriously injured will be seen.

Housing

Affordable housing

Good quality affordable homes promote health and well-being, helping to build sustainable communities and create places where people want to live.

There is a need for more affordable homes in the county. There has been a 27.1% increase in the average house price for a first-time buyer in Carmarthenshire between 2016 (£112,497) and 2021 (£142,919).

This is an area we would like to research further.

Data published by the ONS (August 2021 in terms of chargeable second homes in Carmarthenshire, indicates that there 1,087 properties in the county. The highest proportion (19% of properties) being in St. Ishmael, Llangyndeyrn and Llanddarog, followed closely with 18% in the areas of Laugharne, Llansteffan, Llanboidy and Whitland.

Homelessness

Homelessness, and the risk of homelessness, poses significant risk to a person's well-being, negatively impacting on emotional, mental and physical health as well as indicating poor social and economic circumstances. In the youth consultation, 'Make Your Mark' in 2020, representatives from the Carmarthenshire Youth Council, stated that homelessness was their second highest topic they were concerned about locally. For more information on this consultation, see the youth section.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

In our conversations with the Armed Forces community, Housing and Homelessness were key issues in terms of Social Well-being. Quality, affordable housing is a significant issue, especially in the context of Veterans who are ready to move on from supported housing.

In Carmarthenshire, 423 households were threatened with homelessness during 2019-20. The number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless was 23.9 per 10,000 which was the 4th lowest in Wales, a similar ranking to the previous two years. This compares poorly with other areas in Wales and the Welsh average of almost 50%.

The main reason for being homeless was *Loss of rented or tied accommodation*. Of these, only 46% were successfully prevented from becoming homeless. Preventing homelessness is made more difficult due to the increasing number of people with complex housing issues such as substance misuse and also people are leaving it late to contact the authority for help when they are facing housing difficulties.

Cultural activities

Enjoying our spare time by doing the things that make us happy is key to ensuring we have positive well-being. Research has shown that, in general, people in Wales who regularly attend or participate in cultural activities are more likely to report higher subjective well-being and potential mental health benefits are seen.

It is interesting to note that participation does vary according to a number of factors and those less likely to participate include those aged over 75, those on low incomes and people from Black or Asian backgrounds. However, Welsh speakers are more likely to participate in arts and sports events.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

Members of the Carmarthenshire Disability Partnership highlighted the importance of arts and culture during the pandemic. Being able to access digital opportunities supported mental health and well-being and members valued the ReConnecting project through the 50+ Leadership Group. It's also important to note that members were concerned about reintroducing face to face sessions, on grounds of safety but also in terms of venues being inaccessible and lack of transport.

Arts, museums and heritage

There are many opportunities to engage in cultural activities in our county. In 2019/20, overall, our residents were active in pursuing such activities across Wales. Some increased levels of activity were seen compared to the last Well-being Assessment figures shown in brackets. 68% (60%) of residents attended art events, 69% (64%) visited historical sites and 42% (42%) visited museums. We rank 10th compared to the rest of Wales for participating in arts events and 8th for museum attendance. Residents are particularly active in visiting historic places, ranking 4th in Wales. The average number of visitors to Council-owned museums and theatres alone are over 250,000 per annum up to 2019/20 prior to the pandemic.

It is noted, however, that when looking at more frequent participation in cultural activities, Carmarthenshire is ranked lower at 19th out of the 22 local authority areas. For the overall percentage of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times in the past year, our figure is 64% compared to the Welsh average of almost 71%.

In Wales, research on the experience of community groups during the pandemic suggests that place and interest-based groups can help alleviate loneliness and provide a sense of purpose.

Welsh language

We have the most Welsh speakers in our county compared to the rest of Wales. It is interesting to note that the ability to speak Welsh is associated with higher subjective well-being. According to the last Census in 2011, which is the only source that gives a whole population figure, 43.9% (78,000) of our residents can speak Welsh.

In 2019/20, over 30% said they spoke Welsh daily and speak more than just a few words. This was a slight increase on the previous figure and ranked us 4th in the data available from 11 local authority areas, three times higher than the average.

The number of Welsh speakers, in Wales, aged 3 and over is projected to increase from around 562,000 when the last Census took place to approximately 675,000 in 2049.

Welsh speakers report higher life satisfaction than non-Welsh speakers. The reason why is not clear, however, it may be that geography plays a role, as areas with higher proportions of Welsh speakers tend to have higher average well-being scores and somewhat lower well-being inequality than less Welsh-speaking areas. Rural areas tend to have higher numbers of Welsh speakers and higher average well-being.

When analysing our surveys responses, it is interesting to note that respondents who noted that their first language was English, also had various Welsh language skills. Of those, 21% could speak Welsh, 41% could understand Welsh, 18% could read Welsh and 13% could write Welsh.

Of these respondents, 53% would consider learning or improving their Welsh language skills and 24% would support their children through a Welsh medium education.

Mental Health

Mental Health

Mental ill health is something that one in four adults will experience in the course of their lifetime. Our mental health affects how we think, feel and act. Looking after our mental health is as important as our physical health, the link between the two factors of health is becoming increasingly better understood. Poor psychological and emotional well-being can act as a barrier to full participation in society. Issues such as confidence, anxiety, fatigue and stigma can limit an individual's capacity to interact with others or to find work for example.

The number of admissions to mental health facilities in Hywel Dda University Health Board is between 750-900 admissions annually. During 2019-20, the number of admissions to HDUHB health facilities dropped by 20.5% to 717, from the previous year. This drop in admissions is likely due to service changes as opposed to a decrease in demand.

Data from Public Health Wales is gathered from the National Survey for Wales and analysed according to the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale. "The Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scales were developed to enable the measuring of mental well-being in the general population and the evaluation of projects, programmes and policies which aim to improve mental well-being." Prof Sarah Stewart-Brown.

Well-being in Carmarthenshire has improved in line with the rest of the country. The Carmarthenshire score is representative of the average for Wales and the highest in the HDUHB region.

Area	2016-17	2018-19
Carmarthenshire	50.2	51.1
Wales	50.9	51.4

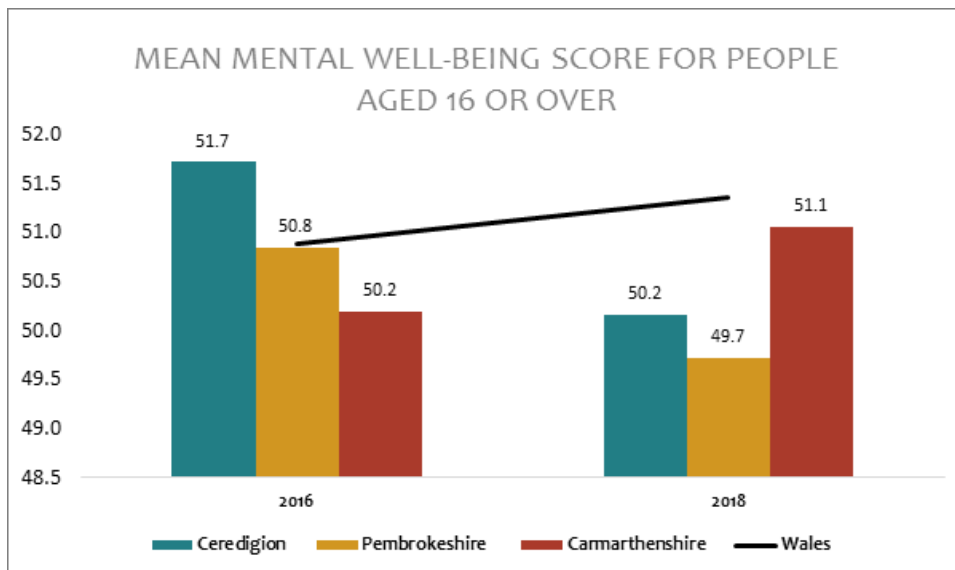


Figure 12: Mental Well-being

Source: National Survey for Wales (Data Unit Cymru)

While the proportion of adults worrying ‘a lot’ about their mental health and well-being increased across the board during the COVID-19 pandemic (from 13% in May 2020 to 31% in January 2021), those living in more deprived areas, women and younger people showed higher levels of worry.

As part of the preparation of the Well-being Assessment and the Population Needs Assessment, WWAMH have facilitated many discussions with voluntary organisations, people with lived experience of mental health and carers.

Carers/families are often excluded from the support planning and discussions but are often the main source of crisis and acute support. Some families/carers have felt the impact of many face-to-face mental health services being closed and having to cope on their own without any direct support. It has been difficult for carers and families to be separated from family members due to lack of visiting on mental health hospital wards over the last 18 months and some of the wards and individuals have struggled with access to video calls.

People with lived experience of mental health have struggled with limited face to face support options and accessing services via phone and video call. Some of the reasons given for struggling with video calls, telephone calls etc is for some people who are hearing voices, seeing things, having delusions. It can be very difficult to work out what is real and what is not. Some people struggle with paranoia and feel people are talking about them, some struggle with the technology and lack confidence to use it.

Another barrier is access to IT equipment and/or poor internet connection. Some people do not have the financial means for a telephone and internet connection and many places with free Wi-fi have been closed over the last 18 months. There are also concerns that these locations may not be a safe, confidential place. However, others have reported that the use of video meetings and calls has helped increase access to mental health and social activity support and they have learnt new skills. Some people have reported that for them due to their anxiety about leaving the home that video calls have helped with accessing things that would previously have been inaccessible.

Conversations also highlighted difficulty in accessing face to face GP appointments over the last 18 months for mental health support and difficulty of being able to discuss mental health needs over video or phone.

There has been an increase in the complexity and intensity of the support needs of people coming forward for mental health support, so often a range of issues such as mental health and drug and alcohol issues, homelessness and

Suicides

We have one of the highest suicide rates in Wales – the fourth highest number of suicides per county with 22 deaths in 2019. There is a general upward trend in male suicide rates, in the over 65's and in children in young people. It is believed that rates are increasing, however we are awaiting more current data. We know from recent data published by the Mental Health Foundation that there has been an increase in suicidal ideation during the pandemic.

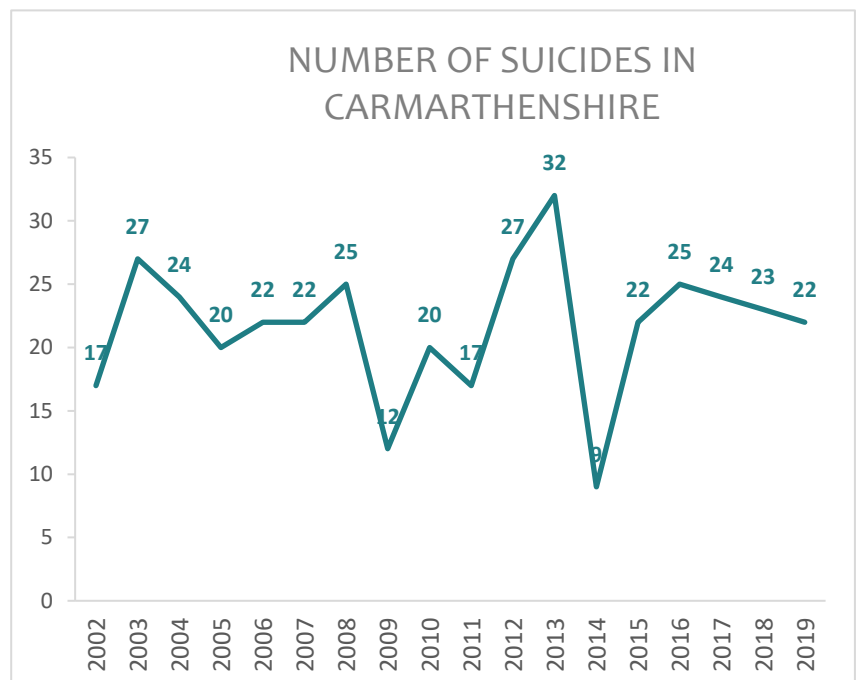


Figure 13: Suicide Rates

Further feedback from WWAMH, in terms of Crisis support and support out of hours (9am-5pm) is reported by some to be very difficult to access at times and others report poor response as a result of going to A and E due to suicidal thoughts and feelings and no aftercare support. Difficulties with Crisis and Home Treatment Teams at times and some people reporting not meeting criteria for any ongoing mental health support, assessed by CRHT but no follow up. Although some people report excellent support and care during the last 18 months with face-to-face support and follow up support and calls.

Suicide prevention is a priority for social care and safeguarding in Carmarthenshire.

Carers

The Census 2011 identified 23,989 unpaid adult carers living in Carmarthenshire – 13,390 were providing up to 20 hours of care per week, 3,485 were providing between 20-49 hours per week and 7,114 carers were providing care for more than 50 hours per week. Research suggests an increase in the number of unpaid carers in Wales from 1 in 6 people to 1 in 4 people.

The demands of caring can place significant pressures on carers impacting both their physical and mental health and well-being. 72% percent of carers in the UK report mental ill health as a result of caring, and 61% report suffering from physical ill health. Carers in the UK also report being twice as anxious as the general population, are seven times more likely to be always or often lonely compared to the general population; and report a level of happiness at one-third of that of the general UK population. The relationship between caring and well-being differs, depending on, among other things, the type, frequency and duration of care being provided.

Carers have been disproportionately affected by the pandemic with disruption to vital services and respite care. Lockdown restrictions have also meant that carers have been unable to rely on wider family members, friends and community support to help with caring responsibilities and to alleviate some of the pressures of providing significant amounts of care for their loved ones.

Since the pandemic, the local support service has witnessed more carers reaching out for support and presenting with high levels of anxiety and stress. This increase has placed significant demands on services, with figures from October to March 2020-21 compared to the same period the previous year, showing the Carers Information Service seeing a 114% increase in referrals to 537 and the Carers Outreach Service a 141% increase to 227.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

Our involvement conversations were structured on the four domains of Well-being - economic, social, cultural and environmental. In discussion with our Welsh Language Strategic Forum, members highlighted the importance of the relationship between the economy and the Welsh language.

To attract and retain our future generations, there needs to be a variety of employment opportunities and we must prepare our young people in terms of digital skills. Carmarthenshire has a good platform on which to build those opportunities and with developments such as Yr Egin, the future is promising in terms of building digital skills through apprenticeship and graduate opportunities.

Members noted that we are over-dependant on public sector employment and that further investment is needed in the private sector and in social enterprises to ensure a variety of career paths. The importance of digital connectivity across the county was also highlighted.

Survey Responses:

Respondents that stipulated they provided caring duties stated that their main concerns were:

- 'Talent drain' to other areas/countries 46% (61)
- Loss of green spaces 57% (75)
- Continued cuts to public services 77% (100)
- Not having access to healthcare or other support that I need, as close to home as possible or available through technology 62% (81)
- Lack of investment in our communities 73% (92)
- House prices being unaffordable for local people 76% (95)
- Families facing food poverty and concerned about affording food 69% (85)

Respondents of a working age 16-64 stated that their main concerns for the county were:

- Poor digital infrastructure
- Ability to adapt and be resilient to climate change
- People feeling threatened by those who may be different from them
- Not being able to stay living in my own home
- Lack of respect
- Lack of Welsh education schools/colleges
- Referrals of potential victims of modern slavery in Wales increasing

Environment

Carmarthenshire is celebrated for its natural environment, including magnificent coastal sand dunes, quiet estuaries, steep wooded valleys and rugged uplands. Natural heritage – including the countryside, a particular geographical situation, and the interaction between people and nature throughout history – is an important component of cultural well-being. Evidence suggests that participating in outdoor recreational activities is associated with better subjective well-being. The County has a rich network of ‘designated’ (protected) sites; protected at a national or international level, these include our Special Protection Areas and Ramsar sites, our National Nature Reserves, and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Natural Resources

Areas of focus for our county from the South West Area Statement are ensuring sustainable land management, reversing the decline of and enhancing biodiversity, reducing health inequalities and adapting to changing climate. Areas of focus from the Marine Area Statement are building resilience of marine ecosystems, nature-based solutions and adaptations at the coast and making the most of marine planning.

Natural Resources Wales (NRW) published the second State of Natural Resources Report (SoNaRR2020) last year, in this they assess to what extent Wales is achieving the Sustainable Management of Natural Resources (SMNR). SoNaRR2020 concludes that the four long-term aims of the SMNR – stocks of natural resources are safeguarded and enhanced, resilient eco-systems, healthy places for people and a regenerative economy – are not yet being met.

The natural environment is a huge part of what makes our county such a special place to live and work, it is our most precious inheritance but addressing the climate and nature emergencies presents us with one of the greatest challenges of our time.

Both the climate crisis and nature emergency are interwoven challenges which cannot be solved in isolation. Climate change places our habitats and wildlife at risk, but if helped to recover, healthy natural habitats can store carbon, reduce flood risk, help prevent coastal erosion, improve people’s health and well-being, as well as maintain healthy soils, clean water and the pollinators needed for our crops – and therefore sustain us.

The way we interact with our natural resources is vital to the social, economic and cultural well-being of people living in Carmarthenshire today and the generations to come. We need to manage our natural resources sustainably because natural resources that are healthy and thriving are also healthier for people, their communities and for the economy.

Sustainable Land Management

Agriculture is a main land use in Carmarthenshire. Sustainable land management is hugely important for farmers, the environment, the local economy, our culture and communities. Intensive agricultural practices can damage soil structure which may then contribute to water pollution. This also has a negative impact on the status of our rivers and coastal waters. It is important to reduce any negative impacts of agricultural emission on the well-being of our residents. A key concern identified in SoNaRR2020 is new ammonia sources associated with the rapid expansion of the intensive poultry developments.

It is important to consider the different impacts that farms can have on the landscape according to how they farm the land. A significant proportion of Carmarthenshire and Welsh farms are

family owned and non-intensive in nature. While work can still be done to support all farmers on decreasing their impact on the land and climate a focus should be on reducing intensive farming techniques.

Air Quality

Clean air is a critical natural resource and is essential in protecting not only our health, well-being and enabling greater physical activity, but also protecting Wales' environment. Air pollution affects both urban and rural areas. No levels of air pollution are 'safe'. Although air pollution has declined in recent decades, nitrogen-containing air pollutants continue to cause significant environmental harm.

Air quality monitoring in Wales is primarily undertaken by local authorities and, through several national networks, managed by the Welsh Government.

The effects of air pollution disproportionately affect those in deprived areas.

Local authorities are responsible to declare Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) if national air quality objectives are not likely to be met. In Carmarthenshire, we have three such areas – Llandeilo (declared in 2011) and Llanelli and Carmarthen (both declared in 2016.)

Encouraging the use of the cleanest modes of transport for freight and passengers, active travel and the creation of urban green space, are likely to be key in reducing emissions in the future.

Wildfires

Wildfires continue to be a problem, as noted in the section on Community Safety, and the areas most affected in our county by deliberate wildfires are: Brynaman, Y Garnant and Glanamman, Llanelli South and Bynea & Llwynhendy. Incidents of wildfires in our county have been more or less steady over the past five years. The environmental harm caused by arson is significant, including affecting water and air quality and damaging or destroying habitats, vulnerable plants, wildlife and grazing.

Flooding

Just over 15,000 properties in Carmarthenshire are currently at some level of flood risk from river or surface water flooding or coastal overflow. 3,151 properties are at high risk, 2,292 at medium risk and 9,713 properties are at low risk. Of these the vast majority are residential properties. Climate change will increase the number of properties, infrastructure and key services at risk of flooding. Places which do not currently flood will become at risk of flooding and those already known to be at risk will see the level of that risk become greater. Welsh Government have worked on an update to Technical Advice Note 15 (TAN15) which provides guidance for local planning authorities to reduce flood risk and develop away from high risk areas - this will have far reaching consequences on planning and comes into force in 2023.

Extreme weather events will become more common. Three key climate change impacts relative to flood risk are extreme rainfall events, river flood flows and sea level rise.

NRW Communities at Risk Register (CaRR) identifies the 5 Carmarthenshire communities most at risk. Llanelli is considered a 'Significant Flood Risk Area' as it falls within the top 33 communities at risk in the country. Other communities most at risk are Ammanford, Ferryside, Llwynhendy and Dafen.

Waterways

Our waterways provide us with important natural benefits, many of which contribute to the well-being of local communities and the wider population. These benefits include providing clean fresh water for people to drink, for industry and for agriculture and clean rivers and seas for recreation and enjoyment.

The waterways in Carmarthenshire are being impacted by several significant risks. The water quality is being affected by pollution from nitrates, phosphorus and sediments from agriculture and sewage. Between 2016-2020 there were 507 proven incidents of environmental pollution in Carmarthenshire. 86% were low impact events and 14% were high impact. Agriculture is the primary cause of environmental pollution, contributing to 135 of the totals; followed by oils and fuels, contributing to a further 67 events.

The demand for water must be balanced with the importance of protecting water resources for a healthy environment. Water is taken from rivers in Carmarthenshire for public water supply, agriculture, industry, power generation and amenity use. 90% of the water taken in Carmarthenshire is for public water supply.

Demand for water is increasing as the local population increases and tourism numbers increase. The impacts of COVID led to an even greater increase in tourist numbers but whether this increase will continue in future is unknown.

Waste

Living in a 'disposable' society where waste is continually generated increases pressure on the use of our natural resources. Once waste is generated it requires treatment at facilities that require land, consume energy and water and produce emissions to the environment. If waste is not handled and treated properly it can be harmful to ecosystems, biodiversity and the well-being of the population.

Wales is transitioning to a high recycling nation which is a necessary component of a circular and regenerative economy. However, more needs to be done to prevent waste from being generated if we are to achieve zero waste and one planet living.

Residents in our county have contributed to an excellent level of recycling, at 65% of waste. This figure can still be improved, and we now need to meet Welsh Government's 70% recycling target by 2025.

Fly tipping occurs at a significant level, with the total number of recorded instances in our county being the second highest in Wales, only after Cardiff. Fly tipping has seen a large rise in recent years, after previously reducing up until 2016, the figure has now quadrupled. This is the opposite of the trend seen in our neighbouring counties of Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire where they have seen a significant decrease in fly tipping instances.

Ecosystem Resilience

Ecosystem resilience is the capacity of ecosystems to deal with disturbances, either by resisting them, recovering from them, or adapting to them, whilst retaining their ability to deliver services and benefits now and in the future. Disturbances include (but are not limited to): habitat and species loss and deterioration; climate change; pollution and invasive non-native species.

Ecosystem Resilience is essential to the people and communities in Carmarthenshire, allowing us to benefit from clean air and water, provision of food, allowing us to be more adaptable to climate change and extreme events such as drought or flooding or simply through the value of landscapes.

Overall ecosystem resilience in Carmarthenshire is higher in the north east and south east of the county which reflects a greater diversity of semi-natural habitats in these areas. Resilience is lower in areas where the diversity, and connectivity of habitats is poorer.

There are 81 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in the county (excluding the area within the Brecon Beacons National Park), one of these also make up the three Special Protection Areas and eight Special Areas of Conservation, sites of international importance. The Brecon Beacons National Park also encompasses a further 15 SSSIs. Carmarthenshire has six Local Nature Reserves (LNRs).

Carmarthenshire is also home to 35 priority habitats and approximately 230 priority species representing 40% of priority species in Wales.

The condition of Carmarthenshire's terrestrial, freshwater and marine SACs and SSSIs was assessed in a recent 'baseline assessment' (2021). This showed that the condition of the features within designated sites was largely unfavourable or unknown. The majority of these protected sites are in unfavourable condition which means that they could be improved.

Significant pressures impacting on the resilience of ecosystems in Carmarthenshire include:

Climate change - there is clear evidence of climate change in Wales. It will impact life in Wales at every level.

Agriculture - intensification of farming and an increased use of chemicals has put pressures on the surrounding environment.

Development – of houses, roads, and industry is a big driver of biodiversity loss.

Pollution – sourced from air, land or water causes significant environmental harm.

Invasive non-native species – from plants or animals drives the loss of native species and changes the landscapes in our county.

It is clear that we need to gather more data on the condition of our designated features. Data on the condition of a broad habitat network is lacking. More detailed mapping will help us better understand our environment and improve upon previous areas of work such as in the connectivity and extent of habitats. A centralised approach and database will help improve this area of research.

Climate Change

If climate change continues along the path that we are currently experiencing, then we can expect significant changes in the next 30 years. Data presented in the Future Trends Report detail that by 2050 we are forecasted to see average summer temperatures rise by 1.34°C. This could cause an increase in rain by 5% throughout the year, concentrated more in winter as summers experience longer periods of drought. Sea levels are forecasted to rise by up to 24cm in some areas of the country. Carmarthenshire will see the impact of these changes in all areas of life. If the trend continues to worsen the Wales we know could be significantly different by 2080.

Addressing these issues now will ensure the future of our future generations in Carmarthenshire and Wales.

National Well-being Indicators

When considering the national well-being indicators in Carmarthenshire that relate to the environment there is a mixed picture. Levels of nitrogen oxide pollution in Carmarthenshire is considerably below the average level across Wales. The capacity of renewable energy equipment installed compares favourably to other LAs. The rivers in Carmarthenshire are some of the highest quality in Wales (as of 2015).

Areas that need significant improvement include the high number of businesses and homes at a high risk of flooding, as well as the high levels of domestic CO2 emissions per capita.

Please see below the National Well-being Indicators and associated local indicators relevant for the Adulthood life stage

Ref No	Indicator Definition	Year	Rank out of 22 Authorities	Score, Wales average and Change since last result	
				Carms	Welsh Avg
3	% of adults who have fewer than two healthy lifestyle behaviours	2018-19 & 2019/20	18th	12.4% Declined	10.0%
3a	% of adult smokers	2018-19 & 2019/20	6th	16.2% Improved	17.4%
3b	% of adult e-cigarette users	2018-19 & 2019/20	16 th	6.7% Improved	6.4%
3c	% of adults who are overweight or obese (BMI 25+)	2018-19 & 2019/20	16 th	63.6% Declined	59.9%
3d	% of adults who are obese (BMI 30+)	2018-19 & 2019/20	17 th	28.2% Declined	24.1%
3e	% of adults who eat the recommended guidelines of fruit and vegetables	2018-19 & 2019/20	13 th	21.7% Improved	24.3%
3f	% of adults who drink more than the recommended guidelines	2018-19 & 2019/20	20th	21.4% Declined	18.6%
3g	% of adults who reported exercise or physical activity for more than 150 minutes	2018-19 & 2019/20	10 th	56.6% Improved	53.2%
3h	% of adults who reported exercise or physical activity for less than 30 minutes	2018-19 & 2019/20	4th	27.6% Improved	33.0%
4	Levels of nitrogen oxide (NO2) pollution in the air	2019	6th	5.9 Improved	8.9
8a	% of adults with no qualifications	2020	10 th	6.6% Improved	7.3%
8b	% of adults who are qualified to below NQF level 2 and no higher	2020	8 th	11.1% Improved	11.8%
8c	% of adults who are qualified to at least NQF level 2 and above	2020	10 th	82.3% Improved	80.9%
8d	% of adults who are qualified to at least NQF level 3 and above	2020	10 th	62.7% Improved	62.3%
			10 th	40.7%	

8e	% of adults who are qualified to at least NQF level 4 and above	2020		Declined	41.4%
9	Gross Value Added (GVA per hour worked (relative to UK average)	2019	9 th Available for 12 "areas"	75.9%	84.1%
10	Gross Disposable Household Income per head (£)	2018	12 th	£16,813 Improved	£17,100
12	Capacity (in MW) of renewable energy equipment installed	2019	3 rd	316 MW Improved	4059 MW
14	Ecological footprint - Global hectares per person	2011	13 th	3.36 No previous data	3.28%
15	Amount (kg) of waste generate that is not recycled, per person	2019-20	8 th	155 Kg Improved	173 Kg
17a	Median Gross Weekly Full-time Earnings (£)	2020	3 rd	£572.10 Improved	£541.70
17b	Pay gender difference Difference (£p) between Male and Female median Gross Hourly Pay	2020	11 th	£1.56 Declined	£0.62
18a	% households living in poverty Household income is less than 60% of the GM median income	2020	13 th	33.8% Declined	32.9%
19	% living in households in material deprivation	2019-20	8 th	11.3% Improved	12.9%
20	% people moderately or very satisfied with their jobs.	2019-20	17 th	78.9% Declined	82.1%
21	% of people aged 16-64 in Employment	2020-21	20 th	68.6% Declined	72.2%
23	% who feel able to influence decisions affecting their local area.	2018-19	10 th	18.8% Declined	18.7%
24	% of people satisfied with their ability to get to/ access the facilities and services they need	2020-21	4 th	91.0% Improved	86.6%
25	% of people feeling safe (at home, walking in the local area, and travelling)	2018-19	7 th	76.1% Declined	71.0%
26	% of people satisfied with local area as a place to live	2020-21	10 th	88.6% Improved	87.4%
27	% of people who agree that there is good community cohesion in their local area	2020-21	13 th	68.6% Improved	69.4%
27a	% who feel they belong to their local area	2018-19	16 th	70.4% Constant	72.4%
27b	% who feel people in the local area from different backgrounds get on well	2016-17	16 th	67.7% Declined	72.0%
27c	% who feel people in the local area treat each other with respect	2018-19	8 th	79.0% Improved	75.6%
28	% of people who Volunteer	2019-20	11 th	27.2% Declined	26.1%
29	Mental Well-being of adults (Average Score out of a maximum 70)	2018-19	12 th	51.1 score out of 70 Improved	51.4
31	% of dwellings (those that are assessed by LA) which are free from hazards	2018-19	1 st	90.5% Improved	60.9%

32a	Number of properties (homes & businesses) with a high or medium risk of flooding from rivers	2019	18th	1,481 properties	20,518 properties
				New measure	
32b	Number of properties (homes & businesses) with a high or medium risk of tidal flooding	2019	19th	868 properties	9,792 properties
				New measure	
32c	Number of properties (homes & businesses) with a high or medium risk of Surface Water flooding	2019	17 th	3,094 properties	53,938 properties
				New measure	
34	Number of households successfully prevented from becoming homeless per 10,000 households.	2019-20	19th	23.9%	49.3%
				Declined	
35	% of people attending or participating in arts, culture or heritage activities at least 3 times in the last year	2019-20	19th	70.8%	82.1%
				Declined	
35a	% Who have attended any arts events in Wales (in last 12 months)	2019-20	10 th	68.3%	70.4%
				Improved	
35b	% Who have visited a museum in Wales (in last 12 months)	2019-20	8 ^h	42.1%	42.5%
				Improved	
35c	% Who have visited any historic places in Wales (in last 12 months)	2019-20	4th	68.7%	62.5%
				Improved	
36	% adults who speak Welsh daily and can speak more than just a few words	2019-20	4th	30.4%	10.4%
				Improved	
37a	Number of people who can speak Welsh. (Based on the Census)	2011	1st	78,048	562,016
				Declined	
37b	% of people who can speak Welsh. (Based on the National Survey for Wales)	2019-20	4th	37.4%	16.0%
				Declined	
38	% of people participating in sporting activities three or more times a week	2019-20	6th	35.1%	32.2%
				Constant	
41a	CO2 emissions per capita	2019	13 th	5.7	7.6
				Improved	
41b	Industry CO2 emissions per capita	2019	15 th	1.6	3.5
				Constant	
41c	Domestic CO2 emissions per capita	2019	20th	1.8	1.5
				Improved	
41d	CO2 emissions of transport per capita	2019	16 th	2.2	2.0

AGEING WELL



The Welsh Government strategy published in October 2021 gives a clear vision of an Age Friendly Wales that upholds older people’s rights and promotes intergenerational society. Our aim is to support and promote age friendly communities where people can age well and that we celebrate the positive contributions of older people to society, as, for instance, volunteers, employees and unpaid carers.

Population projections

Welsh Government indicate via their population projections on Stats Wales that the population will continue to grow. Figures show that from 2018 to 2043 there will be over 5% increase in the total population for Carmarthenshire, slightly lower than the Welsh average. Whilst predictions for the under 15 and under 64 age group indicate a decline in population, there is an indication of an increase of over 32% for the people aged over 65 for the same period.

The effects of an ageing population are being felt across Wales, from 2018 to 2028 it is projected that there will be less children in Carmarthenshire and significantly more of the population will be over 65. The healthy life expectancy of the population in Wales has remained relatively stable over the Civic Participation and Employment last decade (Future Trends Report). Considering the healthy life expectancy aids us in projecting the level of healthcare services that will be required in the future.

	Base Year	Projection years			2018-2028		2018-2038		2018-2043	
	2018	2028	2038	2043	number	%	number	%	number	%
Children (0-15)	33,220	32,281	31,401	31,980	-939	-2.8%	-1,819	-5.5%	-1,240	-3.7%
Working age (16-64)	110,337	109,067	106,159	106,991	-1,270	-1.2%	4,178	-3.8%	3,346	-3.0%
65+ age group	44,011	50,769	57,846	58,248	+6,758	+15.4%	+13,835	+31.4%	14,237	+32.3%
Total	187,568	192,117	195,406	197,219	+4,549	+2.4%	7,838	+4.2%	9,651	+5.1%

Table 3: Projected Population Changes

Everyone in our community has the right to age well. The World Health Organisation has created a framework to assist in ensuring the creation of age friendly communities. Within this there are eight domains to focus the assessment and planning of the creation of an age friendly community. The following sections cover these domains and lay out the situation as it currently stands in Carmarthenshire.

Outdoor Spaces and Buildings

52% concerned if they were not able to spend time outdoors or in nature and green spaces

Access to an outside environment and accessible public buildings have an impact on the quality of life of many older people. As people age it is important that there are outdoor spaces where older people can access to walk, with consideration given to potential mobility issues, availability of seating and access to public toilets.

62% valued access to nature and green spaces

Access to outdoor spaces and nature has been proven to boost the well-being of all people, this is also true for the elderly. Studies have shown that regular time spent outdoors can particularly benefit people suffering from dementia, helping to lower stress levels and blood pressure.

For residents aged 65 and over completing our 2021 Well-being survey **52%** said that ‘*Not being able to spend time outdoors or in nature and green spaces*’ to stay physically and/or mentally well concerned them and **62%** said that ‘*Access to nature and green spaces*’ was the thing they most valued in their local environment.

Participation in activity can help older people to sustain their health and well-being, living as well and as independently as possible within supported networks, focused around their own homes and localities. 51.3% of older adults in Carmarthenshire report they are in good health, below the all-Wales average of 56.1%. Carmarthenshire is the 5th lowest in Wales. Only 34.1% of older adults in Carmarthenshire are a healthy weight.

Health Care services working alone can have as little as 10% influence on population health. Leisure services in Carmarthenshire are prioritising older people in their strategic planning.

Transport

Transport Links

Private transport fulfils an often-essential function, particularly in rural areas. It is notable that of 23,274 Carmarthenshire residents who do not have access to a car or van, 50% are aged 50 or over (2011 Census). Furthermore only 55% of those aged 80 or over have access to a car or van therefore public transport and community-based services are important support mechanisms to enable people to continue to live within their communities. Such services can mean the difference between a person staying independent at home or entering residential care.

Availability of public transport was already a challenge for older people before the pandemic and that has been exasperated by loss of more services and fear of catching COVID-19 on buses and trains. One Carmarthenshire resident told Age Cymru:

“Trying to visit my 85 year old father who lives in Kent. I do not drive so would have to travel by coach to go and see him. I panic just at the thought of the idea. (Female, 55-59)”

The lack of transport was the highest concern (56%) for over 65's when asked about prosperity in the County as part of the Well-being Survey. Followed by lack of affordable housing (55%) and lack of suitable job opportunities (47%).

Well-being survey question 19 - Looking ahead, what concerns you the most about prosperity in the county? (190 respondents aged 65+)

- Lack of transport 56% (107)
- Lack of affordable housing 55% (105)
- Lack of suitable job opportunities 47% (89)

Housing

Housing stock suitability

As we age, we require our housing to be warm, accessible and free of trip hazards. In Wales, 28% say that they will need help adapting their home as they get older. In the UK, more than 80% of homeowners aged 65 and over state that they want to stay living in their own home. Housing is an area that we would like to research further.

Social Participation

Communities

The following Community Based Project was suggested as part of our Well-being Survey

Trigolion yr ardal yn rhannu sgiliau, a chyd-ddysgu sgiliau garddio, coginio ac ailgylchu.
People in the Community sharing their skills and learning new skills together such as gardening, cooking and recycling

Loneliness

Loneliness and social isolation have the same effects on mortality as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. 17% of Carmarthenshire residents report being lonely and just 50.6% report feeling a sense of community. Social networks and friendships not only have an impact on reducing the risk of early death and illness but can also help individuals to recover when they do fall ill.

It is doubly important for us to consider the impact isolation and loneliness has had over the course of the COVID-19 pandemic. While many of us have seen a return to some sense of normalcy it is important to remember that some of the most vulnerable in our society will still feel the need to shield.

A quote taken from an Age Cymru report on the Experiences of people aged 50 or over in Wales during the winter Covid-19 lockdown, and the road to recovery says:

Mixing with other people. [...] I have been on my own for over a year and not gone into a shop or other home. Going inside I find very difficult. Being in a crowd - too many people around me - I avoid. (Shielding female, 55-59)

Respect and Social Inclusion

Volunteering

Promoting full economic and societal participation for older people is essential to the Welsh economy, as over 65-year-olds contribute over £1billion annually. Currently, 33.7% of Carmarthenshire adults' volunteer.

During the pandemic some of the opportunities for volunteering became more challenging, leaving some older people without a valuable and social part of their lives.

Across Wales 30% of people aged 65-74 volunteer, more than those in the 24-44 age cohort, of which 24% volunteer. It is clear that older people are active and valued members of their communities. Those who responded to our regional survey contributed thousands of hours of voluntary work to their communities.

Older people who volunteer are less likely to experience loneliness and communities where there is good volunteer activity show good community cohesion.

Civic Participation and Employment

Working

Over the last 5 years we have seen a trend of over 50s working across Wales, this is not true of our over 50s community in Carmarthenshire. We are unsure of the reasons behind this; however, we can look into this further as part of Ageing Well Network.

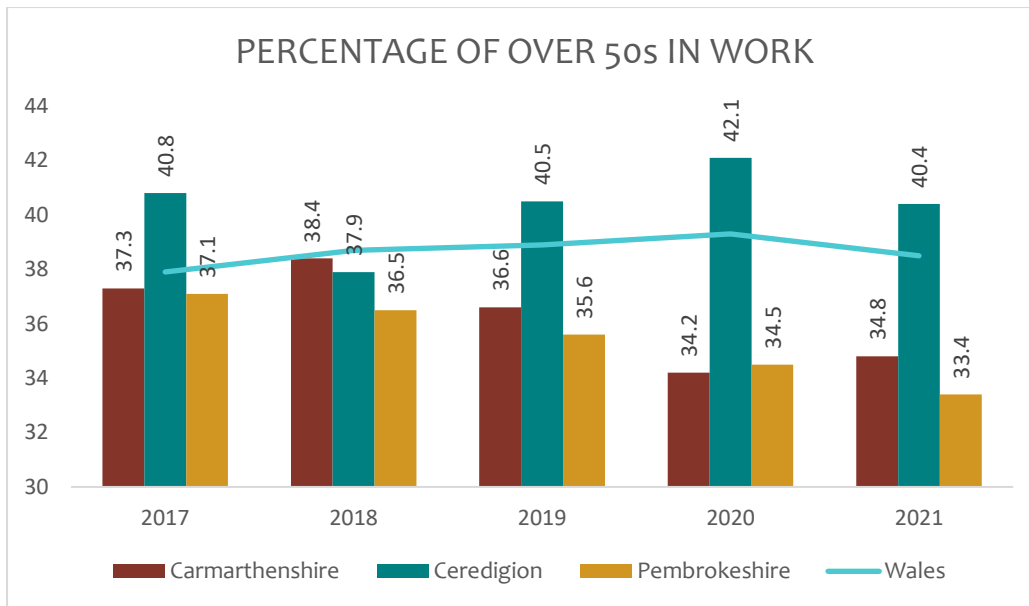


Figure 14: Over 50s in work

Our older generations provide us with a wealth of knowledge, expertise and experience. Harnessing the skills gained through both working and life experiences are significant attributes that older people can share with society. Sharing this knowledge and experience provides opportunities for intergenerational connectivity therefore building community cohesion as well as improving the emotional and social well-being of older people who may otherwise feel outcast and undervalued by society.

ENGAGEMENT RESPONSE

In our Well-being Survey, almost half (47%) of the 65+ respondents said that they would like to use their skills/knowledge/experience to help others in their community.

Those who responded also noted their concerns about

- How to reduce waste and improve recycling
- A lack of affordable public transport on which everyone feels safe to travel
- Not being able to stay living in their own home
- The voice of local communities not being heard
- Not being able to use the Language of their choice
- Our key natural resources are being depleted faster that they can be replenished

PERCENTAGE OF WHAT RESPONDENTS 65+ VALUED MOST IN THE COMMUNITY THEY LIVED

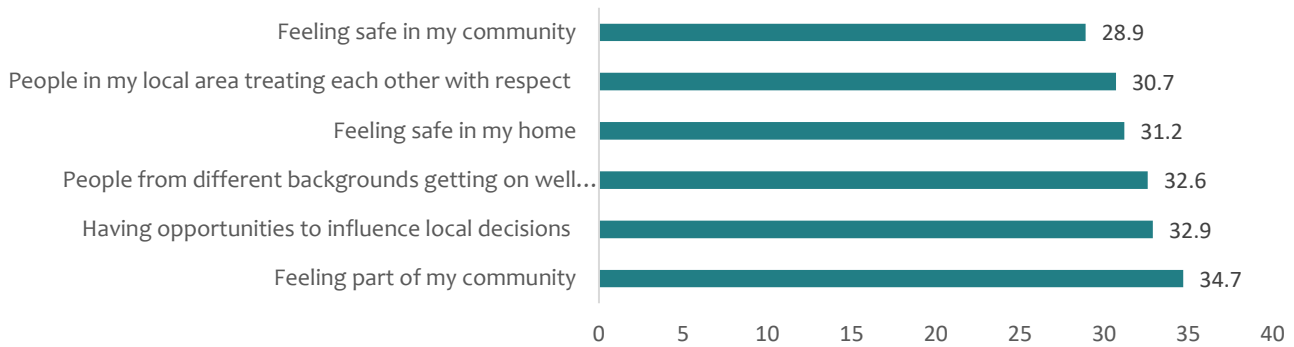


Figure 15: Survey Responses

Communication and Information

We are living in an increasingly digital age with a growing number of services transferring to digital platforms. The growth in digital communications has been a positive fall back for many families who otherwise would have had little to no contact with each other during the pandemic. This change has the potential to leave older people more secluded.

The WHO Age-friendly Cities Guide states that: "No matter how developed the city; word of mouth is the principal and preferred means of communication for older people". Many older people value personal communication which can be overlooked in the digital age. Oral communication is particularly important for those with visual impairments or low levels of literacy.

Feedback from Age Cymru Dyfed notes that many older people were not confident in using IT and had to quickly learn how to use technology to speak to family, friends, pay for shopping, attend social groups etc. Age Cymru Dyfed delivered a Think Digital project until end of May 2021, which helped over 350+ people get online. The move to digital during the pandemic was a step too far for some people leaving them cut off from services and interaction.

Community Support and Health Services

Health

As we age our health declines, the ageing population in Wales, and Carmarthenshire, is forecasted to put pressure on our health and social care services. The situation may become that people live longer, but in more ill health than previous generations. It is important that we support our communities to stay as healthy as possible for as long as possible.

These are the two main areas of concern our Well-being Survey respondents aged 65+ when asked -“Thinking ahead over the next ten years, what concerns you the most about being able to stay physically and/or mentally well?”

Not having access to healthcare or other support that I need, as close to home as possible or available through technology

65%



Not being able to stay living in my home

64%

Adult Social Care

A recent report to the Social Care and Health Scrutiny committee, notes that since Spring 2021, we have seen a significant increase in the volume and complexity of new referrals to adult social care both from within the community and from those admitted to hospitals. This appears to be delayed demand following the pandemic as a result of people not being monitored and receiving treatment for ongoing chronic health conditions, not having access to the usual forms of respite, and making active choices to not access services until critical due to understandable fears of contracting Covid. As a consequence of the above, we have seen a very high increase in the number of people requiring assessment and consequently a significant increase in demand, particularly for domiciliary care.

A report by the Statutory Director of Social Services on the Impact of National Social Care Pressures in Carmarthenshire and an additional report on Domiciliary Care, Social Work Workforce and Market Pressures (October 2021) highlights the current pressures and challenges:

- That significant pressures are now more profound and wide ranging than at any time during the management of this COVID-19 pandemic.
- There are growing workforce challenges in the domiciliary care sector leading to increased waiting lists and decreased customer satisfaction.
- This situation is starting to limit our ability to support some of our most vulnerable people in the community.
- Social care and health are under significant pressure and the demand continues to grow exponentially in comparison to capacity.
- Moreover, the added complexity of those presenting to social care services is unique and unprecedented.
- The growing number of Social Worker vacancies, combined with increase in demand for services has seen our allocation waiting list for assessments grow to unacceptable levels. This position is worsening and poses a significant risk to the authority’s ability to meet its statutory responsibilities.

Dementia

It is projected that there will be a significant increase in people diagnosed with dementia over the next 15 years.

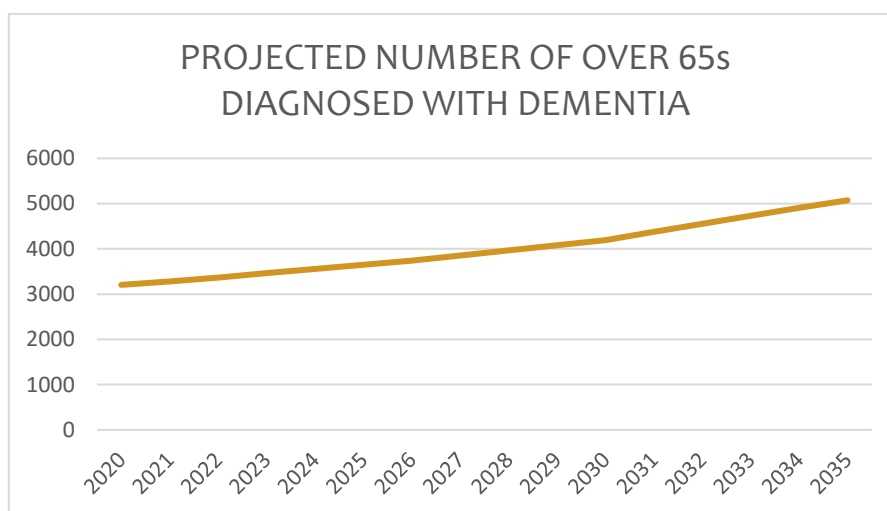


Figure 16: Projected number of dementia diagnoses in Carmarthenshire

Mental Health

Research by Age Cymru Dyfed highlighted: “Mental health issues have increased. People have become anxious, frustrated, and depressed and some cases angry. There has been no face-to-face grievance counselling which has left many depressed and some feeling suicidal. Many people have suffered anxiety about leaving the house. People who have had loved ones in care homes have been unable to visit causing an effect on their mental health.”

Mobility

Falls

Falls are the second leading cause of accidental injury or death world-wide and the largest preventable cause of hospital admissions in Wales and across the UK. Falls cost the NHS £2.3 billion per annum. Falls reduction services have been proven to reduce the risk of falling by between 15% and 30%. It is essential that we enhance the availability of services that promote and support ongoing well-being and independence for our frail older adult population. A network of activity programmes can delay dependencies for those with long term needs and provide ongoing specialist help. By developing and investing in high quality, accessible and sustainable facilities we can grow our physical activity provision for high-risk older adults.

Life Expectancy

Life expectancy in Carmarthenshire is in line with the average in Wales, (Males - Carmarthenshire 78.3 years: Wales 78.5 years and Females 82.4 years: Wales 82.3 years 2017-19), the inequality gap in healthy life expectancy is one of the lowest in Wales for both males and females.

According to Public Health Wales, there has been no substantial change in the gap between male and female life expectancy and healthy life expectancy during the period 2009-11 to 2015-17. The life expectancy deprivation gap widened for both males and females from a difference of just over 5 years for females in 2002-04 to just over 6 years in 2015-17. The pattern is similar for males with the difference in life expectancy between the most and least deprived fifth being just over 6.5 years in 2002-04 to approximately 7.5 years in 2015-17.

Deaths and Causes

Some of the largest causes of deaths are heart disease, cancer and dementia. Carmarthenshire currently has a lower rate of deaths due to heart disease and cancer than the Welsh average. The total number of deaths in Carmarthenshire has seen an incremental increase, with a distinct peak in 2020. A total of 185 deaths due to COVID-19 were recorded in the over 50s in Carmarthenshire in 2020, the age distribution of these deaths follows an expected trend of an increase up to the age of 90, and then slightly less. The total number of deaths due to COVID-19 in this age range was still less than the traditional causes of death of heart disease, cancer and dementia.

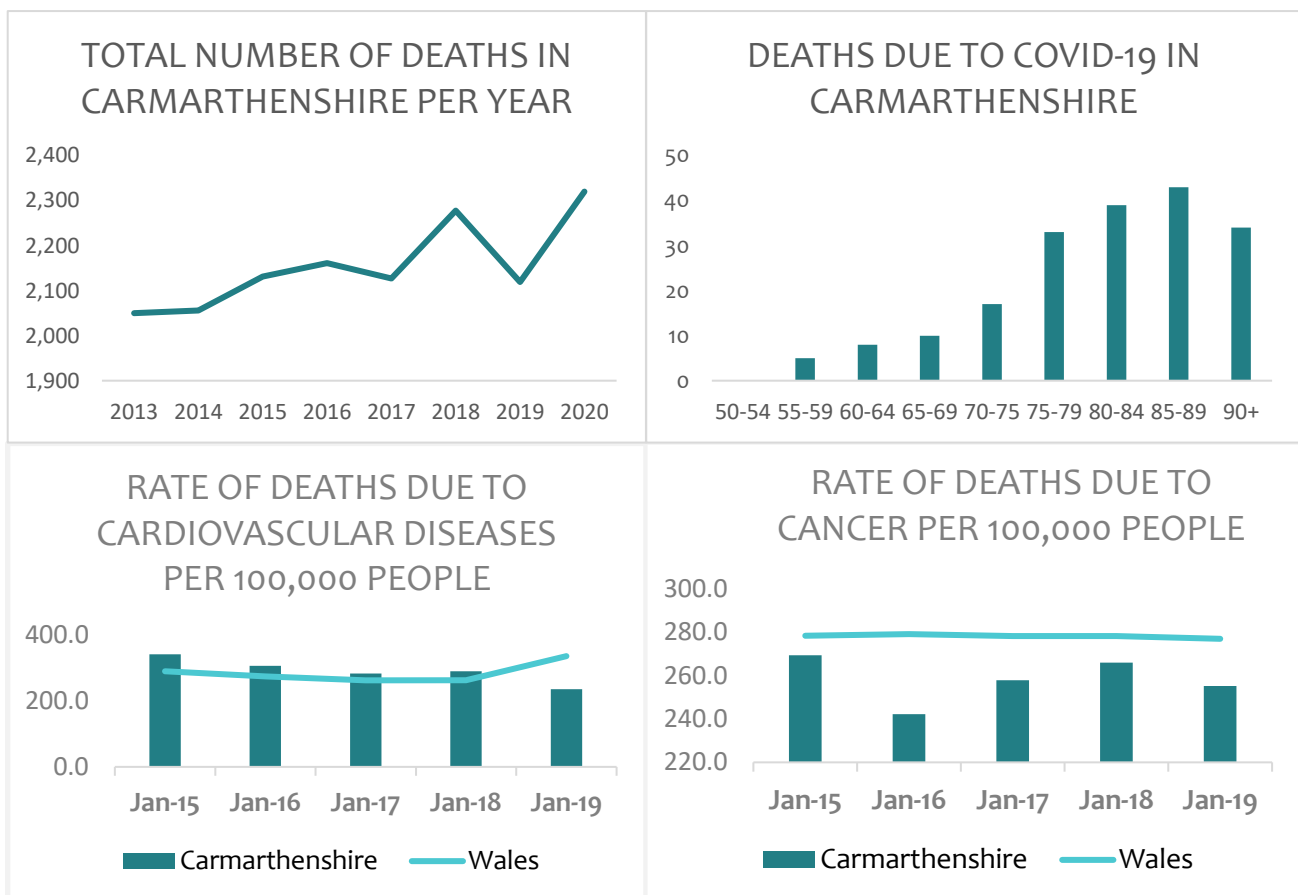


Figure 17: Series of charts detailing causes of deaths in Carmarthenshire

National Well-being Indicators

Noted below are the National Well-being Indicators and associated local indicators relevant for the Ageing Well life stage

Ref No	Indicator Definition	Year	Rank out of 22 Authorities	Score, Welsh average and Change since last result	
				Carms	Welsh Avg
2e	Male healthy life expectancy at birth	2010-14	15 th	65 years	65.3 years
				Improved	
2f	Male inequality gap in healthy life expectancy Sloped Index of Inequality (SII) in years	2010-14	5 th	10.6 years	18.7 years
				Improved	
2g	Female healthy life expectancy at birth	2010-14	15 th	66 years	66.7 years
				Improved	
2h	Female inequality gap in healthy life expectancy SII in years	2010-14	7 th	12.5 years	18.2 years
				Improved	
30	% of people who are lonely	2019-20	19 th	17.3%	15.4%
				Declined	

NEXT STEPS



As part of our work, we have identified key areas that we need to research further. These areas may be in terms of statistics, local information or in terms of involvement. These are noted within the assessment and are noted here for ease of reference:

- Fuel poverty
- Adult obesity
- Domestic abuse
- Housing and homelessness

We will also undertake further work to better understand well-being at a more localised level based on the 6 community areas identified within the assessment. In addition, there will be a technical background document, which will provide the detail from our consultation and involvement and the data sources used as part of the preparatory work.

We recognise that there are voices which aren't currently being heard as part of the assessment. These voices include:

- Those who are expecting or have given birth in the last six months
- Our Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Communities
- Our young people
- Our Gypsy and Traveller Community

Increased efforts will be made to engage with these groups on the draft Assessment. Following discussion at the PSB, we will consult with our residents and stakeholders to ask for their opinions on the themes and priorities that we have identified. We will ensure that the networks and forums who were involved in the first exercise receive this information.

- The consultation will run from 1 December 2021 until 19 January 2022.
- Consultation will be held in accordance with Section 38 of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- The PSB support team will work closely with colleagues and in light of new information and feedback to prepare a final version of the Assessment.
- The final version of the Assessment is scheduled for discussion at the Carmarthenshire PSB on 8 March 2022.
- The final Carmarthenshire Well-being Assessment will be published on the PSB website on 28 March 2022.

The PSB Support Team will also be working with partners to identify and develop case studies to be added to the Assessment. Our aim is to demonstrate how the Sustainable Development Principle and the Five Ways of Working guide our local work and interventions.

The Carmarthenshire Well-being Plan

The Well-being Assessment will be the foundation and evidence on which to prepare our Well-being Plan for the county.

The Carmarthenshire PSB has a statutory responsibility to improve the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of our county by contributing to the achievement of the seven national Well-being Goals. This includes our work on setting local objectives to maximise our contribution to meeting those goals and demonstrating how we use the Sustainable Development Principle and Five Ways of Working in everything we do.

Our Plan will set out the short, medium and long-term actions to be achieved by the PSB over the next five years up to 2028.

Regional working

We will work with our colleagues in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire to continue with the assessment of well-being in our area. The “Gorwel” platform, developed by the region will support this work, in providing well-being data and involvement information.

There is an on-going commitment by the PSB to embrace the principles of continuous engagement, and this is reflected regionally in Ceredigion and Pembrokeshire.