

Introduction

We are pleased to present the fourth annual local authority performance bulletin. Again, we have provided information on a range of service areas, highlighting areas where there has been notable change in the overall level or range of performance across Wales. Where possible we have tried to simplify the performance indicator descriptions for use within this bulletin. We have also rounded the data in order to make comparison easier.

Of those performance indicators which are comparable with 2007-08, 64% show an improvement. Some of the key facts for 2008-09 are highlighted below.

Areas where performance indicators showed a positive change ↑:

- ↑ Across Wales, the amount of waste sent to landfill fell from 64% in 2007-08 to 60% in 2008-09;
- ↑ The percentage of children achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 in the core National Curriculum subjects increased, reaching 76% in 2008-09, having remained at 74% for the previous three years;
- ↑ Urgent housing repairs were completed in an average of 6.2 days in 2008-09, compared to 6.6 days in 2007-08;
- ↑ It took an average of 375 days to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant in 2008-09, compared to 453 days in 2007-08;
- ↑ 95% of children's referrals saw a decision on how to proceed taken within 1 working day, compared to 93% in 2007-08;
- ↑ The percentage of children in care experiencing 3 or more placements during the year fell from 10.3% to 9.7% in 2008-09. 13.5% of children in care experienced one or more changes of school compared to 14.4% in the previous year;
- ↑ 91.4% of reviews of children in care were carried out as required compared to 89.8% in 2007-08, with 84% of statutory visits taking place compared to 74% in the previous year;
- ↑ 68% of adult care plans were reviewed during the year compared to 63% in 2007-08;
- ↑ The rate of people waiting in hospital for social care fell to 6.2 per thousand population aged 75 or over compared to 7.0 per thousand population in 2007-08.

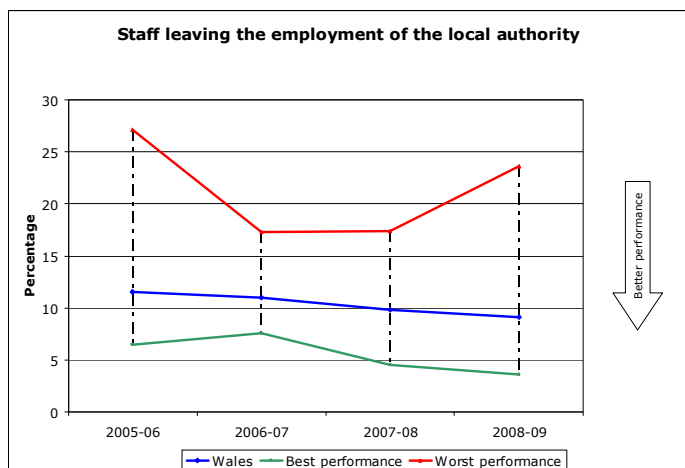
Areas where performance indicators showed a negative change ↓:

- ↓ The condition of our roads deteriorated, with the percentage of roads in poor condition rising slightly in 2008-09. 4.4% of principal (A) roads and 8.3% of non-classified roads were considered to be in "poor condition". This compared to 4.3% and 7.4% respectively in 2007-08;
- ↓ The number of days taken to complete emergency housing repairs rose slightly from 0.5 days to 0.6 days in 2008-09;
- ↓ The time taken to complete an adult care plan increased from 31 days in 2007-08 to 34 days in 2008-09.

Local Authority Performance 2008-09

Your council...

Local authorities are often among the largest employers within a locality, and are responsible for delivering many of the services which citizens rely on. Local authorities in Wales employed around 147 thousand people in 2008-09.

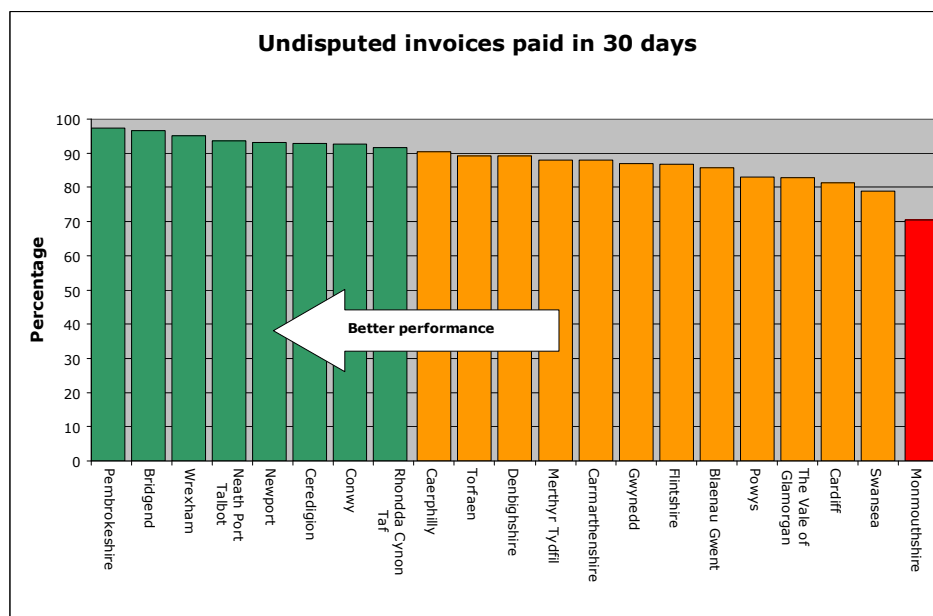


During this time, just over 9% of these employees left their employment. Despite this continued reduction in the Wales figure, 2008-09 saw the gap between the best and worst performers widen, ranging from 3.6% in Neath Port Talbot to 23.6% in Merthyr Tydfil.

In 2008-09 local authorities reported that 11.5 days were lost to sickness per employee compared to 11.6 days in 2007-08, although for both years a number of authorities were unable to provide data. The time recovered due to the reported reduction in the number of days lost to sickness would equate to almost 4 additional staff per authority in 2008-09.

Local authorities paid in excess of 3.3 million undisputed invoices in 2008-09. 88% of these were paid within 30 days compared to 87% the previous year.

This ranged from 97% in Pembrokeshire and Bridgend to 71% in Monmouthshire. (The Isle of Anglesey did not supply data for this indicator).



Authorities in Wales collected 96.4% of the council tax due in 2008-09 compared to 96.6% in 2007-08. 97% of non-domestic rates was collected in 2008-09 compared to 98% in 2007-08.

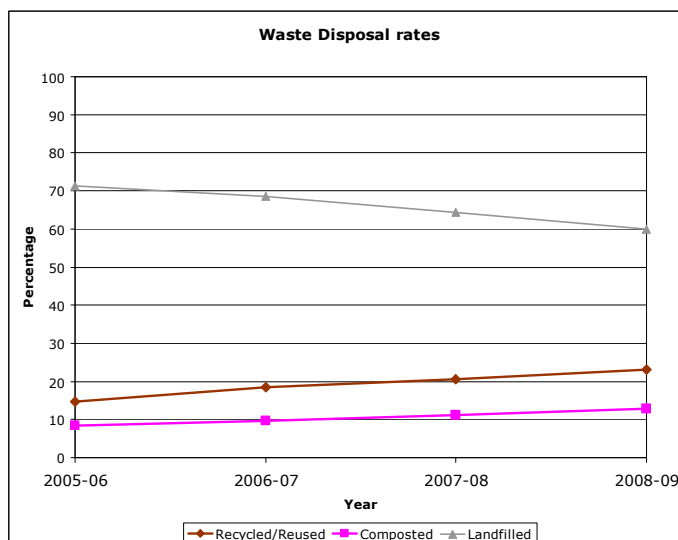
The environment...

Local authorities continue to face the challenge of dealing with municipal waste whilst caring for the environment. In 2008-09 local authorities collected more than 1.7 million tonnes of municipal waste. This continues a downward trend in the amount of waste collected from 1.9 million tonnes in 2005-06.

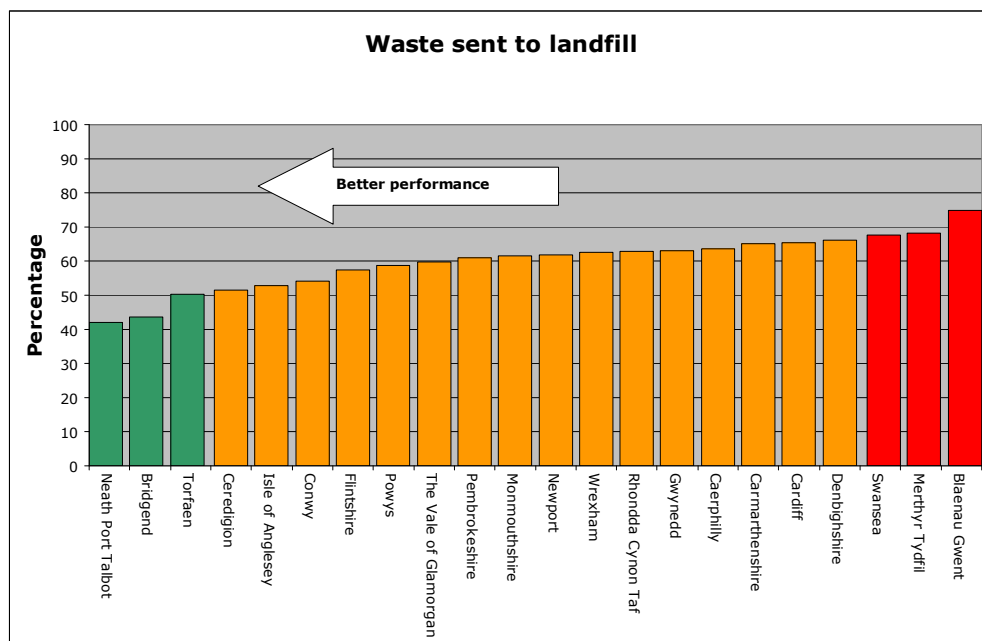
In 2008-09 local authorities recycled or re-used 23.1% of municipal waste. This represents a further improvement on the 20.6% reported the previous year.

Ceredigion continues to recycle or re-use the greatest proportion of its waste, increasing its rate to 40% from the 39% reported in 2007-08, whilst Monmouthshire now recycles or re-uses the smallest proportion at 17%.

The proportion of waste recycled or re-used increased in 21 of the 22 local authorities. Wrexham reported a reduction (from 23.6% in 2007-08 to 21.8% in 2008-09).



A further 12.8% of waste was composted in 2008-09 compared to 11.2% in 2007-08. This ranged from 21.8% in Monmouthshire to 5.6% in Blaenau Gwent. The amount used to recover heat and power improved from 1.3% to 1.8%. (Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend remain the only local authorities making significant use of waste for this purpose, reporting 16.5% and 17.9% respectively).

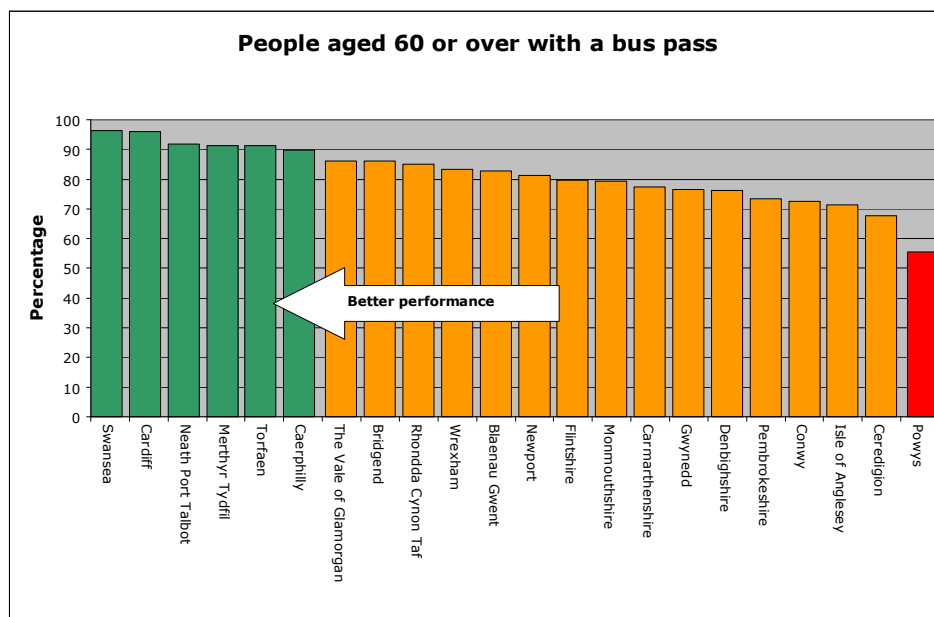


Consequently, the percentage of municipal waste sent to landfill continues to improve, falling from 64% in 2007-08 to 60% in 2008-09. This ranged from 42% in Neath Port Talbot to 75% in Blaenau Gwent.

Transport and travel...

Local authorities play an important role in maintaining public roads and providing transport for citizens.

The percentage of roads in poor condition rose slightly in 2008-09, with 4.4% of principal (A) roads and 8.3% of non-classified roads being considered to be in "poor condition". This compared to 4.3% and 7.4% respectively in 2007-08. For principal (A) roads, this ranged from 1.0% in Flintshire to 11.4% in Rhondda Cynon Taf, and for non-classified roads from 3.0% in Flintshire to 13.7% in Blaenau Gwent.

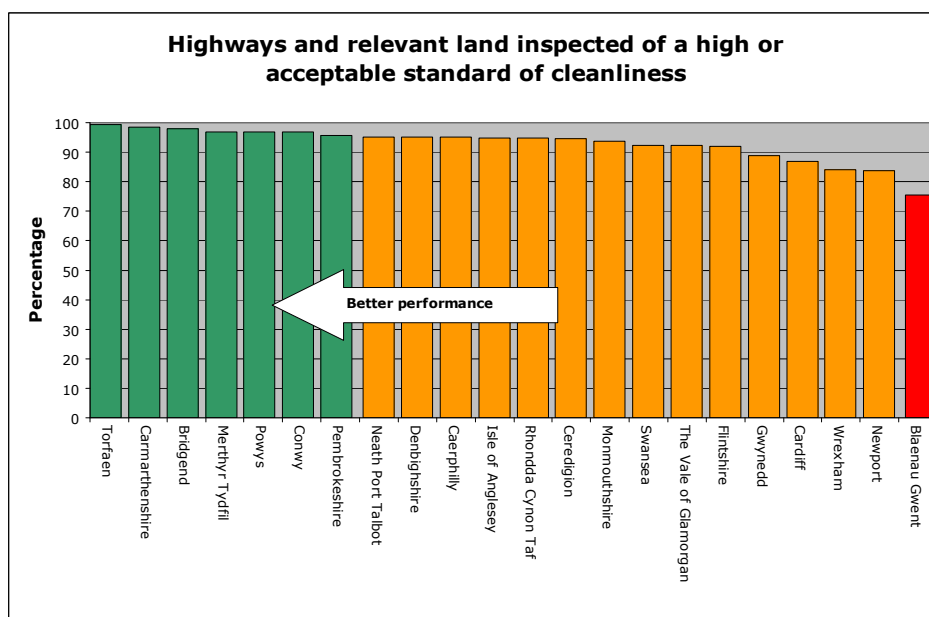


The percentage of adults aged 60 and over with a concessionary travel pass or "bus pass" continued to improve, reaching 82% in 2008-09 – an increase of 2 percentage points from the previous year. This ranged from 96% in Swansea and Cardiff to 56% in Powys.

Safe and clean communities...

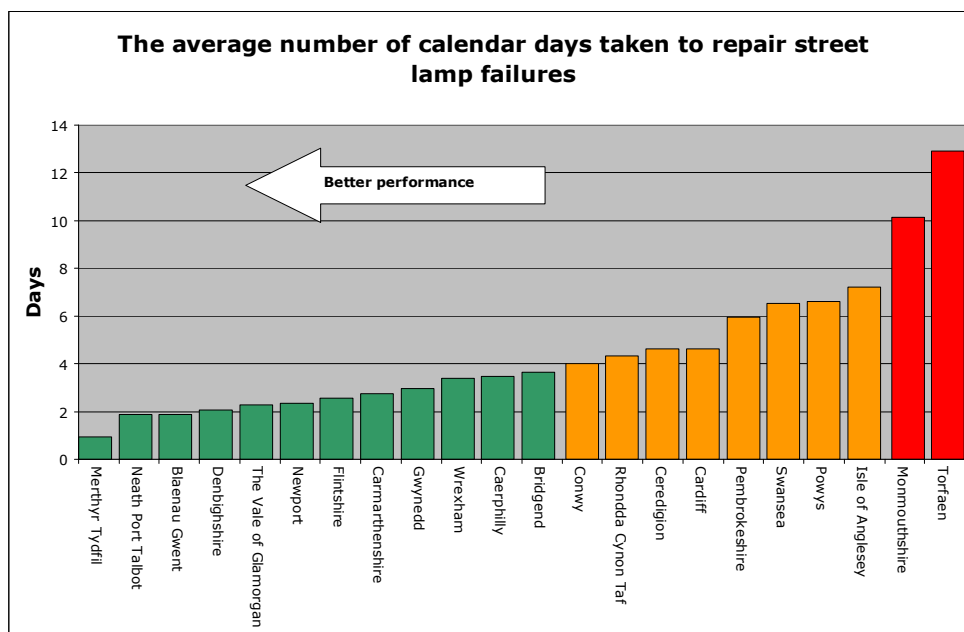
Local authorities have responsibilities to ensure that public areas are clean and safe.

In 2008-09 95% of highways and other land inspected were of a high or acceptable level of cleanliness. This compares with 96% in 2007-08 and ranged from 100% in Torfaen to 76% in Blaenau Gwent.



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In the same period, 49% of rights of way were easy to use by members of the public. This ranged from 97% in Blaenau Gwent to 33% in Gwynedd.

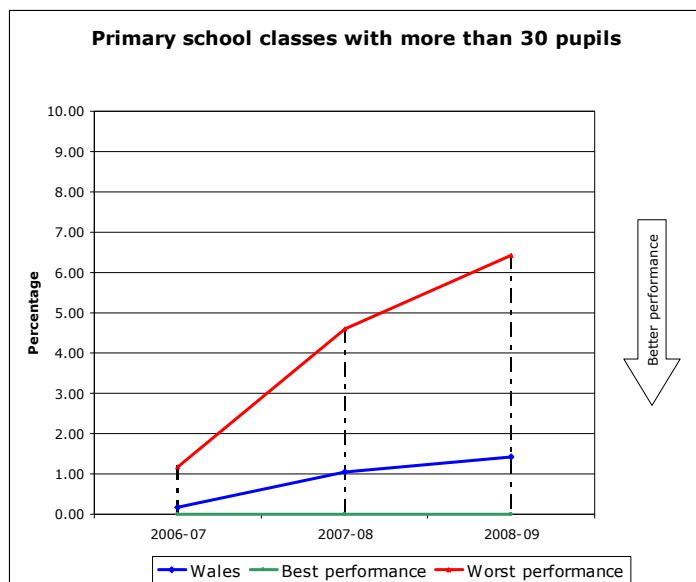


The average number of days taken to repair street lamp failures increased from 4.5 in 2007-08 to 4.7 in 2008-09. This ranged from less than 1 day in Merthyr Tydfil to almost 13 days in Torfaen.

Education...

Local authorities plan and deliver education for our children. In 2008-09, local authority maintained schools educated almost 262 thousand children in primary schools and over 206 thousand children in secondary schools.

In 2008-09, pupil attendance in primary schools was reported at 93%, and at 91% for secondary schools. These are in line with the attendance rates reported for 2007-08.

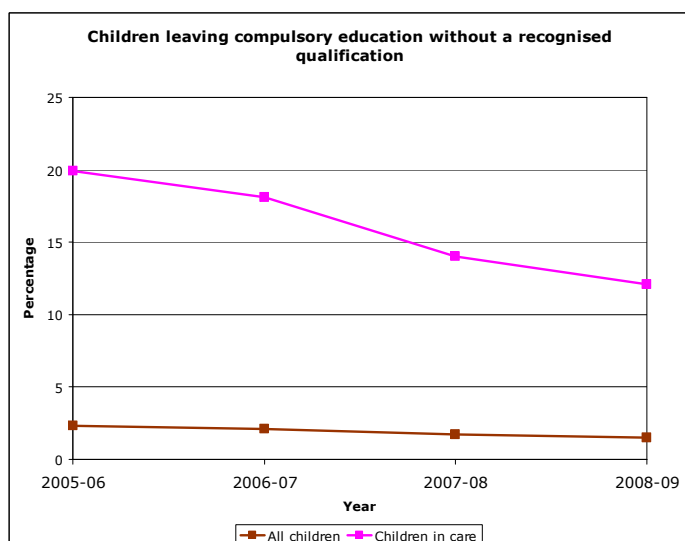


The overall percentage of primary school classes with more than 30 pupils continued to increase, rising from 1.1% in 2007-08 to 1.4% in 2008-09.

2008-09 saw the gap between the best and worst performers widen, ranging from 0.0% in the Isle of Anglesey, Denbighshire, Flintshire, Wrexham, Ceredigion, Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Merthyr Tydfil, Caerphilly, Blaenau Gwent and Torfaen to 6.4% in Swansea.

Of the children assessed, 19.6% received a Teacher Assessment in Welsh as a first language at Key Stage 2, which is a slight increase from 2007-08. This compares to 16.0% at Key Stage 3 which showed an increase for the same period. Figures reported for 2007-08 showed 19.5% at Key Stage 2 and 15.3% at Key Stage 3.

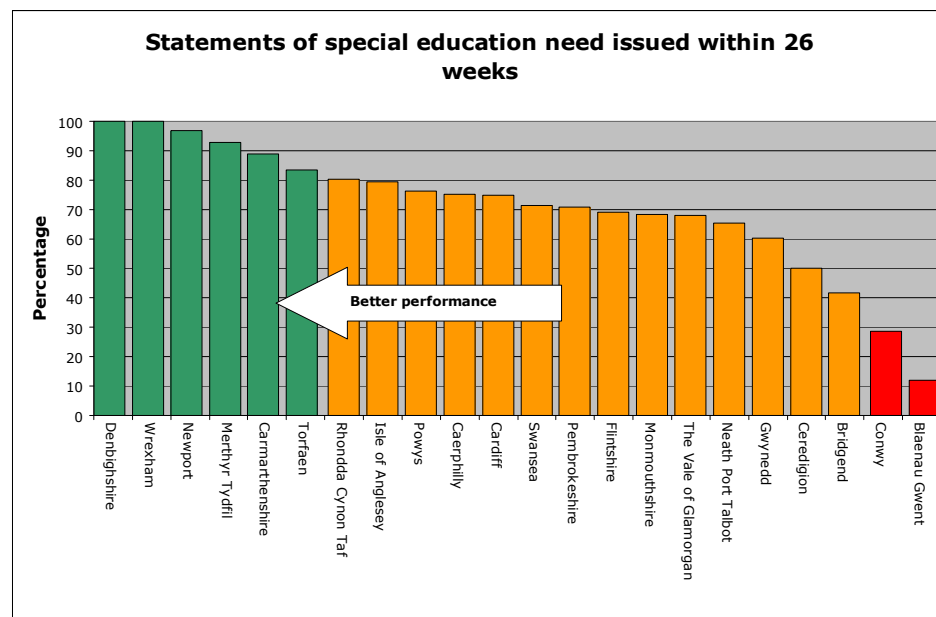
The percentage of children achieving level 4 or above at Key Stage 2 in the core National Curriculum subjects of English or Welsh (first language), Mathematics and Science increased for the first time in four years, reaching 76%, having remained at 74% for the last three years.



The percentage of secondary school children who left compulsory education at the age of 15 or 16 without a recognised qualification continued to improve, falling from 1.7% in 2007-08 to 1.5% in 2008-09. This ranged from 0.1% in Wrexham to 3.2% in Torfaen.

The percentage of children in care who left without a recognised qualification fell from 14.0% to 12.1% during the same period.

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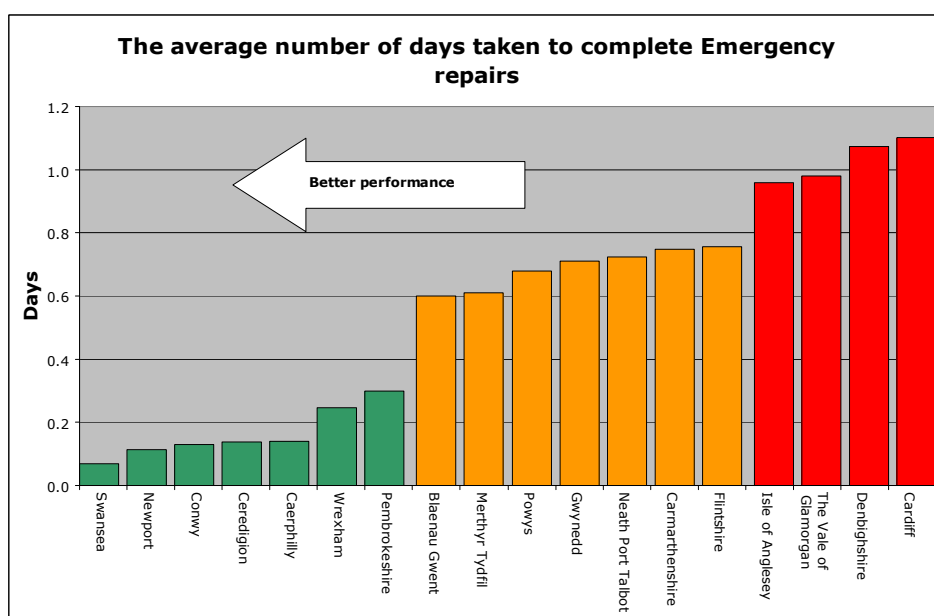
Across Wales, 74% of statements of special educational needs were issued within 26 weeks in 2008-09, a 4 percentage point improvement on the 70% reported for 2007-08.

This ranged from 100% in Denbighshire and Wrexham to 12% in Blaenau Gwent.

Housing...

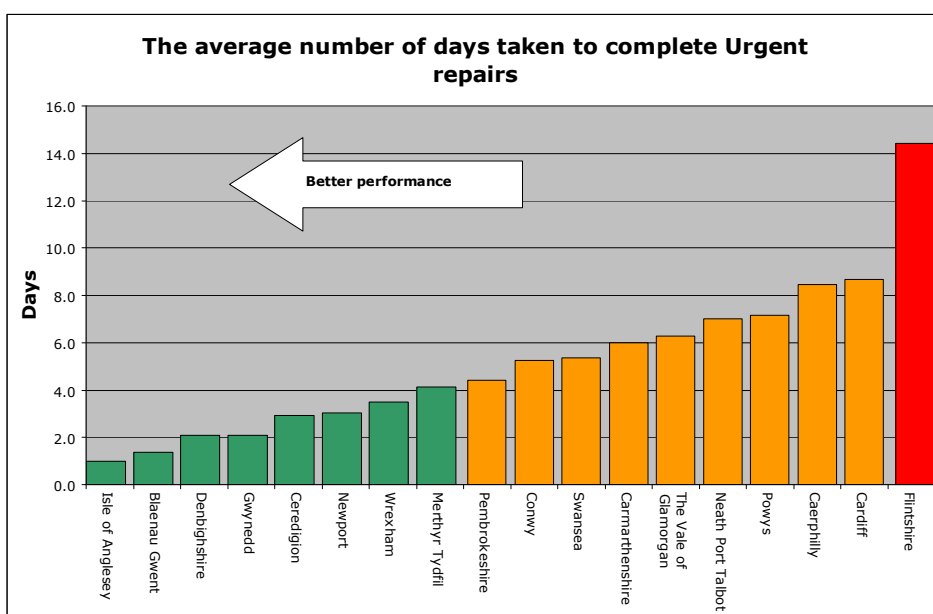
In 2008-09, local authorities were responsible for managing and maintaining around 130 thousand dwellings. (Bridgend, Monmouthshire, Rhondda Cynon Taf and Torfaen transferred their council houses to other social landlords such as housing associations before the start of 2008-09, and are, therefore not included in some of these figures).

Local authorities collected 96.8% of the rent due from tenants in permanent accommodation, and 81.2% of that due from tenants in temporary accommodation. This compares with 96.4% and 78.5% respectively in 2007-08. For tenants in permanent accommodation, this ranged from 99% in Newport to 94% in Gwynedd and Conwy. For tenants in temporary accommodation, the range was from 96.9% in Denbighshire to 53.4% in Gwynedd.



The average number of days taken to complete Emergency repairs increased slightly from 0.5 days in 2007-08 to 0.6 days in 2008-09. Two authorities (Denbighshire and Cardiff) reported an average time in excess of 1 day.

The time taken for Urgent repairs fell from 6.6 days in 2007-08 to 6.2 days in 2008-09. This ranged from 1 day in the Isle of Anglesey to 14 days in Flintshire.

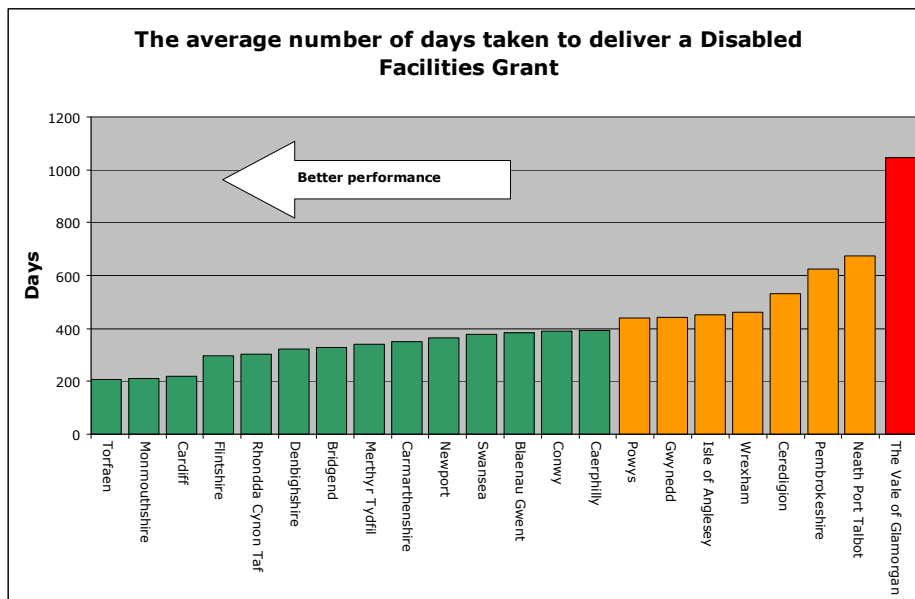
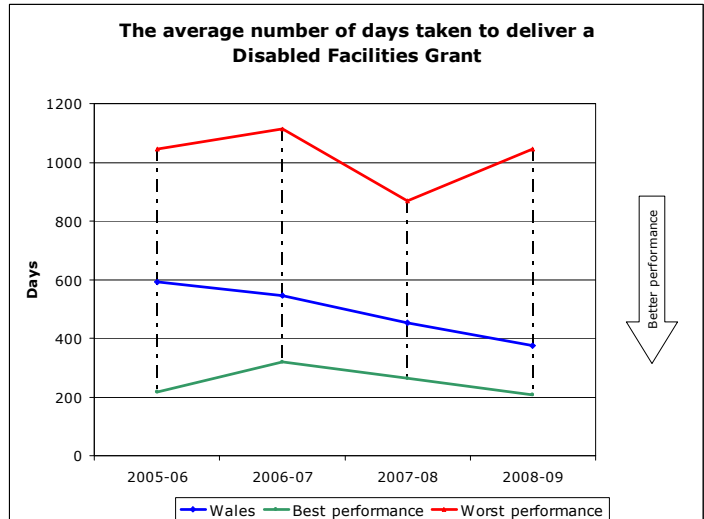


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Non-urgent repairs were completed in an average of 31 days in 2008-09 compared to 41 days in 2007-08. This ranged from 10 days in Gwynedd to 78 days in Blaenau Gwent.

A Disabled Facilities Grant is a local authority grant to help towards the cost of adapting a disabled person's home to enable them to continue to live there.

Local authorities took an average of 375 days to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant in 2008-09. This represents an improvement on the 453 days reported for 2007-08.



In 2008-09, the average number of days taken to deliver a Disabled Facilities Grant ranged from 206 days in Torfaen to 1,046 days in The Vale of Glamorgan.

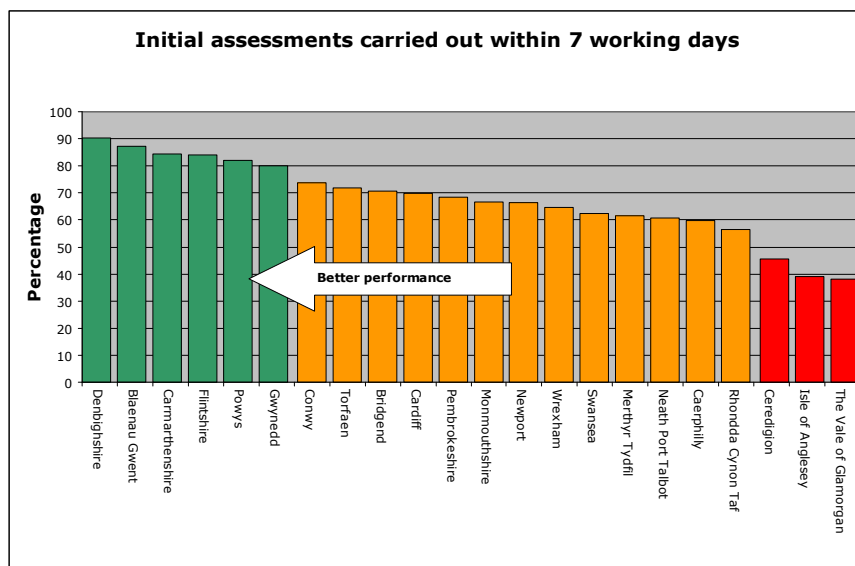
Where a Disabled Facilities Grant was not used to deliver an adaptation for local authority tenants, the average number of days taken was 187 in 2008-09 compared to 208 in 2007-08. This ranged from 23 days in Flintshire to 367 days in Swansea. For residents of private dwellings, low cost adaptations took an average of 69 days compared to 81 days in 2007-08. This ranged from 8 days in Blaenau Gwent to 359 days in Pembrokeshire.

Social Services...

Local authorities have a statutory responsibility to provide a range of services designed to meet the social care needs of vulnerable people.

Children's services

Social Services departments received over 46 thousand referrals relating to children during 2008-09, an increase of around 3 thousand compared to 2007-08. A decision on how to proceed was taken within 1 working day for 95% of these – an improvement on the 93% reported in 2007-08.

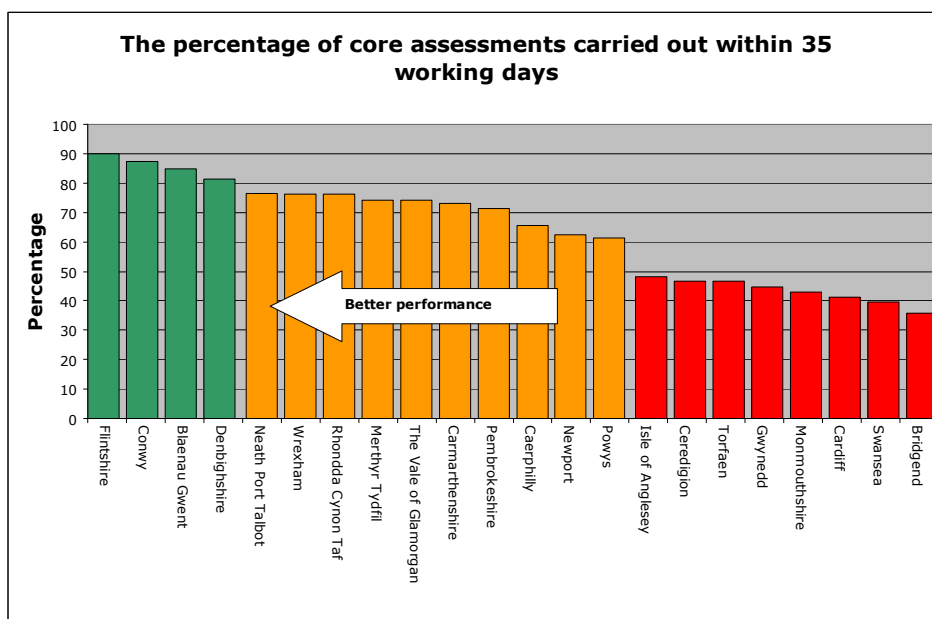


Over 25 thousand of these referrals proceeded to an initial assessment. Almost 68% of these were completed within 7 working days compared to 64% in 2007-08. This ranged from 90% in Denbighshire to 38% in The Vale of Glamorgan.

Where initial assessments took longer than 7 working days, these were completed in an average of 18 days, ranging from 12 days in Denbighshire and Blaenau Gwent to 26 days in Caerphilly.

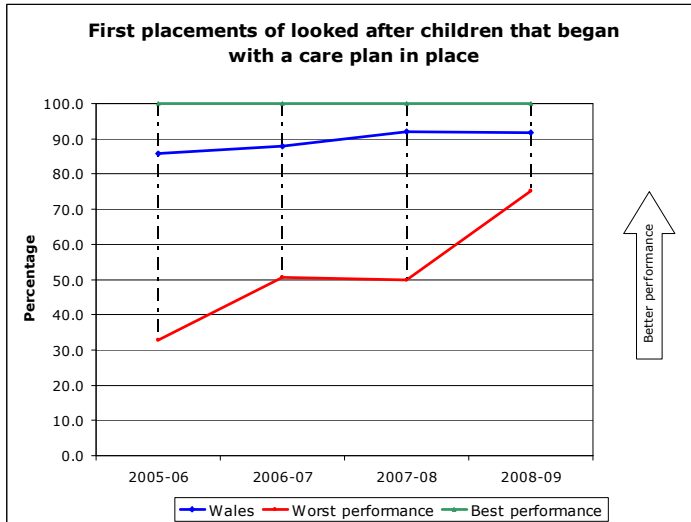
Core assessments are in-depth assessments of a child's needs and the ability of parents and care providers to meet these needs. In 2008-09, 7.9 thousand core assessments were required, compared to 6.6 thousand in 2007-08.

In 2008-09, 60% of core assessments were completed within 35 working days compared to 55% in 2007-08. This ranged from 90% in Flintshire to 36% in Bridgend. This represents an overall improvement and sees the gap between the best and the worst performers closing compared to the previous year.



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Where core assessments took longer than 35 working days, these were completed in an average of 75 days, ranging from 45 days in Flintshire and Merthyr Tydfil to 115 days in Cardiff. The average number of days taken in 2007-08 was 82.



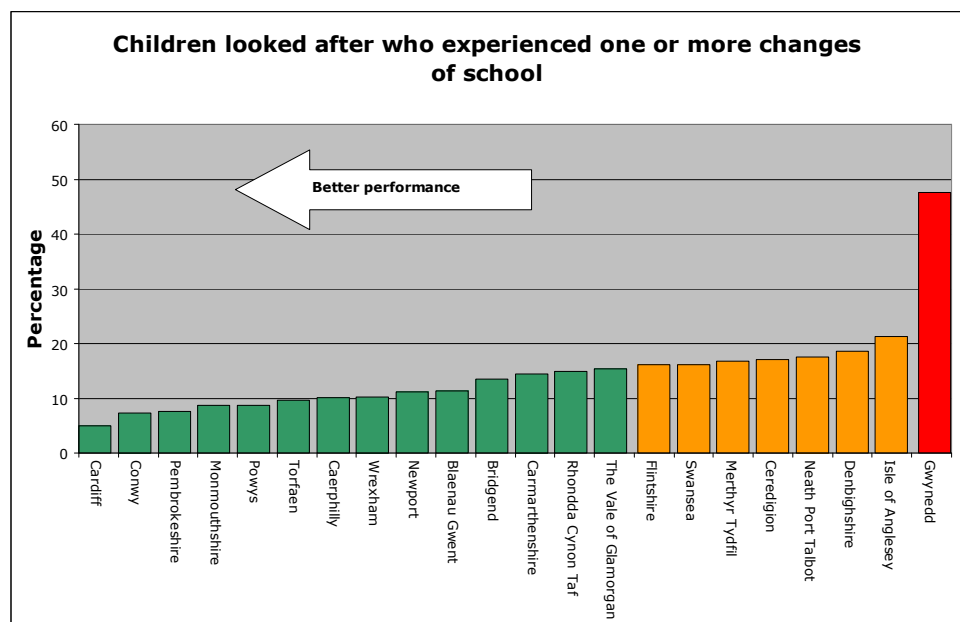
1,900 children entered care in 2008-09, almost 13% more than in 2007-08. As in 2007-08, 92% of children entering care had a care plan in place at the time of their first placement.

2008-09 saw the gap between the best and worst performers close significantly, ranging from 100% in Gwynedd, Powys, Ceredigion, Pembrokeshire, Carmarthenshire, The Vale of Glamorgan, Blaenau Gwent and Newport to 75% in Swansea.

Stability is recognised as being important for the wellbeing of children in care. Children in care should not move from one care placement to another, or change school, without good reason.

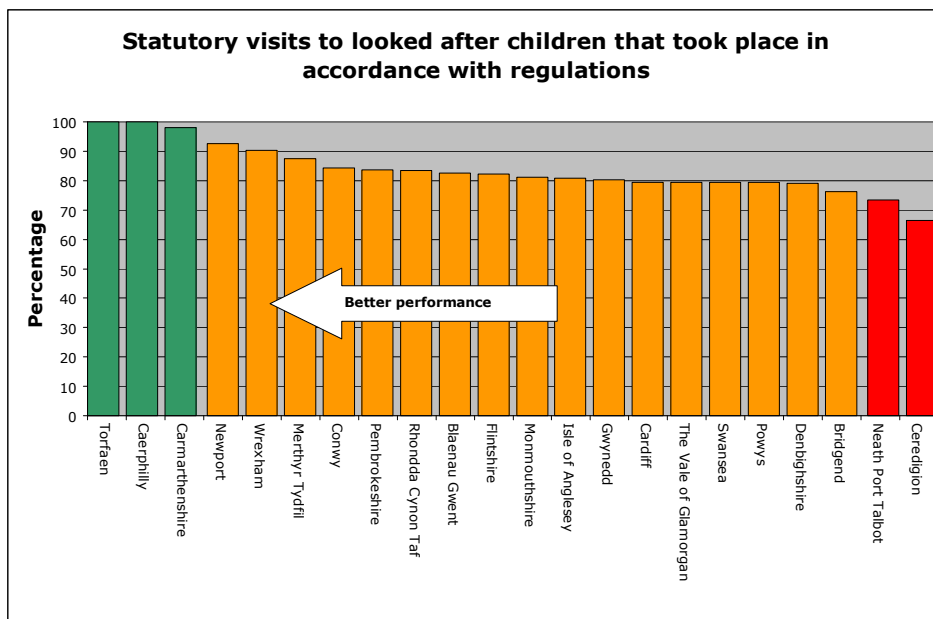
In 2008-09, 9.7% of children in care experienced 3 or more placements during the year compared to 10.3% in 2007-08.

During the same period, 13.5% of children in care experienced one or more changes of school compared to 14.4% in 2007-08. This ranged from 4.9% in Cardiff to 47.7% in Gwynedd.



The needs of children in local authority care should be reviewed according to statutory timescales. In 2008-09 91.4% of reviews were carried out as required compared to 89.8% in 2007-08.

Local Authority Performance 2008-09

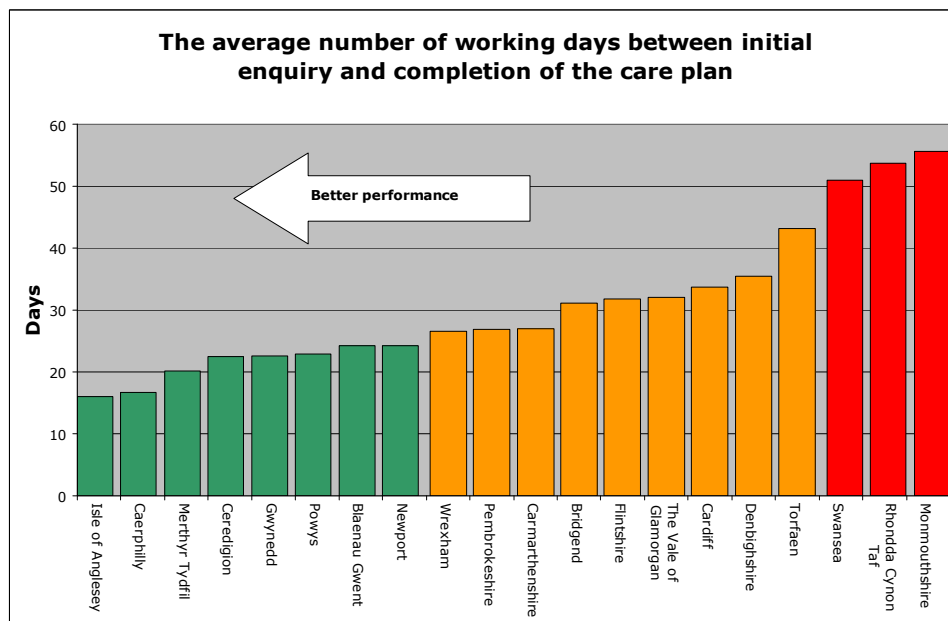


Similarly, children in local authority care should be visited regularly by Social Services.

In 2008-09, 84% of statutory visits took place in accordance with regulations compared to 74% in 2007-08. This ranged from 100% in Torfaen to 67% in Ceredigion.

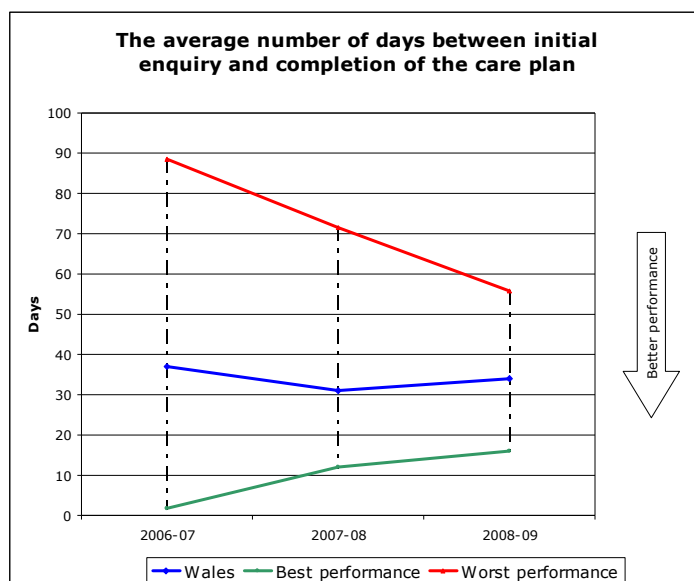
Adult services

Local authorities provide social care support to over 107 thousand adults. Just over 80 thousand of these people are aged 65 or over. Around 83% of these are supported in the community.



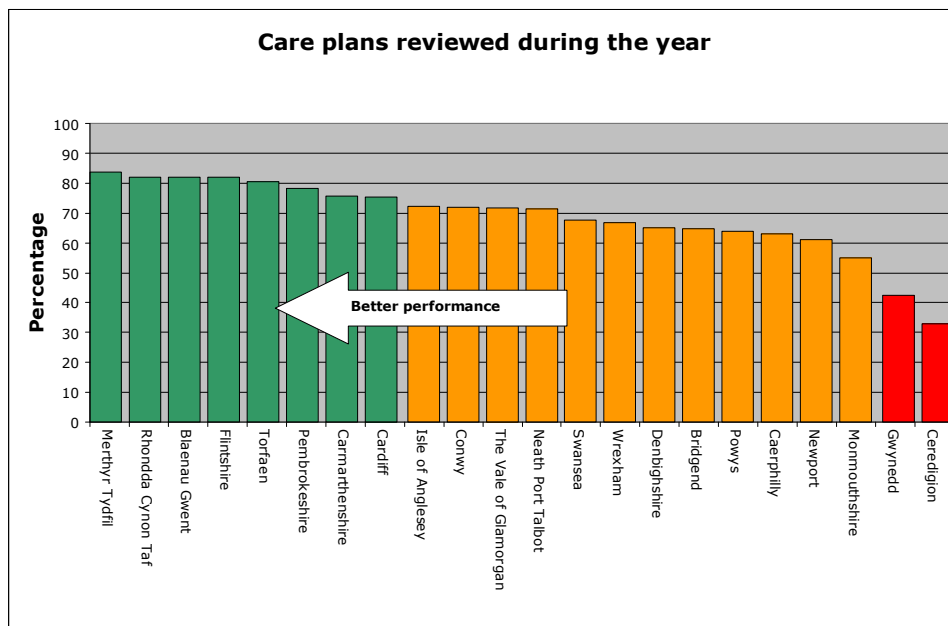
In 2008-09, local authorities produced almost 14 thousand care plans, taking on average 34 days to complete each one compared to 31 days in 2007-08. This ranged from 16 days in the Isle of Anglesey to 56 days in Monmouthshire. (Conwy and Neath Port Talbot did not provide data for this indicator).

Despite the overall increase in the average number of days taken to complete care plans, 2008-09 saw the gap between the best and worst performers improve significantly.

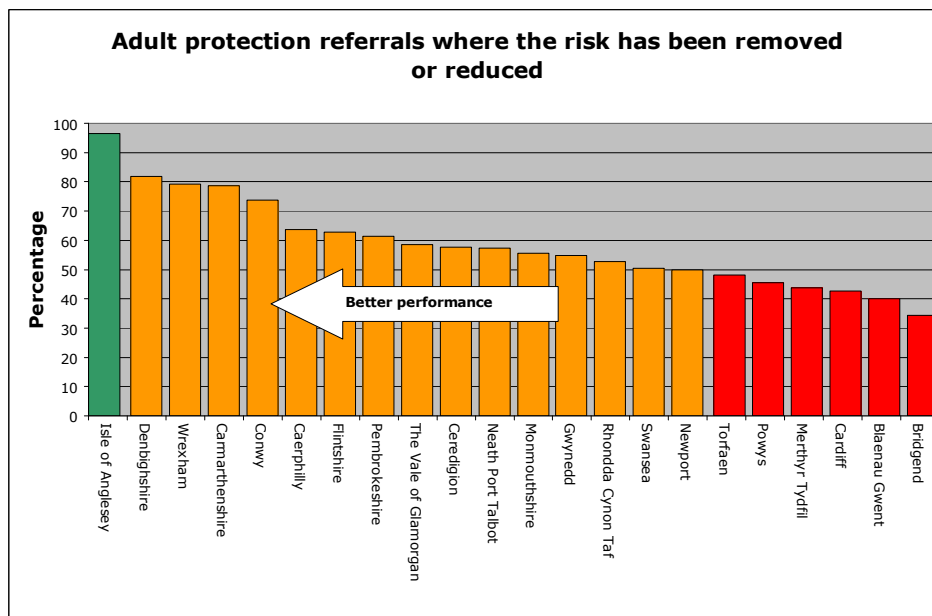


Following completion of the care plan, authorities took an average of 7 days to provide and install necessary aids and equipment. This ranged from 3 days in Flintshire to 15 days in Neath Port Talbot and Bridgend.

68% of care plans were reviewed during the year compared to 63% in 2007-08. This ranged from 84% in Merthyr Tydfil to 33% in Ceredigion.

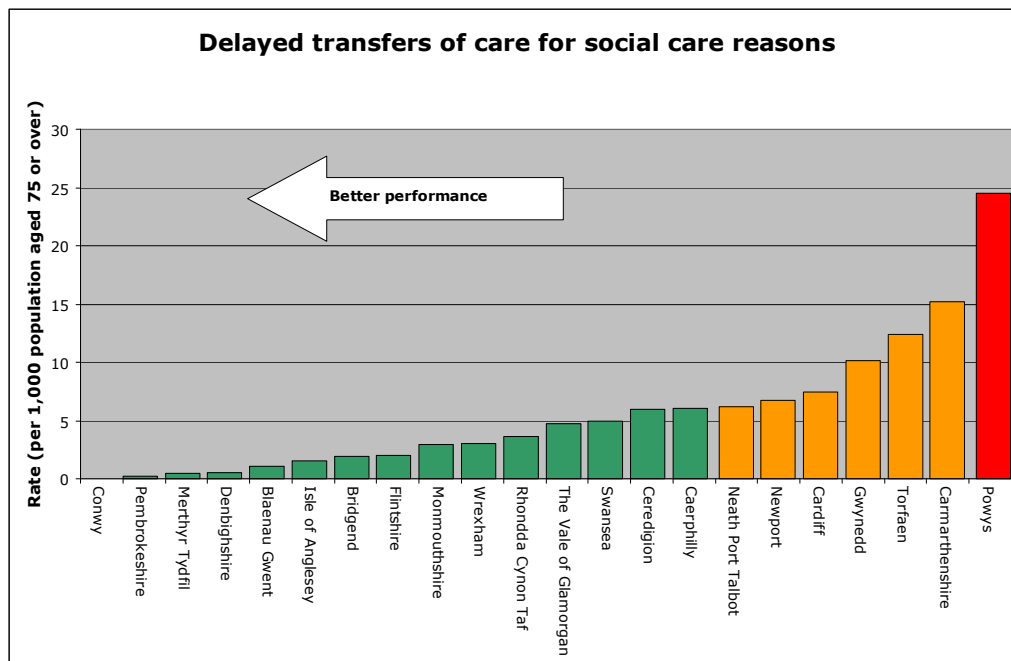


During the same period, local authorities received almost 6 thousand adult protection referrals where concerns are raised about the care of an adult with 83% of these resulting in an adult protection investigation. These reflect the levels reported in 2007-08.



The risk to the individual was reduced or removed for 56% of the referrals completed. This ranged from 97% in the Isle of Anglesey to 34% in Bridgend.

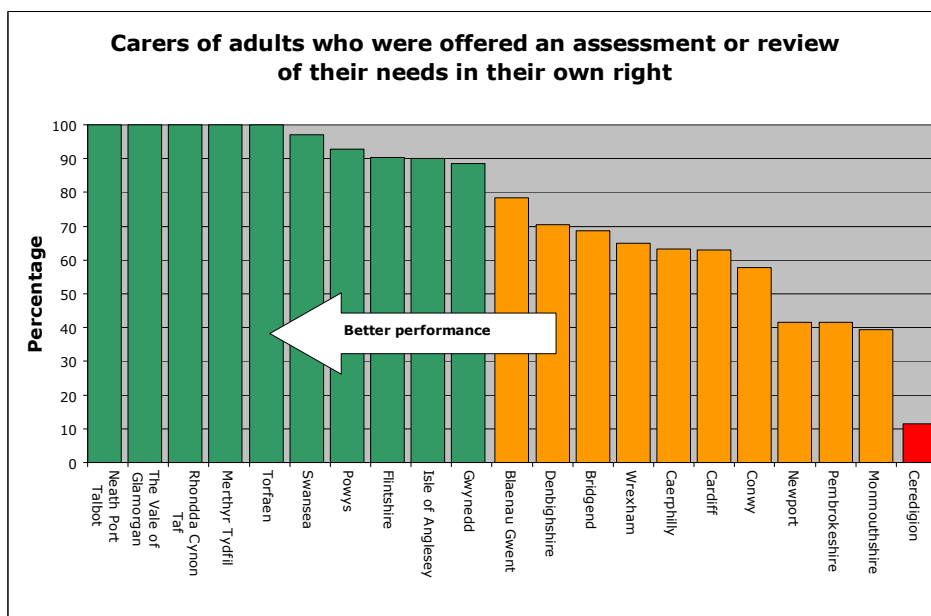
A delayed transfer of care – also known as “bed blocking” – arises when a person who no longer needs hospital treatment is unable to leave hospital and return to their own home or to a social care setting such as a residential home.



In 2008-09 the rate of delayed transfers due to social care reasons fell to 6.2 per 1,000 population aged 75 or older, compared to 7.0 per 1,000 in 2007-08. This ranged from 0.0 in Conwy to 24.5 per 1,000 in Powys.

Almost 12.6 thousand carers of adults were known to social services in 2008-09.

68% of these were offered an assessment or review. This ranged from 100% in Neath Port Talbot, The Vale of Glamorgan, Rhondda Cynon Taf, Merthyr Tydfil and Torfaen to 12% in Ceredigion. (Carmarthenshire did not provide data for this indicator).

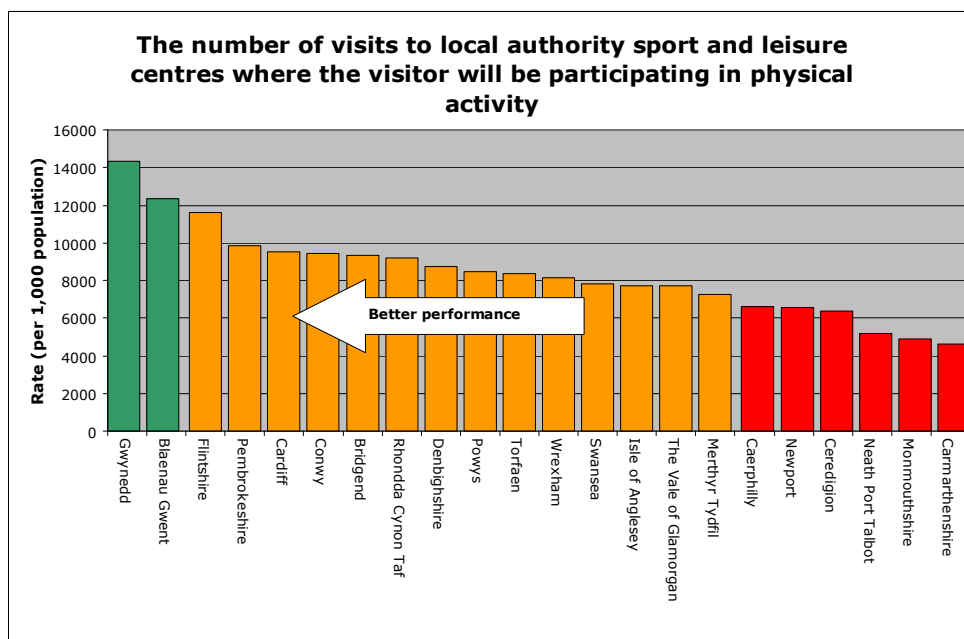


Of those carers who were offered an assessment or review, 61% had an assessment or review. 46% (around 2,200 carers) of those who were assessed or reviewed were provided with a service.

Leisure...

Local authorities provide library services aimed at providing a wide range of facilities for their communities. In 2008-09, over 16 million visits to public libraries were reported, equating to almost 6 visits per person. This continues a steady increase from just over 5 visits per person in 2006-07. In 2008-09 the rate varied from almost 9 visits per person in Monmouthshire and Cardiff to less than 4 visits per person in the Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd.

Continued participation in sport and recreation activities is considered important in developing and maintaining our health.



Again in 2008-09, there were around 25 million visits to local authority sport and leisure centres to participate in physical activity; equating to more than 8 visits per person during the year. Whilst this rate is similar to that reported last year, the level of participation in Wales varied from more than 14 visits per person in Gwynedd to less than 5 visits per person in Carmarthenshire and Monmouthshire.

Contact details

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The full performance indicator data set is published on our website www.dataunitwales.gov.uk.

Notes

One of the key functions of the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales is to collect, process, interpret and disseminate statistical data on local government services and activities. Further information about the range of our work can be found on our website.

The National Strategic and Core Set Indicators (NSIs and CSIs) are part of the Performance Measurement Framework for local authorities in Wales. The data for this framework was collected for the first time for the 2005-06 operational year.

National Strategic Indicators reflect key priorities identified by the Welsh Assembly Government and local government in Wales. Core Set Indicators provide service/policy area specific performance information.

We have collected data for the framework from the 22 local authorities in Wales. The National Strategic Indicator data has been audited by the Wales Audit Office.

Wales values are based on the base data taken from the NSI and CSI data collection forms submitted by the authorities. Where authorities have not supplied their base data, their figures do not contribute to Wales values.

Where appropriate, data has been rounded for the purposes of this bulletin. The complete data sets and Wales values are available on our dissemination tool on our website.

Definitions of, and guidance for, local authorities on the 2008-09 indicator set are also available on our website. This provides a detailed definition for each of the indicators along with their classification i.e. National Strategic Indicator or Core Set Indicator.

The colours (red, amber and green) used in the performance ranking charts are based on the range of PI values. Green indicates performance was at a level within the top quarter of the performance range; red indicates performance was at a level within the bottom quarter of the performance range. Amber is used where the performance level falls between these two points. In performance range charts, blue represents the Wales PI value, green shows the PI value for the best local authority performance, and red shows the PI value for the worst local authority performance.

Data sources

All data included in this bulletin is derived from the datasets collected as part of the local government Performance Measurement Framework except for:

Number of dwellings: Welsh Housing Statistics 2008, Table 1.2 Dwelling stock estimates by tenure and local authority, at 31 March 2008. Published by the Local Government Data Unit ~ Wales, March 2009.