



The Director of Social Services Annual Report

2018/19

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Director's Introduction

It is a pleasure and privilege to present my Annual Report for 2018/19. I am pleased to report that positive performance has been seen again this year. As I have reported in previous reports, we are on a journey of transformation and so it is a very exciting period.

Despite the enthusiasm to make these changes, it is a period that can be challenging for staff and for the residents of Gwynedd. We are attempting to change our work arrangements to make things simpler and more effective; however, these changes are afoot whilst we also continue to provide services for people. Therefore, I wish to thank all Council staff members and our key partners for their hard work and commitment, which has made the performance that I am reporting on this year so positive.

I also wish to thank the residents of Gwynedd, whether they are users of our services or carers, for their input in drawing up the services and the changes in the pipeline. Their input is key if we are genuinely going to create care and health provisions and interventions that best respond to what people need. Prosperous and resilient communities are also key and we will work with communities to identify how we can improve local networks so that individuals can continue to live in their communities for as long as possible.

I have received the annual letter of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), which is very positive. They confirm that our self-assessment of the Council's social services is a fair and accurate picture of our current situation, and that we have made good progress with the transformation work. Of course, there are fields where we need to make changes, or speed up the change, but, overall, our services are of a high standard, and the changes in the pipeline are being welcomed and are innovative.

I am eagerly looking forward to the year ahead. I would like to see the benefits from the changes we are making within our communities in terms of developing more coordinated arrangements with the Health Service, which includes much more local support to a number of fields such as mental health, learning disabilities and the support for children and young people. My intention is to attempt to ensure that we have measures that give us assurance that we are achieving what matters to individuals.

We have excellent foundations here in Gwynedd to build our services within supportive and friendly communities. I look forward to see the fruits of everyone's labour.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "M Edwards".

Morwena Edwards,
Corporate Director and
Statutory Director of Social
Services

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1. Introduction

At the end of every financial year, every Statutory Director of Social Services is required to prepare and publish a report regarding the duties of social services within the local authority over the previous year.

Therefore, the purpose of this annual report is to evaluate the performance of the local authority in relation to achieving social services' duties and drawing attention to any lessons that have been learnt or improvements that need to be introduced.

The report should also set objectives for the year to come in relation to promoting the well-being of people and carers who need care and support.

This report has been set out in a specific order, as we need to report on how we as a Council have achieved against six quality standards of well-being as noted within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The form of the report is now a requirement, and every local authority is required to measure the performance of their social services by using the relevant indicators and performance measures against the quality standards.

In order to draw up this report, I obtained observations and support from focus groups, and I thank everyone for their contributions. After you have read the report, I am very eager to hear from you if you have any comments on the content, or regarding how to draw up services for the future:



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2. How People Draw Up Our Services

It is essential that the care and well-being services we provide for the people of Gwynedd meet their requirements. In order to plan and provide the services that our residents need, it is obvious that the first step is to listen to the voice and views of our residents.

In accordance with the principles of the Social Services (Wales) Act (2014), members of the Community Resources Team are already holding conversations with individuals and their families to discover 'what matters' to them. Therefore, the aim of creating a Population Needs Assessment for Gwynedd is to gather information from individuals and their families and then analyse it so that we plan the best support for them to be able to 'Live their lives as they wish'.

Similarly, within the children field, the views of the child and children in general is an integral part of how we attempt to provide services. A looked after child is now a member of the Corporate Parent Panel.

By anticipating the long-term needs of our residents, we aim to prevent some problems from intensifying, in accordance with the principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act 2015. If we are aware of the barriers preventing us from providing the best services for our residents, we can attempt to address them promptly.

One essential element of our way of working as a Council is ensuring that we have suitable arrangements for engaging with our residents. We wish to ensure that we use different methods of engaging, or discussing, with our residents in order to provide as much opportunity as possible for everyone to receive information about what we do and to obtain views.

In 2018/19, 5,960 of the people of Gwynedd responded to all the Council's corporate public consultations, such as the Disability Sports Questionnaire, Social Housing Consultation, Public Toilets Strategy or the Gwynedd Local Buses Consultation. Specific attention was given to ensuring that the Council hears the voice of specific cohorts such as young people,

the LGBT+ community, ethnic minorities, refugees and adults with learning disabilities. We have continued to discuss face-to-face with our residents with assistance from groups such as our Residents Panel or Equality Group, but we have increasingly moved to communicate and gather views electronically.



Our use of social media has grown by 9% over the past year, and the Council now has over 25,000 followers on its Facebook and Twitter accounts. Of course, these methods are increasingly popular with our young residents. The use of the self-service services on our website has also increased, with 9,129 new self-service accounts opened during 2018/19. We hope that this method means that services reach out to some of our residents who do not find it easy to drop by or phone Siop Gwynedd.

3. Promoting and improving the Well-being of those we are assisting

As outlined in chapter one above, the six quality standards noted by the Government will be used here to outline what we intended to do, what happened and what difference we saw. In addition, for each standard, we will provide an outline of what we intend to do in 2019/20.

Quality Standard 01

Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

In order to achieve this, local authorities should:

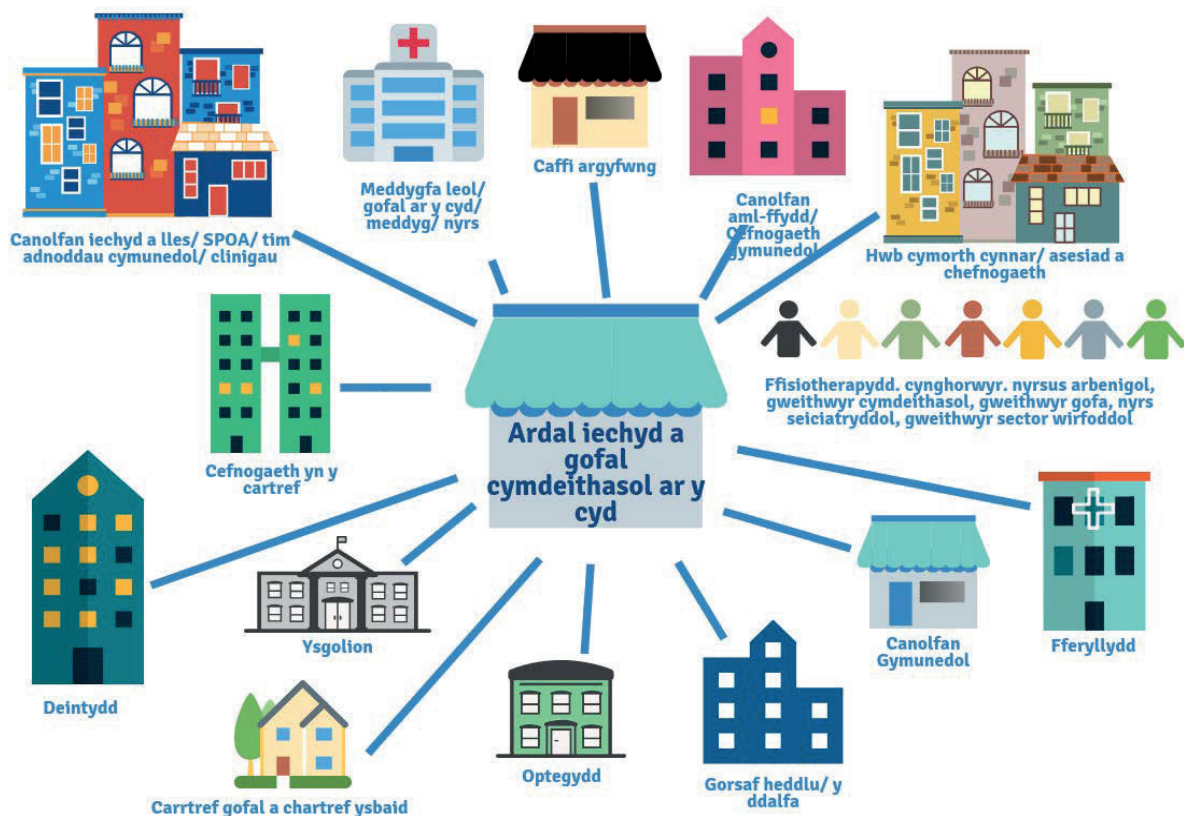
- ensure access to clear and comprehensible information, advice and assistance to support people to maintain their well-being and make informed decisions
- work with individuals, their carers and partner organisations, to support and maintain the independence of an individual without the need for care and support
- complete well-being assessments in a timely manner
- ensure that decisions respect individual circumstances across the entire range of needs and that they give due attention to the United Nations' conventions and principles for children, older people and disabled people
- ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect
- enable people to have control over the planning and provision of care
- promote a healthy lifestyle and support them
- enable access to services and activities that maintain mental health and emotional well-being
- encourage and empower people to control their own health and well-being, to be active and benefit from care and proactive preventative support
- arrange independent advocacy where needed or refer to other types of advocacy to enable people to overcome obstacles to participation when reviewing and meeting needs
- arrange contact names and share relevant information with partners in order to allow for the smooth transfer of care and support across the services
- facilitate multi-disciplinary care and support plans
- put arrangements in place for assessing needs and deciding on eligibility
- explain challenges as well as achievements
- measure the impact of the care and support, and support to carers, on people's lives and well-being outcomes
- ensure that people are aware of the arrangements for paying and charging for care

Evaluation of progress against Standard One

Welsh Government's Health and Care Plan, 'A Healthier Wales', sets a clear direction to developing new care models that focuses the services around the individual and their family, as close to their home as possible. It emphasises the need for high quality preventative services that are easy to use. It is worth noting that 'A Healthier Wales' follows the exact path that we have already been following in Gwynedd for some years, and we are at the forefront in that respect in terms of our vision and the transformation plans we are working on.

The vision in North Wales is that our services in the community are transformed so that early support and assistance is provided for people in their own homes. With this approach, we should see better results for individuals, and the demand for hospital admissions and care provision will reduce over time. We are expecting, over the next few years, to move from providing care and treatment in hospital to a situation where it is possible to offer health and support interventions in the community.

We can see that the firm foundation we need in order to achieve this vision is to improve the GP clusters and social care arrangements and move towards strengthening the local areas/ community resource and social care teams. These teams will work tirelessly to provide information, advice, care and support based on 'what matters' to individuals. These locations, when fully developed, will work locally within regional design principles.



Our local project of re-designing Care Services is already attempting to ensure that we work in a way that focuses on what matters to people who receive health and care services by trialling new and innovative ways of working.

We have been collaborating with the Health Board to ensure that adults living in Gwynedd have easy and direct access to our local teams. To this end, jointly with the Health Board, we have established five Local Area Teams that aim to provide a seamless service. These teams build on the strengths of the individual and the community and ensure that our arrangements for hospital discharge are effective and are in keeping with what matters to the individual. Working in smaller areas also means that it is easier for staff to gain a better understanding of what is happening within local communities, and in turn, this will improve the individuals' experience.

Work is also taking place to improve people's experience when transferring from hospital back into the community. Our vision for the future is to strengthen our community teams in order to improve our ability to respond and provide support as people transfer from hospital to the community. The development of the community resource teams (CRT) and the development of domiciliary care plans in the Tywyn and Bethesda areas has contributed to improving people's experiences when transferring from the hospitals. The results of this experiment have been very positive and we will proceed to recommission using this new method. In addition, on Ogwen Ward in Ysbyty Gwynedd, we have been attempting to improve the patient transfer system, and although it is early days, the work is showing very positive signs.

Last year, I reported that we were aware that some of our residents in Gwynedd have to travel far to obtain some dementia care services. In response, the Council has prioritised the development of specialist dementia provision within the Council's in-house homes, in partnership with the Health Board. We have experienced some difficulties in terms of recruiting specialist staff from the Health Board so that we can take full advantage of these

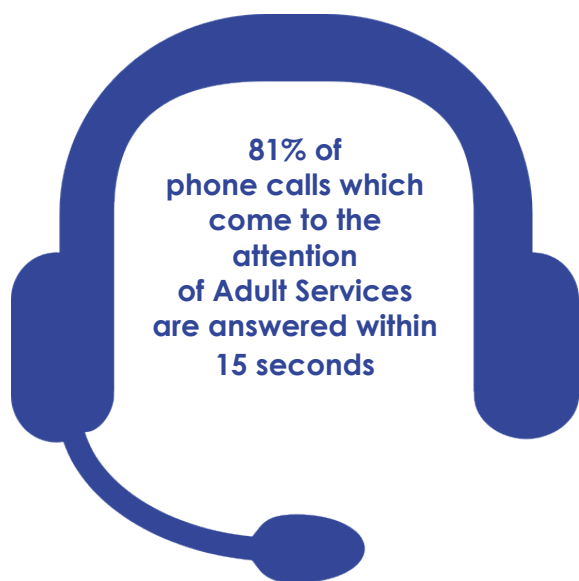
developments, but we intend to attempt to recruit soon.

Substantial investment in four new dementia units located in communities across Gwynedd received Cabinet approval over the year. The Council agreed to earmark an annual figure of £808,000 to staff four new specialist dementia units located within the authority's residential homes. Construction work has already been completed to develop the specialist units at Llys Cadfan in Tywyn, Plas Hafan in Nefyn and Plas Hedd in Bangor, thanks to Welsh Government's Integrated Care Fund (ICF). It is expected for the unit at Bryn Blodau Home, Llan Ffestiniog to be completed by the end of the summer 2019.

These specialist dementia units are part of joint efforts by the Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to ensure that older people gain access to the specialist care and health services they require within their communities.

Whilst collaborating with our partners features very highly on our agenda, it is important for us to remember that our main partners when modernising our care provision are the people who use the service. Therefore, I am exceptionally proud that the services being delivered at Plas Hafan, as well as other areas of the county, are clearly responding to what local people have told us that they wish to see.

One of the requirements of the Act is to ensure that we provide **information, advice and support** to people in a simple and accessible way. To this end, we have incorporated this service within the five adults teams. This will involve simple arrangements for the residents of Gwynedd, and will also ensure that individuals remain in control whilst seeking information about what they need.



Similarly, the Supporting Children and Families services have also been developing their information, advice and support services over the year. The Department has gradually developed its service and has built on the idea of having 'one front door', namely **'Hwb Teulu Gwynedd' ('Gwynedd Family Hub')**. Through Welsh Government's ICF funding, the Department has managed to attract three Community Connectors to the Hub to enable the Hub to provide current information about services that are available locally to individuals. An information officer, as well as the referral officers of the Team Around the Family and statutory team are a part of this Hub. I look forward to report on the advantages of this hub for Gwynedd families in the future.

The Council and other partners acknowledge that there is a need to continue to strengthen individuals' abilities to remain healthy for as long as possible, and that community resilience is an important factor if this is to be achieved. Therefore, one of the main improvement priorities for the next five years is to work with communities to attempt to ensure their resilience so that individuals can continue to live independently within their communities in line with their wishes. A key part of this is the contribution of preventative services within our communities, the valuable contribution of the third sector and, of course, the huge contribution of carers who are members of the family/friends.

The Community Connectors Scheme has been established and has placed individuals sponsored by a third sector agency within three of the Community Resource Teams. They map services and groups within communities and link individuals requiring assistance with those services. They also identify gaps in the service and promote community enterprises.

In the Llŷn area, a local partnership has been set up which focuses on developing well-being services and ensuring effective collaboration across several boundaries. The community transportation agency "O Ddrws i Ddrws" has been critical to its development. Likewise, a project funded by the Big Lottery Fund called "Be 'Nawni Heddiw?" (What shall we do today). The local Community Connector administrates meetings known as "Cydweithio er Lles Llŷn" (Collaborating for the benefit of Llŷn) and brings stakeholders and community champions together from all walks of life, from the vicar who runs the Food Bank, to the local PCSO.

In future, the Department will ensure that the Community Connector is part of the 5 Community Resource Teams and that they bridge all adults services, rather than older people services alone. It is, therefore, intended to develop partnerships similar to "Lles Llŷn" across Gwynedd.

Quality Standard 02

Working with people and partners to safeguard and promote the physical and mental health and emotional well-being of people

In order to achieve this, local authorities should:

- promote and support a healthy lifestyle
- support access services to maintain mental health and emotional well-being
- encourage and empower people to control their own health and well-being, to be active and benefit from care and proactive preventative support

Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard Two

Last year, I reported on an exciting programme that was in place to ensure a sustainable **learning disabilities** provision for adults for the future. I am very proud to report that the Learning Disabilities Service has made substantial progress to modernise the service during the year and has jointly developed a clear vision with service users and their families and key partners. Our vision focuses on developing preventative services across the County, which will include focusing on the needs of adults on the autistic spectrum. Work has also happened on a regional level to develop a lifelong autism service.

The Learning Disabilities field is developing and maturing. A lot is happening within the field with various plans at work, which includes the development of community hubs. Cegin Arfon is the first of these developments and offers opportunities for work experience and training for adults with learning disabilities with the aim of developing skills. The main purpose of the café is to foster individuals' confidence and develop their skills in the hope that it will

be possible for them to move on to gain jobs in future. It also gives them the opportunity to socialise. The service has managed to attract European Grant funding through Welsh Government in order to develop two additional hubs - one on the Gwystl site, Y Ffôr, and another on the Brynffynnon site, Y Felinheli.

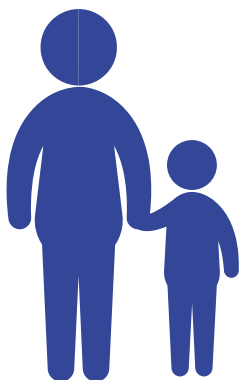
This region also developed a Regional Strategy for the transformation of care for people with learning disabilities. The project across the North is working to develop seamless health and social care services. The project has succeeded to attract £100m in funding from the Welsh Government fund. This project aims to ensure more integration between services for people with learning disabilities in order to help them live more independently. Then it is hoped that all these ideas will be rolled out to all parts of Wales in order to improve services for people and reduce the pressure on sections of the Health Service and social services.

As I promised, **the mental health field** has received attention during the year and it will continue as a priority over the coming years to ensure that we meet the needs of individuals.

In order to provide a mental health service, we are working with the Health Board by working on a multi-agency basis, and we also act in line with the Mental Health (Wales) Act 2010. Work has progressed during the year to implement the 'Together for Mental Health' strategy, jointly with our key partners. Very good progress has been made, and Gwynedd is a full partner in the discussions to transform Mental Health services for the future, in order to ensure improved access to preventative services and place more emphasis on mental well-being for people of all ages.

During the year, we have developed the Gwynedd Mental Health Learning Partnership jointly with the Well-being Unit, Opus, Unllais and the Gwynedd Mental Health Manager, in order to promote collaboration and address the need for preventative work in the field of Mental Health. To this end, the Partnership developed a booklet that offers ideas on how to look after your health and well-being, and it was launched during a recent event in Porthmadog. The aim of the booklet 'Edrych ar ôl fy hun' ('Looking after Myself') is to present information on what is available within Gwynedd communities. Various services can be reached by following the 'five ways to well-being' developed by Public Health Wales. Our intention is to encourage people to think of ways of looking after themselves.

253 children were in care at the end of March 18/19 compared with 227 at the end of April 17/18.



This year, there has been an increase in the number of **looked after children** compared with previous years. Currently, there are 253 looked after children (as at the end of March 2019), which is an 11% increase compared with the previous year. It is worth noting that this is a national trend and research is being undertaken nationally at present to look in detail at the reasons for this. It is a complex field and there is no easy answer to the situation. Children usually come into our care under very difficult circumstances. What is encouraging to note is that the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) stated in its inspection report of the Council that our Safeguarding arrangements are robust and that no child was brought into care unnecessarily.

The Corporate Parent Panel continues to look at specific matters within the Looked After Children field, namely: Keeping Safe, Education, Health and Welfare, Making a Positive Contribution and Becoming an Adult. Councillors and officers across the Council, as well as officers from the Health Board, are members of the Panel, and they focus on what is going well and what we can influence in order to improve outcomes for the children who are in our care. Now, the Panel's membership includes a foster parent and a looked after child. Doing 'What Matters' to these individuals lies at the root of this work and I am very glad that a child in our care is now a member of the Corporate Parent Panel also. I have some concern regarding Education/Schools and Health matters within this cohort of children. Our performance measures continue to show a decline in these fields and I have asked the relevant officers to look at these issues in more detail. Details regarding our performance measures can be seen at the end of this report.

The Council has already identified the need to focus more on **supporting people**, with a strong emphasis on preventative work and integrated working across key partners. The work of developing the Supporting Families Strategy and Welsh Government's recent announcement to merge their preventative grants has given us an opportunity to reflect on our direction. As a Council, we are eager to

to look more broadly at the preventative field and the support we provide the residents of Gwynedd across all our services, in an attempt to tackle some of the barriers they face.

Some residents need more support, and the Council invests in, provides and plans many services and interventions that address and support people with various challenges, such as:

- difficulties with parenting and bringing up a family
- getting and maintaining a home
- maintaining healthy relationships
- dealing with substance and alcohol abuse
- violence
- crime and the impacts of that
- healthy and active living
- insufficient income and lack of work
- inability to remain in education, lack of qualifications and basic skills
- caring
- ageing
- loneliness and lack of social connections

Therefore, over the next years, we intend to look objectively at how we support people, and in doing so look at our systems from their perspective. We will therefore discuss our vision with our partners, so that we can agree on the direction, scope and work programme. The intention is that we will be able to provide assurance that we are making the best use of the resources we have to meet needs early, and co-plan services and appropriate interventions. In doing so, we can also be confident that we have effective and efficient arrangements.

The intention is for this to be done in a seamless way that strengthens the role and contribution of partners to improve outcomes for children and people of all ages. The ultimate goal will be to combine all skills, resources and commitment of every professional worker across departments and sectors in a coordinated way to achieve better outcomes for children and young people and families in Gwynedd. This is an innovative and very ambitious programme that involves a huge change in the way we work; however, the 'A Healthier Wales' offers confirmation that we are on the right track.

One of the highlights of the year was the official opening of Hafan y Sêr Short Break Unit. The new residential unit offers a short break provision for up to six children with various disabilities from Gwynedd and Anglesey at any given time. It offers a home from home for children with various disabilities in a bespoke and homely building. Hafan y Sêr is run by the Council's Children and Supporting Families Service, in close collaboration with the Isle of Anglesey Council. The building comprises of modern rooms, an open recreational area, sensory equipment, computer facilities and an enclosed garden. The response from families who have already used Hafan y Sêr has been very positive, with many parents noting that the provision has transformed their lives. This is what one family had to say:

“

Hafan y Sêr is like a holiday camp for our children - they look forward for weeks before going there! The experience of being able to stay with friends in a caring and homely environment is very nice for them, and difficult to obtain under normal circumstances.

”



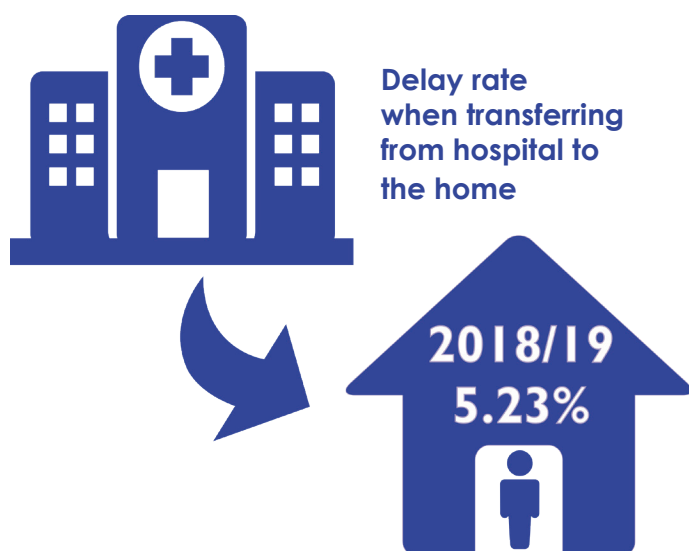
The North Wales Integrated Autism Service was launched in June 2018. Welsh Government has committed £13 million up to 2021 to develop the Integrated Autism Service across Wales. This is because many autistic individuals fall between the eligibility criteria for mental health services and learning disabilities and therefore they cannot get access to emotional, behavioural, low mental health or life skills support.

In north Wales the service is being developed across the six local authorities with the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board. The Integrated Autism Service (IAS) will provide new diagnostic services for adults; life-long support to autistic persons (children and adults) their families and carers; support with the transition from children

provision to adults and training for professionals. Gwynedd Council will work with the IAS and there will be designated Support Workers for Gwynedd within the service.

The **delay when transferring from hospitals** has been addressed by the Council and the Health Board during the year. We are working to ensure that the people of Gwynedd can be discharged from hospital as soon as they are ready. We have been carefully scrutinising the reasons for the delays during the year and we, in collaboration with the Health Board, are working to improve the flow through the care and health system, by following cases from end to end and attempting to remove the obstacles arising. It is encouraging that an improvement was seen in the rate of delay when transferring

from hospital for social care reasons over the last quarter of the year.



future. We anticipate that work to transform home care will undoubtedly lead to improving the status and image of home carers' jobs in the future. The change involves entrusting in front line staff and also ensuring that home carers become a part of a broader team of professional workers. It is noted that communication and marketing permeates through all work streams of course and are totally essential to the success of Council efforts to recruit and retain experienced staff in future.

The challenge will be for us to continue with this improvement as the performance reflects general problems in the health and care system in terms of the high demand on hospitals, lack of nursing beds in the community and also a lack of capacity in terms of professional workers and home carers in some specific areas of Gwynedd. Although this measure is reported nationally and is of great interest to the Government, we are considering this as one measure of a whole system. We clearly need to look at the whole picture in terms of our improvements, and ensure that the appropriate support and interventions exist within the community. A part of the picture of course is the availability and capacity of the home care provision.

A lack of home care provision is still a problem in every part of Gwynedd and we know that home care staff are essential in order to support people to stay at home for as long as they wish. We have been experimenting with new ways of providing this support. The initial findings of this experiment has drawn the interest of local and national policy designers such as Social Care Wales and the Care Inspectorate Wales. Over the year, we have built on what we learnt from the experiment and used the information as a basis to draw-up an alternative service for the

Quality Standard 03

Safeguarding and protecting people from abuse, neglect or harm

In order to achieve this, local authorities should:

- Respond effectively to changing circumstances and regularly review the achievements of individuals' well-being outcomes
- Provide care and support to meet the assessed needs to protect people from abuse or neglect or other harm
- Develop protective procedures for those who put their own safety at risk to prevent abuse and neglect.
- Manage risk in a way that empowers people to feel in control which is in accordance with safeguarding needs
- Work in partnership in order to investigate allegations of abuse or neglect in order to ensure that people are protected from harm
- Advocacy in relation to safeguarding

Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard Three

We welcomed a report published by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), which confirmed that the authority's children services had '*substantial strengths*'. The report, which follows a detailed inspection undertaken by CIW in May 2018, states that Gwynedd Council's Children and Supporting Families Department has a '*committed and stable*' workforce. The report notes that there is '*Strong leadership*' and that the '*Corporate Parent Panel is eager to ensure good outcomes for looked after children and to receive good support from all parts of the Council*'. This report confirms and ensures that the safety and welfare of the most vulnerable children and young people of Gwynedd lies at the root of everything we do.

We acknowledge that there is room for ongoing development, and we are already taking steps to respond to the fields outlined by the inspectors as fields for improvement.

Improving the experience of children and families going through the Safeguarding procedure is something that the Department is looking into. Less emphasis is placed on the timetable set and more on the quality of the contact the children and young people have with our officers. This is something that the Inspectorate highlighted and our Independent Review Officers (IROs) are looking at how we can improve and develop practice.



During 2018/19, the percentage of case conferences where the voice/views (excluding children under 7) was 99%

Our Independent Review Officers provide their views on the quality of children's placements as well as on social work. We need to ensure that we include the views of the child, where possible, when making decisions when planning for them. Ensuring that we listen to the voice of the child, and that it is heard in everything we do, is extremely important. During 2018/19, the percentage of case conferences where the voice/views (excluding children under 7) was heard was 99%. This performance has improved compared with the past two years, which shows that we act in a way that is based on the rights of children.

At the end of March 2019 there were 253 children being looked after by the Council. This is an increase of 11% on the number that were looked after at the end of March 2018.

At the end of March 2019:

- 65% of looked after children were placed in a foster placement
- Of these, 35% of the foster carers were friends or family members
- 23% of looked after children were placed with their parents, and therefore remained at home

With the continued increase in the number of children being placed by the courts with their parents, and whilst this was positive in terms of keeping families together, it often means that very intensive interventions and support is needed from our workers in order to ensure the safety and welfare of the children.

In response to the Welsh Government's Partnership Plan '**A healthier Wales**', the Health and Care of the North Region has attracted transformation funding for four specific fields, with Children being one of these fields. One of the matters that the transformation bid attempts to tackle is the increasing number of children and young people with complex needs who enter the care system, and it attempts to ensure that a range of specific responses are developed. The transformation bid emphasises the need to develop more integrated services that would be available on a more local level. These would focus on offering early support, building on the edge of care provision and would offer more intensive support via the assessment and support teams. This transformation work will certainly assist to drive our vision forward.

In addition, the Council has succeeded to attract a grant to move on with an innovative plan '**Safeguarding Children Effectively**'. The plan seeks to respond to the practice needs of workers within the challenging child protection field. Very briefly, it has been developed to ensure that we protect children in the most effective way possible, which leads to attempting to ensure that the change that is needed to ensure that children are being protected is achieved. By having better conversations that stimulate change, it aims to ensure that safeguarding statutory services can step back safely. The project includes elements of measuring, reviewing and evaluating. If success is seen, the vision is to disseminate this across the region as a model of good practice. A practice mentor has been appointed which will lead on the work of developing the practice of individual workers and teams. This work should strengthen practice, more effective conversations, quality decision and a clear focus on change.

Specifically in relation to children, the rate of risk assessments submitted to case conferences which were considered as exhibiting quality in decision making was 99%, which is sustained performance compared with previous years.

The **Adults** department has put robust arrangements in place during the year in order to ensure expertise and full understanding of all the issues involving safeguarding. The Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit has been established in full since October 2017. There has been a general increase in cases involving safeguarding issues recently; however, from discussions with other Authorities within the region, it is clear that we are all in a similar situation. In response to the increase in Safeguarding referrals, the Unit has developed a '**Safeguarding Hub**', and all Adult Safeguarding referrals will be received by the Hub, before being allocated for appropriate intervention.

Our adult safeguarding measures show a strong performance yet again in 2018/19. It was seen again this year that from all adults safeguarding referrals completed during the year, we have again managed to control the risk 91.5% of the time, with the remainder choosing not to intervene.

Over the past year, the Unit has continued to monitor the quality of Gwynedd Care Homes and considerable time has been spent on responding to cases of concerns about quality. Two homes were considered under the escalating concerns procedure during the year. We will work with the Health Service to monitor nursing care and we intend to produce joint reports in the future.

Efforts are continuing to ensure that the Council achieves its **corporate safeguarding duties** and to raise awareness of safeguarding across the Council. Safeguarding policies and procedures have now been adopted across all Council services and a lot of work has been done to raise awareness and training has been held across the entire workforce.

The Council's Strategic Safeguarding Panel has expanded its focus during the year and has added the 'PREVENT' agenda to its work fields. This is the Home Office-led programme that attempts to prevent individuals from being radicalised.

The violence against women and modern slavery agendas are also matters that are being addressed by the Panel. Matters such as crimes involving the supply of drugs into north Wales has also been given attention and we have identified cases of vulnerable adults within our work fields that are being affected by this increasing problem. We will be collaborating closely with the Police and our key partners to ensure that we do everything within our ability to make Gwynedd a safe area for all our residents.

Quality Standard 04

Encouraging and providing support for people to learn and contribute in society

In order to achieve this, local authorities should:

- Provide support for people to do the things that matter to them
- Assist people to gain the educational skills and achievements they need to participate in the things that matter to them
- Encourage people to be active members in the community and support each other to reduce social isolation.

Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard Four

The “**Dementia Go Scheme**” is going from strength to strength and is a catalyst to develop preventative support to people who live with dementia and their carers. The DementiaGo scheme has held exercise sessions for people who live with dementia and their carers within leisure centres since 2015. This Scheme has been very successful by encouraging people who live with dementia and their carers to keep active, and also to have the opportunity to socialise. Twelve classes are now held across Gwynedd. The scheme has also been extended and developed to offer experiences to residents within our care homes so that they have the opportunity to be as active as possible and reduce the risk of falls, reduce depression and increase the quality of life.



DemnetiaGo



During the year, the **Youth Service** transferred from the Economy Department to the Children and Supporting Families Department. Having the opportunity to socialise, take part in activities and continue to learn and develop new skills outside school is very important to Gwynedd young people. We have recently changed how the Council provides its youth service. The purpose of the Youth Service is to ensure access to a range of informal learning experiences for young people (11-25 years old), which gives them opportunities to gain skills, be innovative, enjoy and play a full part in their communities. Now, a new staffing structure is in place and recruitment is continuing, and staff are reporting that they are very happy in their work - "I love my job". It is highly encouraging that 1,107 young people have received support from the service to date (March 2019), through a range of activities including engagement work, volunteering in their communities, cookery skills and sports. A very good response has been received from young people and parents:

“

I thought I'd give you feedback after my son attended a session in Penygroes last Thursday evening. He and his friends had thoroughly enjoyed themselves - in my son's own words when he got into the car - "Oh, Mam, that was class!"

(e-mail from a parent).

”

In terms of the children who have left care, 82% are now in education, employment or training 12 months after leaving care. This is a substantial increase from the 75% reported last year. Schemes such as Ad Trac will assist us to place the required emphasis on ensuring that the children who leave care are identified as a priority so they receive the support they require to secure further education, training or employment. It is an exciting programme which is moving forward to assist in raising the momentum of the work that needs to be done with the children who are in our care. We are acting upon the recommendations of the

Children's Commissioner, 'Hidden Ambitions' to ensure that children who leave care receive the same opportunities, support and assistance to find their way in the world.

The percentage of children who have left care and are in education, employment or training 12 months later is 82%



Gwynedd has participated in a pilot scheme for the **'When I am Ready'** scheme since 2013 and, since April 2016, it has been a statutory responsibility for all local authorities in Wales. The aim is to offer stability and continuity to young people so that they do not move out of care before they are ready to do so. During 2018-19, four young persons left the care system under this scheme. In the same way the Children's Department is working closely with the Housing Department within the Council to ensure that the experiences of finding accommodation for young care leavers is as positive as possible. Some obstructions have been identified and steps are being taken to remove these.

One of the core principles of the Well-being of Future Generations Act is to ensure that today's actions do not harm our future or the opportunities available for our children. When planning the health and care provision for the future, we must therefore ensure that firm foundations are in place so that we can maintain the increasing demand on those services. In order to strengthen those firm foundations, we must ensure that people of all ages and from all communities are included equally in the discussion around future service planning. Establishing robust communities is a central part of this. Our **'Resilient Communities'** programme, within the Council's Plan, focuses on creating investment in new or current preventative services within primary and community centres that are relevant to children

and people of all ages. The programme will offer new opportunities within preventative services in parallel with the 'business as usual' of the current system. The Council has included 'community resilience' as one of its main improvement priorities for the next five years, and it will be an important part of trying to ensure that individuals can remain and continue to live independently within their communities. A key part of this is the function of the third sector and the huge contribution on unpaid carers. chymunedol sy'n berthnasol i blant a phobl o

We are continuing to fund the '**Community Connectors**' pilot scheme through the ICF fund within our community teams, and the posts are going from strength to strength and are essential in order to understand the strengths of our communities. The purpose of these posts is to increase teams' ability to identify preventative, community resources to support vulnerable adults from developing more intensive problems, as well as trigger community activity that promotes people's well-being. Community Connectors connect the workers in our locality teams with what goes on at grass roots level in order to support people within their communities. During the year, the Connectors have managed to establish successful networks in their local areas, and have made access to community services easier to their colleagues and they have also managed to better highlight the gaps in service. Consequently, some activities have commenced in some areas in an attempt to develop more collaboration, e.g. the establishment of Cydweithio er lles Llŷn meetings which has brought sectors together to share information about new initiatives and hold consultations. Also, in Arfon, we have considered how to collaborate with social enterprises such as Menter Fachwen and Gisda to see how we can work collectively to serve people who are housebound.

Another scheme involved with community resilience is the '**Intergenerational Project**' and this looks at improving how different generations connect. An output from this will be seeking to prevent loneliness by bringing everyone together to undertake fun and

interesting activities. Over the year, the Well-being Unit has been working with the Head of Grŵp Llandrillo Menai Site in Dolgellau on a pilot programme between their students and older people. A successful pilot was undertaken where individuals who lived in the community came to the college, and also at the Cefn Rodyn residential home, to work with students on different activities. In future, this will become a part of the curriculum of some courses and this pilot will also be disseminated to the College's other sites.

The Community Arts Unit is also offering a range of artistic activities across Gwynedd, some of which are specifically targeted towards older people. Amongst these projects, the elderly residents of Awel y Coleg, Bala, and the elderly residents of the Gellilydan area, had the opportunity to attend a **Music Memories** session - a project which attempts to reduce loneliness through the arts. Two primary schools were involved and the statistics show that the scheme tackled loneliness, with over 90% noting that the scheme helped them feel less lonely, and that it had encouraged them to participate in other social activities. The Scheme has now been extended to the Deiniolen and Bethesda areas, and it will continue in 2019/20.

In addition during the year, the 'Spirit of 2012' charity announced the names of three projects that will receive financial support over a three-year period as a result of their 'Music Challenge Fund' and one project from Wales will be amongst them. Under the guidance of William Mathias Music Centre and in collaboration with the Gwynedd Council Learning Disabilities Team, the 'Canfod y Gân' project will bring people with disabilities and people without disabilities together to create music in regular sessions in Caernarfon, Pwllheli and Harlech. This is an excellent example of promoting the well-being of individuals with learning disabilities by providing opportunities for them to co-create and socialise with other participants, professional musicians and volunteers.



Intergenerational Project - Plas Hafan, Nefyn



Quality Standard 05

Providing support for people so that they can develop safely and maintain healthy relationships in the home, with families and on a personal level.

In order to achieve this, local authorities should:

- Provide support for people to maintain relationships that are of importance to them, in accordance with the safeguarding needs
- Assist people to acknowledge unsafe relationships and to safeguard themselves from abuse and neglect
- Where appropriate, give consideration to the views of families, carers and other personal relationships when assessing care and support needs

Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard Five

Within the carers field, the North Wales **Carers Strategy** has now been adopted which acknowledges the importance of working in partnership with carers of all ages. The Strategy has led to developing and co-producing an 'offer' for carers, which includes the service standards that partners are committing to deliver. Over the next few months, we will proceed with the action plan to ensure that we commit in full to the standards, identifying the obstacles and how it would be possible to resolve them.

In terms of the **Annual Questionnaire** that is sent to Carers as part of Welsh Government requirements, it was seen that 53.8% of Gwynedd Carers had reported that they "can do the things that matter to me", with 38.3% reporting that this occurred occasionally, and

the rest saying that they could not do the things that mattered to them. This gives us an idea of the opinion of carers and this, along with more detailed information from individuals, will enable us to measure the success of our developments in the field. In addition to this, we will proceed to develop further measures within the field of carers by the next reporting cycle.

Attempting to **support families** as soon as possible in order to avoid problems from intensifying is one of our goals. The Edge of Care Team was established in order to work intensively with children and their families when their situations at home are fragile. By working with the children and their families, the physical and mental health needs and the emotional well-being needs of the children and their

families are met. During 2018/19, 67% of children who were finishing with the Team showed a reduction in the factors that were obvious pre-intervention, and therefore avoided having to bring children into care in some cases. This type of support obviously has a very positive impact on a number of families and hopefully we will be able to continue to further develop this way of working.

We are statutorily required to establish an IFSS (Integrated Family Support Service) service that provides intensive intervention for families facing difficulties with substance misuse and domestic violence. This service was offered jointly with the Isle of Anglesey Council. Following a full appraisal of the service during the year, we believed that better outcomes could be obtained for the families by providing the service within operational teams and the Edge of Care Team, thus avoiding duplication. The new service is currently under development and is keeping to the principles and the original purpose, but is also integrating with front-line teams in a much simpler way. We will monitor the situation to ensure that we see improved results.

One of the greatest challenges that we face as a Council is identifying **suitable placements** for those individuals who are very difficult to place due to complex and intensive needs. Mainly, these individuals are children in their teens. During the year, we have faced a challenge when placements break down at short notice and where it has been very difficult to find placements for these children in a brief period of time. At times, children were unavoidably placed in placements in England, miles away from their communities and family connections. This situation is not ideal or unique to Gwynedd. The lack of available residential placements, and the increased costs associated with them, is a matter receiving national and regional attention.

The matter was recently the subject of a discussion by the Welsh Government Parliamentary Accounts Committee. On a regional level, work is taking place on a regional feasibility assessment to run a residential placement jointly, or to look at options with local providers for children and young people in north Wales. The task group is expected to report back on possible options during the year. Nevertheless, this will not be a short-term answer to the problem or will it remove the need for us to place some children in specialist residential placements in the future; however, the intention is that it will improve the situation, and retain more children locally.

During the year, the **Youth Justice Service** has been focussing on developing a service for individuals who behave or display harmful sexual behaviours. This is a new service for us and the first of its kind across the region. We have seen an increase over the past years in these types of cases and the intention is for us to be able to offer more expert intervention based on evidence for these individuals and their families.

Families First in Gwynedd offers intervention to families with children who face difficulties, particularly those who experience low income and poverty problems. Families First deals with the provision of different types of support to the whole family, subject to their needs. They do this by means of projects, activities and training provided by sections of the Council, charities and other organisations. A high percentage of families note that a positive difference has been made to their lives after receiving intervention.

90% of families have reported that they have seen a significant improvement in their family lives following intervention



Social work in the field of Children and Families is challenging work. Often, the national pattern is that the workforce is unstable at times. In Gwynedd, the picture is very different, as we have had **a stable** and experienced workforce for many years. Not changing social workers often ensures all-important consistency and stability to children and their families. Being familiar with each other provides the best possible opportunity to foster and develop positive relationships, which is an essential element when offering intervention in an attempt to ensure a positive change.



Quality Standard 06

Working with people and supporting them to achieve better economic welfare, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

In order to achieve this, local authorities should:

- Provide support for people to participate as active citizens, both economically and socially.
- Provide support for people to acquire meaningful work and retain that work
- Provide support for people to receive financial advice and support and assistance with benefits and grants
- Provide access to services through the medium of Welsh and other languages of choice
- Provide support for people to acquire accommodation which meet their needs and to facilitate their independent living

Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard Six

One of Gwynedd's biggest priorities is to ensure **a sufficient supply of suitable** and quality housing to address the needs of a changing population. During the year, we have held a survey of housing needs in Gwynedd and the findings from this assessment, along with population assessments, have helped us gain a clear composite picture of the demand for housing and the challenges facing us. The findings of the assessments show that the demand for social and affordable housing in Gwynedd is currently higher than the supply available and the current response does not meet the needs of the local population now or for future generations. Our assessments show that an increasing number of people are homeless or are at risk of being homeless in Gwynedd. Using this information, we have drawn up a **Housing Strategy** that aims to make the best of our housing supply in Gwynedd as well as improve access to housing by strengthening the support that is available for

people to enable them to independently in their own community.

As part of our efforts to address the demographic challenge and to ensure a sufficient provision for older people that promotes independence, we have been working on the **Hafod y Gest Extra Care Housing scheme**. I am proud to report that the first tenants of Hafod y Gest Extra Care Housing moved in during January 2019. This development is a partnership between Gwynedd Council and Grŵp Cynefin and the scheme was developed by 'Anwyl Construction'. It is located in the centre of the town and community of Porthmadog, and is closely located to the town's shops and facilities. The response of residents to the development has been very positive and it allows older people in the area to benefit from living independently in a secure community environment with flexible care services also available.



Hafod y Gest

The Council acts in order to **prevent homelessness**, but also to provide support to homeless families or individuals. We have seen an increase of 35% in the number of people who present themselves as homeless or at threat of becoming homeless, over the past five years. Last year, a service was provided for 768 individuals. The unit's performance is amongst the best in Wales in homelessness prevention, and supports the emphasis placed on prevention.

The Council experienced increased pressure when attempting to identify accommodation for prison leavers. To this end, with Welsh Government grant funding, the homelessness service has funded a project to coordinate a service for people who are leaving prison.

We have developed a prisoner rehabilitation programme, which is a new way of working that puts the client at the centre. The 'Rehabilitation' Officer is one point of contact that provides a service within prisons and after individuals have been released. We collaborate closely with our key partners to identify accommodation early and co-plan the accommodation arrangements before the individual is released from prison.

The 'Empty Houses Team' has had great success with its '**Grants for First-time Buyers**' scheme. During 2018-19, the Team received 115 applications for this grant, and has already approved £1.5 million of the grant to 85 of these applications. In turn, this will house almost 200 individuals and families. Since the scheme's

inception, we have seen an increase in the number of applications for mortgage deposits, which are available to help first-time buyers gain access to the housing market. There is a high number of empty houses around Gwynedd and the Council has been working to bring some of these houses back into use for the residents of Gwynedd. Currently, there are approximately 1300 empty houses across the County. Positive progress has been made against the "The percentage of private sector dwellings that had been empty for more than six months on 1 April which were reoccupied during the year as a result of direct action by the local authority" measure. By the end of 2018/19, 61 empty houses were brought back into use, with 141 people from Gwynedd being housed as a result.



In response to the **lack of one-bedroom properties**, the service is working jointly with the third sector agency, Cais, to find property for single, vulnerable people in the Bangor area. The scheme being developed will provide accommodation and intensive support for eight individuals, with an emphasis on developing the skills of individuals to enable them to live independently.

Another development in the field of homelessness is the 'intensive support for rough sleepers'. The service is collaborating with North Wales Housing and with the aid of a Welsh Government grant, a support officer has been appointed to encourage people to work with us to help solve their problems, and support them to move on to stable accommodation. To this end, we have submitted a financial bid to Welsh Government's **'Innovative Housing**

Scheme' and has been successful in attracting funds to develop flexible 'pod' units. These units will offer a home with support for the most vulnerable people in our communities. The aim is to develop four 'pods' for four individuals. These innovative plans have attracted attention on a local and national level. We are confident that the 'pods' will be in place by the end of March 2020.

The **Supporting People** programme provides support for vulnerable people to manage or retain their tenancy and live independently. During 2018/19, the programme in Gwynedd has supported 2,157 individuals to gain access to and retain permanent or temporary tenancies. Due to the change in legislation and the conditions of the supporting people grant, more emphasis is now placed on homelessness prevention by means of earlier and more creative intervention. We have developed a "drop-in" service in two areas that offers support for local people before the need for accommodation or more specialist support is reached.

Mapping analysis confirms that our highest priority groups are:

- those fleeing from domestic abuse
- young people
- prison leavers
- homeless people between 25 and 54 years old
- those who misuse substances and single parents.

The gap has become apparent over the previous years, with an increase in the number of our clients who have intensive mental health problems and have either become homeless or are at threat of becoming homeless. In response to this, we commissioned a new service by 'Gorwel' that will be working intensively with individuals with complex needs such as mental health.

A key part of the service for children is our ability as a Council to place children with **foster parents**. As a Council, we are extremely proud of our foster parents and the Fostering Team continues to ensure that we have enough foster parents to meet the needs of children who cannot live at home. We held several recruitment campaigns over the past five years to attempt to encourage more people to become foster parents. Nevertheless, the lack of availability within the field is a challenge for us in Gwynedd. On a national level, the lack of fostering placements is being acknowledged. To this end, the 'Outcomes for Children Ministerial Advisory Group' published the 2017-2020 Action Framework, which aims to:

- Reduce the number of looked after children
- Improve care experiences and outcomes
- Provide better support for young people leaving care
- Tackle the crisis in care

As part of the National Fostering Framework, a detailed work programme is in place, which attempts to address the matter. A regional project manager leads on the work in the north, including analysing the needs of local authorities, care pathways, the profile of the care cohort, the outcomes of court proceedings and placements and, the levels of placement breakdowns. On a local level, work is ongoing to improve the marketing work to attract foster carers, improve recruitment and the profile of Gwynedd as a fostering agent. As a Council, we are corporate parents, and we need to be wise to this challenge and support this work wherever we can.

The success of collaboration between families and the team means that a number of children have been able to stay at home with their families, some have been able to return home from foster and residential care, and it has ensured that vulnerable foster placements have been substantially stabilised. Although the number of looked after children increased during the team's operating period, the number of children in foster or residential placements has remained stable.



4. How we do what we do?

The Welsh Language and delivering against the requirements of the 'More than Just Words' Framework

A core part of any care provision is the need to ensure that users can receive the service through the medium of Welsh. Since 1996, we have been operating bilingually in all aspects of our work. Our Welsh language policy has extended to recruitment processes and requirements, data collection, contracts, commissioning, procurement and training.

As a Council, we are fully committed to the requirements of 'More than Just Words'. We welcome the principles of the Follow-up Strategic Framework published in 2016. I am the national lead for the 'More than Just Words' agenda on behalf of the Wales Directors of Social Services and am a member of the Welsh Language Partnership Board, led by Welsh Government.

As a Council, we make a full contribution to the North Wales 'More than Just Words' Forum and I, as Director, now chair this Forum. The Forum shares ideas and is an excellent opportunity to collaborate with the Health Service, councils and other organisations.

The commitment of Gwynedd Social Services to the principles of 'More than Just Words' is a reflection of the commitment and priority given across the Council to offering Welsh-medium services. A senior officer was designated to promote the Welsh language within the care field. This officer is also known as a 'Business Ambassador' to collaborate with Careers Wales.

We are now in a better position to record the linguistic data since the new WCCIS computer system was introduced. In the future, reports from the WCCIS system will allow us to identify the weaknesses and shortcomings of the provision in terms of the Active Offer that will then be fed into the planning and commissioning process.

The Council undertook broader research over the past year as well, which helps us obtain a better picture of how services succeed to offer bilingual services. A language audit was undertaken, which involved gathering information from managers regarding the ability of their teams and units to act and provide services bilingually. On the whole, a very positive picture was painted. Nevertheless, we are aware of shortcomings in some areas and we are continuing to plan in an attempt to respond to this.

At the end of 2018/19 around 88% of social services staff could speak Welsh, and we are very confident in the Council's ability to provide the Active Offer.



Our workforce and how we support their professional role

Social care in Gwynedd is provided by a number of agencies from the private sector, third sector and by statutory services. Recent research shows that the social care sector creates broader economic value and in an attempt to attract more career interest, we will need to raise the profile and work status of social care.

To this end, we have identified the need to do further work on this and a project within the Council's Plan for 2018-23 will address this matter. Approximately 3,000 staff members have been employed in the Social Care sector in Gwynedd during the year. 122 social workers work for the Council across the children and adults field and we are fortunate in Gwynedd that we manage to retain experienced staff.

The Qualifications Framework for the Social Care Sector in Wales sets a foundation for suitable qualifications in social care and social work. As part of the service registration process, the inspectorate expects care workers to complete a suitable qualification for their jobs, and a high percentage of workers have completed the necessary qualifications. The Workforce Development Unit offers a range of training programmes for in-house providers and their partners. Additionally, we have a comprehensive training and support programme for social workers during their first year of practice, as well as a three-year programme for newly-qualified social workers.

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 outlines an expectation for domiciliary care staff to begin registering as a registered workforce from 2018 and residential workers from 2020 onwards. As a Council, we have now begun work to ensure that our workforce have the necessary qualifications in order to register.

Staff turnover continues to be a problem within the Domiciliary Care workforce and has been identified as a priority for the Council. A number of recruitment drives were held during the year, including work with local colleges to identify individuals to sign-up to the Apprenticeship in Care Scheme. We have also been coordinating work experience to attract young people to the field and have attended recruitment fairs. In partnership with Bangor University, and nearby counties, we offer 16 placements a year to social work students.

Training that focuses on dementia has been held for the entire workforce during the year. In addition, the Council's Training and Development Unit has been running a 'Morals, Excellence and Engagement' programme. The aim of the programme is to ensure the long-term continuation of the service and make the most of communities' capacity to support people and families who live with dementia to enjoy the best possible quality of life. To this end, we are introducing a purposeful training programme that works towards excellence.

The 'Collaborative Conversations' training for social work teams has continued during the year and the training has focused on identifying what matters to individuals.

Our financial resources and how we are Planning for the future

We must bear in mind that the Council's budget has reduced over the past years, mainly due to the reduction in the grant received from Welsh Government. Whilst the money we receive is reducing, the demand on our services, and on our budget as a Council, is increasing. People are living longer, and often with complex health conditions, and this in turn can lead to the need for higher spending. Therefore, keeping a balanced budget to ensure that we are able to provide essential services to the people of Gwynedd, is no mean feat.

As a result of these challenges, we have attempted to be more flexible and creative in the way we provide our services. Consequently, we have attempted to keep the impact on the people of Gwynedd to the minimum, and have sought to achieve more in those priority fields. A part of this is attempting to ensure that we look at better and seamless methods when providing our services to people. The Parliamentary Review, and more recently, A Healthier Wales, noted that we could work in an integrated way and by making use of technology and that this would improve the quality of health and care services for people. Therefore local plans of a transformational nature are in progress that will seek to respond to the challenge of delivering health and care services in more coordinated

Working in partnership

A core part of our current work is working with our key partners, such as Health and the third sector, through local and regional arrangements. Comprehensive programmes are in progress, which aim to transform our culture and practice, with financial support from Government through the Transformation Grant. Robust governance arrangements are in place across Gwynedd and Anglesey in order to ensure that we work as one.

A key partner in order to achieve what matters to people, is the Third Sector. A Liaison Group is in place within the Council with the aim of having an overview of the field and assurance that effective collaboration is taking place between the statutory organisations and the third sector. The group's arrangements have been strengthened recently, and attempts were made to ensure that governance arrangements are clear. Introductions and visits take place through the Liaison Group which ensures that matters are discussed openly and positively.

Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

It is important for me to draw your attention to Part 8 of the Act, which notes the requirements imposed on me as the Statutory Director of Social Services. Gwynedd Council Cabinet has approved the 'Director's Protocol'. This is a document that outlines how we will ensure that we address the legislative requirements. This protocol ensures robust governance arrangements along with strong lines of accountability. This protocol is available on the website and it is important that staff and members also familiarise themselves with the requirements.

The Council has robust governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of social services. As well as submitting reports to scrutiny committees, we also have a robust departmental performance challenging structure in place. We also hold regular meetings with the Inspectorate to ensure that our procedures are sound. The Scrutiny Committees has made a substantial contribution again this year in scrutinising particular fields and offering us important perspectives in order to continually improve.

The Council has appointed two Cabinet Members for the fields within Social Services, namely Councillor Dafydd Meurig for the fields of Adults, Health and Well-being, and Councillor Dilwyn Morgan for the fields of Children and Supporting Families.

Learning and Development

As previously noted in this annual report, learning and improving is key if we wish to improve our performance and achieve what matters to the people of Gwynedd.

Arrangements are in place to report back regularly on complaints arising from the care field, and every effort is made to resolve them, respond to them and learn from them as soon as possible. Hearing the views of our service users about the quality of our services is very important to us if we are to continually improve, and the complaints procedure is a part of this. A specific annual report is published on

complaints, which offers an overview of all complaints received across all Council departments during 2018/19; however, I wish to take the opportunity to summarise the main messages of relevance to the health and social care fields within the report.

The aim is to respond to every complaint with fairness, impartiality and respect so that the individual is confident that his/her complaint will be handled professionally and positively. Often, when the individual chooses not to pursue the formal Complaints Procedure, the matter is dealt with as an enquiry, an informal complaint,

or 'Step 1'.

By responding positively during these initial steps, some matters can be effectively resolved without the need for the formal Complaints Procedure as this is an opportunity to deal with any misunderstanding or to respond to enquires. Without a doubt, this is the best outcome for everyone. One of the prominent themes when dealing with enquiries and informal complaints is the misunderstanding between people due to the lack of clear communication or regular communication.

By following the principle of focusing on a successful early and local resolution, complaints do not, usually, need to be escalated to Step 2 of the Complaints Procedure, namely an independent investigation to resolve disputes / problems / issues. Compared with other Local Authorities in North Wales, the Children and Supporting Families Department and Adults, Health and Well-being Department of Gwynedd Council is extremely successful in dealing with Step 1 complaints, whilst a higher proportion of complaints in other Authorities are escalated to Step 2.

In 2018/2019, the Children and Supporting Families Department received one request to escalate a complaint to Step 2 of the Social Services Statutory Complaints Procedure. The investigation was carried out during Quarter 2 and Quarter 3. A request was submitted by another complainant during Quarter 3 for a complaint to be investigated under Step 2 arrangements immediately, without following Step 1 initially. However, to date, it has not been possible to commence the Step 2 investigation, as the complainant has failed to agree to the scope of the complaint to be investigated by the Independent Investigator that has been appointed. The Department is continuing to strive to work with the complainant to confirm the scope of the complaint in order to ensure that the complainant's complaint is fully and fairly investigated under Step 2 of the Complaints Procedure.

During 2018/2019, the Adults, Health and Well-being Department received four requests to escalate complaints from Step 1 to Step 2 of the Social Services' Complaints procedure. Three of the investigations have ended and comprehensive responses were provided to the individual complainants. As far as we are aware, the complainants have not, so far, referred these cases to the Ombudsman.

5. Priorities for 2019/20

Here are the main priorities of Social Services for the 2019/20 year:

- Re-design services in line with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 and the principles of 'A Healthier Wales'
 - Communities Transformation Agenda
 - Mental Health Agenda
 - Learning Disabilities Agenda
 - Children and Supporting Families Agenda
- Strengthening the resilience of communities
 - Dementia Agenda (including Dementia Go)
 - Intergenerational Agenda
 - IAA
- Improvements from the feedback of CIW/Commissioners
 - Improvements from the Children SSD report
 - Further strengthen safeguarding adults matters
- Adopt and implement the Gwynedd Council Housing Strategy 2019/24



6. Gaining access to further information and key documents



Well-being and Population Assessments

[Gwynedd Well-being Assessment](http://llesiantgwyneddamon.org)
(llesiantgwyneddamon.org)

[Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-being Plan](http://llesiantgwyneddamon.org)
(llesiantgwyneddamon.org)

[North Wales Population Assessment](http://www.cydweithredfagogleddcymru.cymru)
(www.cydweithredfagogleddcymru.cymru)

Gwynedd Policies

[Training Information](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)
(www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

[Language Policy](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)
(www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

[Listening, improving, responding](http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)
(www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru)

National Reports

[More Than Just Words Report](http://www.llyw.cymru)
(www.llyw.cymru)

[Report of the Older People's Commissioner - A Place to Call Home](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com)
(www.olderpeoplewales.com)

[Report of the Children's Commissioner - Hidden Ambitions](http://www.childcomwales.org.uk)
(www.childcomwales.org.uk)

[Parliamentary Review of Health and Care in Wales](http://www.llyw.cymru)
(www.llyw.cymru)

Access to further information

[Dewis Cymru](http://www.dewis.cymru)
(www.dewis.cymru)

Concerns about an individual.

If you are aware of an individual who is at risk of abuse or who is being abused, it is very important that you inform the Council or the police.

If the individual is in imminent danger, call the police on 999. If not in imminent danger, call Social Services as soon as possible to share your concerns.

Child:

01766 772577
01248 353551 (outside working hours)
cyfeiriadauplant@gwynedd.llyw.cymru

Adult:

01766 772577
01248 353551 (outside working hours)

Appendix 1 - 2018/19 Performance Measures

Adults, Health and Well-being Department

Measure	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Number of users of adults services who receive direct payments	121	-	121	139	142
Percentage of older people and people with physical disabilities where an increase is seen in achieving what matters to them	-	-	88%	80.5%	98.8%
The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons per 1,000 population aged 75 or over	1.05	2.38	3.40	4.9	5.23
% of the adult protection referrals completed during the year, where the risk has been controlled	100%	96.7%	97.9%	97.6%	91.5%
Of the % of the adult protection referrals completed during the year, the percentage where the danger has been controlled (except for those who have refused intervention)	-	99%	100%	99.4%	93.1%
The average number of calendar days taken to issue a Disabled Facilities Grant	316	271	281	204	211
The percentage of private sector dwellings that had been empty for more than six months on 1 April which were returned to occupation during the year as a result of direct action by the local authority	5.7%	5.13%	3.68%	4.82%	4.7%
Number of affordable units secured for Gwynedd	144	48	71	77	87
Time taken (number of days) for the Homelessness Unit to achieve a prevention plan for those at threat	84.94	69.08	77.73	101	
Length of stay in temporary accommodation (number of days)	75.82	126.02	104.44	92	89.57

Children and Supporting Families Department

Measure	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Percentage of 2 year olds in attendance at **Flying Start	82%	83%	84%	81%	79%
Number of the senior parenting assistance packages which result in travelling a positive distance	38%	48%	89%	65%	89%
Percentage of families who have reported progress after receiving a service from the Team Around the Family (Gyda'n Gilydd)	30%	25%	95%	92%	90%
Transitional plan agreed for disabled children aged 16 years	100%	100%		100%	100%
Pathway plan agreed for looked after children	100%	100%	100%	99%	97%
The percentage of looked after children on 31 March, with experience of moving school once or more during their period or periods of receiving care and if that move was not because of transition arrangements in the 12 months up to 31 March	18.7%	18.1%	17.1%	10%	16.7%
The percentage of looked after children at 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year	6.2%	7.7%	6%	7.5%	5.9%
Percentage of reviews of looked after children held within the statutory timetable during the year	93.8%	91%	91%	89%	85%
The percentage of child protection reviews to be held within the statutory timetable during the year		85.5%	92.0%	90%	94%

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	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
The percentage of statutory visits with looked after children that were supposed to be held during the year that were held in accordance with the regulations	89%	86.9%	90%	92%	93%
The percentage of eligible, relevant children who were relevant and who have pathway schemes as required.	100%	100%	100%	100%	97%
The percentage of eligible, relevant and previously relevant children that have been allocated a personal advisor	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of case conferences where the voice/views of the child were heard (except children under 7 years old)	83%	85%	84%	92%	99%
The rate of children who were discussed in supervision, where significant harm had been considered (and the answer recorded)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Percentage of risk assessments submitted to a Case Conference which were considered as exhibiting quality in decision making	98%	97%	94%	96%	99%