



# Complete Agenda

Democratic Services  
Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Meeting

**CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**10.30 am, THURSDAY, 15TH NOVEMBER, 2018**

**NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS ONLY AT 10.00AM**

Location

**Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH**

**\* NOTE**

**This meeting will be webcast**

[https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en\\_GB/portal/home](https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home)

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(DISTRIBUTED 07/11/18)

## **CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

### **MEMBERSHIP (18)**

#### **Plaid Cymru (10)**

Councillors

Menna Baines  
Elin Walker Jones  
Olaf Cai Larsen  
Linda Ann Jones  
Peter Read

Alan Jones Evans  
Dafydd Owen  
Annwen Daniels  
Rheinallt Puw  
Catrin Elen Wager

#### **Independent (5)**

Councillors

Eryl Jones-Williams  
Beth Lawton  
Angela Russell

Richard Medwyn Hughes  
Dewi Wyn Roberts

#### **Llais Gwynedd (1)**

Councillor  
Anwen J. Davies

#### **Gwynedd United Independents (1)**

Councillor  
Vacant Seat - Gwynedd United Independents

#### **Individual Member (1)**

Councillor  
Vacant Seat - Individual Member

#### **Ex-officio Members**

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

# **A G E N D A**

## **1. APOLOGIES**

To receive any apologies for absence.

## **2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

## **3. URGENT BUSINESS**

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

## **4. MINUTES**

4 - 9

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 13<sup>th</sup> September, 2018 be signed as a true record (attached).

## **5. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY**

10 - 32

**Cabinet Member – Councillor Craig ab Iago**

To receive a report on the above (attached).

## **6. RECRUITING AND RETAINING DOMICILIARY CARE STAFF IN GWYNEDD - OLDER PEOPLE**

33 - 36

**Cabinet Member – Councillor W.Gareth Roberts**

To receive a report on the above (attached).

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## CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 13.09.18

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**Present:** Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Chair)  
Councillor Dewi Wyn Roberts (Vice-chair)

Councillors: R. Medwyn Hughes, Elin Walker Jones, Cai Larsen, Beth Lawton, Dafydd Owen and Catrin Wager.

**Apologies:** Councillors Annwen Daniels, Anwen Davies, Rheinallt Puw and Angela Russell. Also Councillor W. Gareth Roberts (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being).

**Officers present:** Gareth James (Members' Manager - Support and Scrutiny) and Eirian Roberts (Member Support and Scrutiny Officer).

**Present for item 5 below:**

Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department)  
Ceryl Davies (Senior Manager - Complex Needs)

**Present for item 6 below:**

Learning Disabilities Services

Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department)  
Ceryl Davies (Senior Manager - Complex Needs)

Children Services

Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)  
Aled Gibbard (Senior Operational Manager - Care Resources)  
Iona Griffith (Children and Families Service Manager)

Education Service

Councillor Gareth Thomas (Cabinet Member for Education)  
Einir Thomas (Senior Manager - Additional Learning Needs and Inclusion)

**Observer:** Sharon Eastlake, Care Inspectorate Wales

The Chair expressed his good wishes to Glynda O'Brien, a former Member Support Officer on her recent retirement after 40 years' service to the previous Meirionnydd District Council and this Council. It was agreed that a card would be sent to her on behalf of all members of the Committee, thanking her in particular for her dedicated service to this Committee and its predecessor, the Services Scrutiny Committee, over the years.

Iona Griffith, Children and Families Service Manager, was also wished well as she would be retiring at the end of this month after 40 years of service in Local Government.

Councillor Catrin Wager was welcomed to her first meeting of this Committee, also Eirian Roberts (Member Support Officer).

### 1. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST -

Councillor Elin Walker Jones declared a personal interest in Item 6 - Autism - Children Services and the Education Service - because:

- She worked for the central team, that was the equivalent of Derwen, at Besti Cadwaladr University Health Board.
- Her daughter worked as a Behavioural Analyst at Ysgol Pendalar.

She was not of the opinion that the matters were prejudicial interests, and she did not withdraw from the meeting during the discussion on the item.

## **2. URGENT ITEMS**

No urgent items were received.

## **3. MINUTES**

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 7 June 2018, as a true record.

## **4. UPDATE - LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICES**

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, updating members on the action plan stemming from the inspection of the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales and Healthcare Inspectorate Wales into the quality of care and support provided by the Learning Disabilities Service.

The Leader and the Senior Manager elaborated on the content of the report, and also responded to questions / observations from members. The following main points were raised:-

- Since the Active Support and the PBS Team is the first team of its kind in Wales, it was noted, once the work of gathering the data has been completed in March 2019, that a report outlining lessons from this model, the outcomes and how it was intended to be developed in future with other counties would benefit the Committee.
- Close and positive collaboration between the service and the Health Board was welcomed.
- It was noted that, as regards the weaknesses, the relationship with the specialist occupational therapy services needed to be improved and refined in addressing the needs of adults with more complex and challenging learning disabilities. Recruiting information and advice officers to the new Preventative Team that would come into force in April 2019, would also need to be considered.
- It was noted that the service was addressing the financial challenge through a combination of factors, including collaboration with external providers to look at every opportunity to submit grant applications, identify over-provision, review every case the service supports and consider out of county placements.
- The service's vision and the development work taking place with Dr Sandy Toogood from Bangor University was welcomed.
- In response to an enquiry into the number of applications for support and assistance that were turned away and why, it was explained that, unlike the historical arrangement where people were turned away if they did not fit into a specific category, the needs would now be met in alternative ways. It was noted that the figures could be looked at in more detail to see whether there could be figures about people who were turned away. It was believed, however, that if needs did exist, they would be met, either by the Learning Disabilities Service or by the Adults Service. It was added that discussions about strengthening the arrangements for those adults where an element of risk existed but who would not necessarily need specialist support were taking place. It was further noted, when

considering the service's data, that information could be found to answer the questions raised by the member and the discussion could be continued with her.

- Staff members who worked during their own time to assist with groups and evening social opportunities, mainly the cookery groups, were thanked. However, the question was raised as to why that happened in the first place and whether there was a role for the third sector to assist with these kinds of activities.
- It was noted that the Audit and Governance Committee had looked at the backlog of DoLS assessments and had given the Department a clear message about the need to deal with cases promptly. It was also understood that some social workers were already qualified to carry out DoLS assessments before the recent training and it was asked whether those individuals conducted assessments. In response, it was noted that the department was attempting to ensure that the resources were being allocated to deal with the assessments, especially to give priority to the urgent cases, but that this remained a very challenging field in Gwynedd, as in almost all other Local Authorities. Approximately 30 officers were now able to carry out the assessments, including those who had long since received training. Considering the questioning at this Committee and at the Audit and Governance Committee, because of the risks involved, the Head agreed to inform the Chair and Vice-chair on progress in this field.
- The Department was asked to share information with the Committee about the multi-disciplinary Transformation Group.
- The work that had been carried out over the past two and a half years to address the recommendations in the review of the service was welcomed. The Committee was persuaded that the work was moving in the right direction but, at the same time, it acknowledged that much work still needed to be done.

## 5. AUTISM

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being, the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, and the Cabinet Member for Education elaborated on the current services in the field of Autism and the plans to develop them over the coming years.

Since the work was taking place across a number of services and as they were planned and maintained by three Departments within the Council, the three Departments provided separate reports.

The Cabinet Members and officers expanded on the content of the reports, and also responded to questions/observations by the Members.

### (A) Learning Disabilities Services

The following main points were noted:-

- Concern was expressed that the needs of adults with autism, but who did not have learning disabilities, were not being met and that autism was being discussed under the learning disabilities services. Most people with autism did not have learning disabilities and there was now a move toward considering autism as a condition rather than a disability. Furthermore, everybody had a contribution to make and it was important to promote the skills of each individual. In light of the fact that the Autism Bill was currently being discussed by the Senedd in Wales, the Council would have to take seriously the needs of people with autism, and treat these needs differently henceforth. In response, it was noted that the Learning Disabilities Service took these needs seriously. It was confirmed that autism was not a separate

service within the Adults, Health and Well-being department at present. It was believed, however, that it was currently located where the expertise existed to deal with complex cases within the Departments, and that this was where coordination across the Department and contact with other Departments took place.

- It was noted that there was a lack of support for people with less profound and less long-term conditions and the importance of supporting adults before they became isolated or before they found themselves in a situation where they needed professional help or medication was emphasised. It was also noted that early intervention saved money in the long term and reference was also made to the lack of mental health experts in the Health Service.
- The view was expressed that the Council should employ an autism officer to be a point of contact for families and who would be able to collaborate with the third sector. It was also suggested that information should be included on the website about which resources, groups were available. In response, it was noted that a support worker had been appointed through the IAS Project to work in Gwynedd. Also, as requirements changed, and more data emerged about things the Council needed to do, the Department would continue to consider what exactly to provide. This could, eventually, lead to the need for a coordination officer or the like, but the Council had not yet reached this point.

(B) Children's Service

The Cabinet Member took the opportunity to thank Councillors Beth Lawton and Angela Russell for their contribution to the performance challenge meetings and to the Chair for his part in the report on the recent audit of the service.

The following main points were noted:-

- It was noted that one of the current shortcomings was the lack of resources which meant that there was inconsistency across North Wales on the structure of the Neurodevelopmental service established for children with autism across Wales and that waiting lists were longer. Some resources had been transferred from the services for disabled children to the new service that affected Derwen, and any intervention was dependent on short term grant funding. Another shortcoming was that only health staff were employed / seconded to the Neurodevelopmental service and that Education had very little time to contribute to the arrangement. The service had no social workers, which meant that families were not receiving carer assessments and support services, etc. and a group of children and young people with autism existed that did not receive much service beyond the diagnosis. Services also lacked resources in terms of the time of clinical psychologists, with waiting times of over a year in some parts of North Wales. There was also a clear lack of resources to develop short break resources further since the service's budget had already been reduced through the Gwynedd Challenge process.
- It was noted that the Council could not afford to cut more services for children and their families since the problems were long term and this was the most fragile cohort of our society.
- It was emphasised that a Children and Families Service Manager was a key post within the service; and in order to ensure continuation, a plea was made to retain the post after Iona Griffiths, the current post-holder, retired at the end of the month.

- The Derwen staff were congratulated and thanked for their excellent work.

(C) Education Service

The following main points were raised:-

- It was asked whether awareness should be raised in schools about autism so that interventions could take place at schools where children were low on the spectrum. In response, it was noted that a training programme was being developed for schools and that it was part of the new strategy relating to additional needs and inclusion.
- An enquiry was made about the future of the Autism Centre on the Ysgol Coed Mawr site as a result of closing that school as part of the plan to modernise education in the Bangor area. In response, it was explained that the hope was to find another location for the centre within another school building in Bangor. As it was not possible to confirm the situation at present, the Cabinet Member agreed to raise the matter and bring the answer to the local members in Bangor. Concern was expressed that members did not know about the unit in Coed Mawr and that it was not, therefore, possible for them to evaluate its importance when considering the plans for schools in the Bangor area.
- The vision of placing the child at the centre was praised. Yet, the question was raised as to how this could be reconciled so that every child was given the same opportunity. Concern was raised that several families who entered the process mentioned very different experiences - some failed to gain access to the service because the school would not accept that a problem existed, others were on a waiting list and were not getting support as they had not been given a diagnosis. In response, it was noted that the coordinator and head teacher had a duty to identify the children, with the assistance of the educational psychologist, and to work through that process. There was a process of grading and of identifying, at the secondary level also, in addition to a specific and comprehensive training programme. In terms of reconciling and monitoring, the service had created a monitoring programme that would be a way of sharing good practice, and four quality officers were responsible for reconciling the service the department and schools provided for pupils.
- A question was asked as to how success was measured. In response, it was noted that Estyn would be used to monitor the schools' provisions and that the progress of the pupils would be measured against the Therapeutic Outcomes Measurement, which looked at soft skills, and this would be reported back to the Management Board.
- It was asked whether it would be possible to arrange training for parents through Skype. It was noted in response that, although it would be possible to arrange general training through Skype, the type of training provided for parents would usually be more in-depth and that Skype would not be suitable.
- It was noted that the lack of follow up and support for parents following diagnosis fell on the school psychologists and special teachers, and that the question of providing support for parents would have to be put to the Health Board. From the child's point of view, it was noted that the basis of the new strategy was that the Education Service intervened early by looking at the needs of the child, rather than the condition, and prepared an individual development plan that met the needs of the child and not the diagnosis. In response to a comment suggesting that this did not happen in every case, it



was explained that this was a very new and innovative strategy. It would take time to rationalise the service across the whole county, but that was the service's aim.

- A more comprehensive report was requested for the Committee, which detailed the numbers of children receiving out of county education, the number of children who did not attend school and who had autism / did not have autism along with information about special schools.
- It was asked whether there was a waiting list to see an educational psychologist. In response, it was noted, although a clinical psychologist had to be seen for a diagnosis to be given, it was not necessary to see an educational psychologist to obtain the provision under the new arrangement. Schools liked the new arrangement as it was easier for them to raise matters under their own school, but parents were familiar with the old arrangement of seeing an educational psychologist and they did not always understand that education differed from health. It was also noted that the Council had a full and fairly young team of educational psychologists who were able to conduct assessments through the medium of Welsh.
- In response to an enquiry, it was confirmed there was good collaboration in the field of autism between the three departments. Big steps were being taken in the collaboration with the Health Board, with the Alltwen project being a catalyst for that with much discussion and consideration given to problems from the user's perspective.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 1.10pm.

**CHAIR**  
**CHAIR**

# Agenda Item 5

<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Homelessness Strategy</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>Respond to the Outcomes of the Strategy and the Local Work Plan</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Arwel Wyn Owen</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>Cllr. Craig ab Iago</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>15th of November 2018</b>

## 1.0 Background

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires every local authority to undertake a strategic review of homelessness in their area every 5 years and to develop and publish a homelessness strategy based on the findings. Under the Act, the Homelessness Strategy must seek to achieve the following objectives within the local housing authority's area:

- a) The prevention of homelessness
- b) Ensuring that suitable accommodation is and will be available for people who are or may become homeless
- c) That satisfactory support is available for people who are or may become homeless

Gwynedd Council have undertaken its first Homelessness Review in line with legislative requirements and are consulting on a Local Action Plan to provide a local strategic response to tackling and responding to homelessness across Gwynedd. A copy of the Homelessness Executive Review document is attached as Appendix 1.

The implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 signalled both a legislative and cultural shift in the Council's response to homelessness. Gwynedd's Housing Service places prevention at the core of service delivery, with a strong focus on meeting the needs of service users through person centred solutions.

## 2.0 Statutory Duties

2.1 Homelessness is one of the Council's statutory responsibilities and there are a number of legal duties which the Council is required to undertake. The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 that came into force in April 2015 has placed additional statutory responsibilities upon the Council, including:

i) a duty to assess the accommodation and support needs of everyone who is homeless or threatened with homelessness.

ii) a duty to assist anyone who is threatened with homelessness within 56 days to help prevent homelessness.

iii) a duty to provide assistance to any homeless person to help them secure a home.

2.2 In addition, the Council continues to have a duty to provide temporary accommodation for people in priority need if it is not possible to find them somewhere else to live.

2.3 There is no requirement to be in priority need to be eligible for a duty under 2.1 and as a result more people can receive help where they did not qualify under the old legislation.

### **3.0 The impact of the New Legislation on the service**

3.1 Following the changes to the Homelessness Legislation the service has seen a significant increase in the number of people who require assistance

<b>Number of referrals to the Service</b>	
2014/15	560
2015/16	648
2016/17	722
2017/18	760

The above show an increase of **28.9%** between 2014/15 and 2016/17

3.2 Cases can also remain open for a much longer period because the duty to prevent homelessness starts within 56 days of becoming homeless, and after that, if we cannot prevent homelessness, the duty to identify another property is open for a further 56 days. The burden of cases is heavier on officers because of this change.

3.3 In addition, the administrative responsibilities has increased due to the statutory requirement to provide each applicant with a written notification of what duty is relevant to their case and a notice when that duty ends and moves to a new duty.

3.4 Officers are having to spend more time looking for affordable property in the private sector, which proves difficult due to a number of factors, including changes in the welfare benefit regime, high rent rates, and a lack of one bedroom accommodation.

3.5 Although the numbers placed in temporary accommodation have reduced, due to the successful homelessness prevention work, those who have received temporary accommodation have had to remain there for longer periods while waiting suitable permanent properties.

3.6 The Homelessness Unit reports on a number of measures to the Welsh Government and in line with most authorities there has been a decline in performance which reflect the pressures facing the service. Despite this decline, the service has performed well compared to other authorities, who also experiencing an increase in workload.

#### **4.0 Prevention**

4.1 Gwynedd Council has for many years placed an emphasis on trying to prevent homelessness as we believe this improves service user experience and lead to greater stability for users and families as their networks can be maintained. This work also proves to be more cost effective. The new Housing Act reinforces the need to focus on preventing homelessness. However, a number of factors affects upon our ability to secure positive results for the vulnerable client group.

#### **4.2 Identifying suitable accommodation for homeless people**

There are significant challenges in identifying properties for certain groups, namely single people and people with complex needs, e.g. people with mental health problems, prison leavers, and people with alcohol and drug misuse problems. An increasing number of people with high needs are discharged to the community without support. In addition, there is a general lack of one bedroom properties and supported housing in the County.

#### **4.3 Changes in the Welfare Benefit System**

There are significant challenge resulting from the reform of the benefits system that has a significant impact on particular groups and imposes a burden on the service. A high number of people now receive housing benefit that is lower than private and social rent, resulting in the need to identify extra money to cover accommodation costs that puts pressure on the sustainability of tenancies

4.5 The service has also witnessed an increase in the number of people requesting help due to tenancy affordability issues following a change in benefit. The impact of Universal Credit has already been seen for single people who have transferred following a new application. More presentations are anticipated when universal credit is extended to everyone.

4.6 The effect of the benefit cap is also impacting with families with several children.

## 5.0 Regional Approach to Preventing Homelessness

Alongside a local review, the North Wales Local Authorities have also committed to tackling homelessness collectively across the region, and have prepared a Regional Homelessness Strategy, which supports the local delivery action plans. The Regional Homelessness Strategy seeks to:

- Develop a regional approach to tackling homelessness in North Wales
- Share best practice across the region
- Develop shared services and collaboration where possible
- Develop a better understanding of the causes of homelessness through better data capture across the region
- Reducing homelessness in North Wales

The Regional Homelessness Strategy seeks to reduce homelessness across North Wales focusing on three themes of **People, Homes and Services**.

The core commitment from the six local authorities in North Wales is to create a culture of better collaboration, in terms of addressing the specific issues causing homelessness.

## 6.0 Local Action Plan

A Local Action Plan for 2018-22 is being consulted upon and this will aim to build on the progress achieved to date by Gwynedd's Housing Solutions team and further develop and enhance existing services and initiatives in response to need.

This Local Action Plan has considered the findings of Gwynedd's Homelessness Strategy, which provides a comprehensive analysis of homelessness across Gwynedd and highlights issues and gaps in service provision, which need to be addressed alongside partner agencies. The action plan focuses around the priorities of the North Wales Homelessness Strategy, and opportunities for regional collaboration.

The local delivery plan has been formulated in consultation with partner agencies. The Council recognises that the Local Authority working in isolation cannot tackle homelessness, and that progress is dependent upon effective and targeted partnership working between the Local Authority and organisations who are working to prevent and respond to homelessness. It is intended that the final action plan will be delivered in conjunction with key partner agencies.

The Local Action Plan concentrates upon the following strategic themes based upon the findings of the Homelessness Review.

### Services

- Delivering an effective Housing Solutions Service to meet service user needs.

- Ensuring robust early intervention and homelessness prevention services are in place.

#### **Homes**

- Reducing reliance on temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast.

- Increasing access to supported and permanent housing options.

#### **People**

- Meeting the complex, multiple and diverse needs of our clients.

### **7.0 Governance**

7.1 The Homeless Strategy will cover the period 2018 to 2022 and will be monitored and reviewed by the Preventing Homelessness Steering Group, alongside the Council's internal performance management systems. Gwynedd's Homelessness Forum will play a key role in assisting with the delivery of the Local Action Plan.

### **8.0 CONCLUSION**

8.1 The report highlights that the homelessness service faces many challenges due to legislative and benefit changes as well as the increased expectation. The service already recognizes that demand has increased and the forecast is that it will continue to grow. It is therefore crucial to consider how we will respond to ensure the sustainability of the service and to help manage expenditure in future.

# Homelessness Review 2018

## Executive Summary

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Gwynedd Council

Executive Summary

September 2018

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**This Homelessness Review has been prepared by arc4 Ltd. on behalf of Gwynedd Council. The Review itself provides a detailed analysis of the levels and nature of homelessness, an audit of the services and a review of the resources available to spend on homelessness within the county.**

**It also provides an evidence base for Regional North Wales Homelessness Strategy, alongside Gwynedd’s Homelessness Local Delivery Action Plan.**

*This report takes into account the particular instructions and requirements of our client. It is not intended for and should not be relied upon by any third party and no responsibility is undertaken to any third party.*

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*Directors - Helen Brzozowski – Michael Bullock*



## 10 Key findings

- There is an increasing demand on the Housing Solutions service following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. An increasing number of households are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Gwynedd. Evidence throughout the Review suggests that this increase will continue.
- There are a very high proportion of single people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Specific housing options and prevention solutions will need to be developed to meet the needs of single people. Single people often present with multiple and often complex needs.
- The Housing Solutions service is under considerable pressure, which is further intensified by the very large geographical area of the County, and the dispersed way in which the service is delivered. There is a need to invest in additional staffing resources, together with reviewing systems and processes.
- There are high numbers of households in temporary accommodation, and a high use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation. Further work is needed to more fully understand the temporary accommodation requirements, and how these are best met, including future projected demand, through the development of a temporary accommodation plan
- There is a high demand of social housing, and a mismatch between the social housing stock provision and the demand for this accommodation. This is especially the case for two bedroom accommodation, with demand significantly outweighing supply.
- The Housing Solutions service has had significant success in preventing homelessness, with the percentage of people whose homelessness was prevented or relieved in Gwynedd being the highest across North Wales and considerably higher than the Welsh average. However this level of achievement is unlikely to be sustainable due to the service pressures detailed above.
- The most successful prevention tools used are assisting people to move into social housing and private rented accommodation. More work needs to be done to increase the number of households who are prevented from losing their existing accommodation.
- The main causes of homelessness in Gwynedd are:
  - Loss of rented or tied accommodation
  - Leaving prison
  - Parents and relatives no longer willing to accommodate,
  - Relationship breakdown
  - Domestic Abuse
- There is an increasing demand for Supporting People funded services, a formal needs assessment would provide a comprehensive understanding of the need and demand for housing related support across the County, which would then inform a robust commissioning strategy.
- It is becoming increasingly more difficult for Housing Solution's customer to access private rented accommodation, this is in part due to affordability, a competitive market, and reluctance from landlords to accept tenants in receipt of benefits, particularly in relation to concerns regarding Universal Credit. These challenges will be further intensified with the Wylfa Development, which will create additional demands for private rented accommodation in the area.

## Background

The Housing (Wales) Act 2014 requires every local authority to carry out a review of homelessness every four years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other local statutory and voluntary organisations.

This review will provide a basis for a strategic approach to tackle and prevent homelessness and will help to build upon the positive work that already takes place in Gwynedd to provide individuals in housing need with a range of housing options to prevent and alleviate homelessness across the county.

This Executive Summary provides an outline of the main findings of the review, an analysis of future trends and the next steps in terms of strategic responses.

## Methodology

The homelessness review is required to cover:

- An analysis of the past, current and future levels of homelessness
- An audit of the services aimed at preventing, accommodating and supporting people who are or may become homeless
- A review of the resources available to spend on homelessness within the County

The review process has drawn upon a wide range of sources, including homelessness statistics, supporting people data, housing advice data and a series of consultation exercises.

There are many complex issues that can give rise to homelessness, many of which are outside the scope of the Local Authority. Therefore in compiling this review, the Council has worked closely with a variety of other statutory and voluntary agencies.

The review should be seen as a multi-agency document which recognises that partnership working is key to preventing homelessness and developing long term sustainable housing and support solutions.

Consultation has been central to the development of the Homelessness Review and will continue to be an important element when developing the Regional Homelessness Strategy and Gwynedd's local delivery plan.

Consultation has been undertaken through a range of different methods with customers, partner agencies and Council staff.

This has included focus groups, stakeholder interviews, questionnaires and online surveys with customers.

## Homelessness in Figures

### Service Requests

Since the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 demand on Gwynedd’s Housing Solutions Service has increased. There was a 36% increase on households accessing the service in 2017/18 compared with 2014/15 (under the previous legislation). This increase in demand is reflective of an increase in homelessness across North Wales.

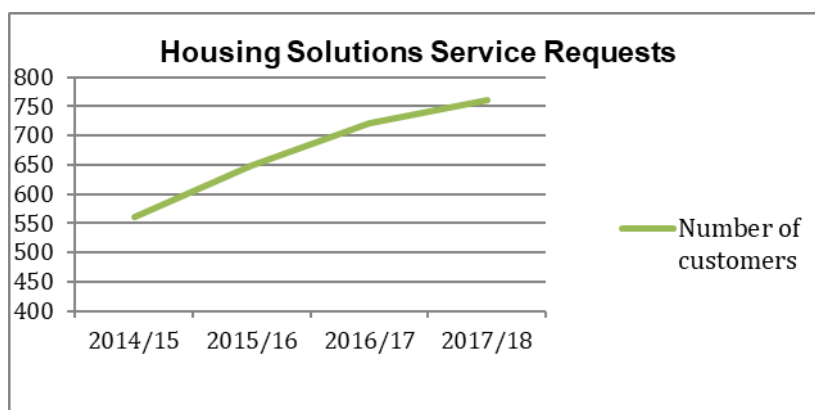


Fig 1: Source: Housing Solutions database

The service provides appointments and drop-ins from 4 locations across the County. In 2016/17 there was a relatively even split between demand in the North (387) and the South (335), however in 2017/18 the demand increased significantly in the North (481) and reduced slightly in the South (279).

### Assessments

The table below summarises the recorded outcomes under the Housing (Wales) Act 2014.

Outcomes	2015/16 Total	2015/16 of which single	2016/17 Total	2016/17 of which single	2017/18 Total	2017/18 of which single
Total applications for assistance that resulted in s62 assessment	-	-	622	397	629	377
Ineligible	0	0	3	2	1	1
Eligible but not homeless or threatened with homelessness	11	4	19	14	24	14
Threatened with homelessness, prevention assistance provided (s66)	162	85	209	100	157	82
Homeless, subject to duty to help secure accommodation (s73)	150	63	206	122	318	234
Eligible, homeless but not in priority need	8	0	2	2	12	12
Eligible, homeless and in priority need but intentionally so	3	2	0	0	0	0
Eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need (s75)	17	5	35	12	45	21
Total outcomes	351	159	474	252	557	364
Total prevention/relief	249	131	322	153	352	217

In 2017/18 there were a total of 629 applications for assistance that resulted in a S62 assessment (where there was a reason to believe the household was homeless or threatened with homelessness), 60% of these applications were from single people.

There is a significant proportion of single people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness across Gwynedd.

In 2017/18 following the assessment a total of 157 households, of which 52% were single people, were assessed as being threatened with homelessness within 56 days and owed a prevention duty under S66. Only 25% of assessments resulted in a prevention duty (S66 duty) being owed – this suggests that many customers are approaching the service once they have actually become homeless, this means that opportunities for effective early intervention and prevention are lost.

In 2017/18 318 households, of which 74% were single, were assessed as being homeless and owed a duty to have their homelessness relieved under S73 (a duty to help them to find alternative accommodation). A very high proportion of single people are owed a relief duty (S73 duty). While the reasons for this are not clear there is a possibility that the service is struggling to prevent single people from becoming homeless due to a lack of options available, and as such, single people may be progressing to S73. There is also a possibility that single people are not approaching the service for assistance until they are actually homeless. This is also the case in a number of other Authorities across North Wales.

In 2017/18 45 households, of which 47% were single households, were found to be eligible, unintentionally homeless and in priority need, and owed a duty to provide accommodation within the private rented or social housing sector (S75 duty).

## Causes of Homelessness

The main cause of homelessness in Gwynedd is the loss of private rented accommodation, followed by people leaving prison.

The other main causes include relationship breakdown, domestic abuse, and family/friends asking household to leave.

These mirror the main causes of homelessness across North Wales. While leaving prison was one of the top five causes for homelessness across North Wales, in both Wrexham and Gwynedd it was the second highest cause of homelessness.

## Prevention and Relief

In 2017/18 of the 157 households owed a duty to prevent them from becoming homeless (S66), 114 households (73%) were successfully prevented from becoming homeless. Of these 38 were helped to remain in their existing accommodation, accounting for 33% of all the prevention outcomes under S66.

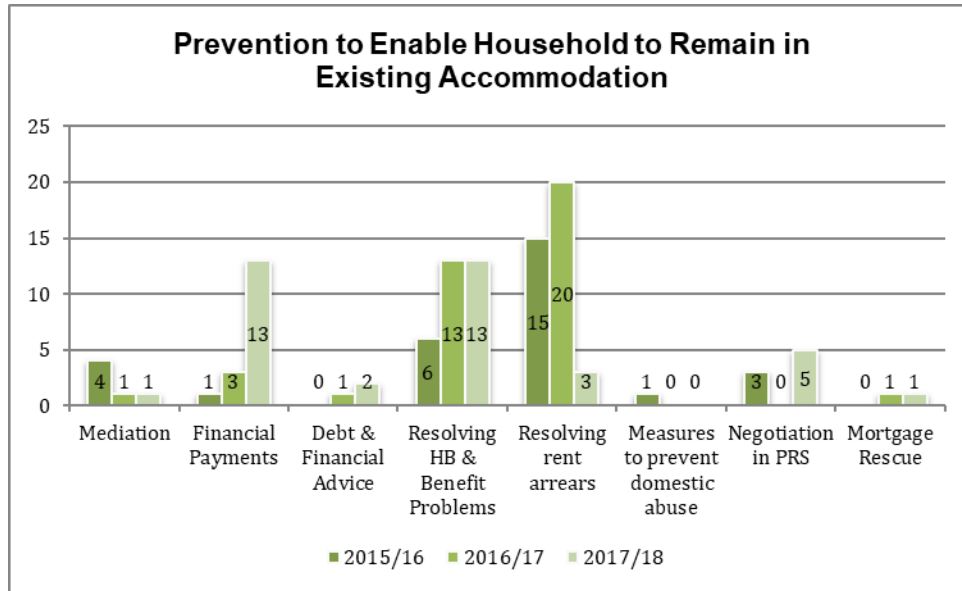


Fig 3: Source: Welsh Government Returns

The most successful prevention tool used to enable households to remain in their existing accommodation in 2017/18 was financial payments (which may include Discretionary Housing Payments, or payments from the homeless prevention fund to cover damage or arrears) and resolving housing and welfare benefit problems.

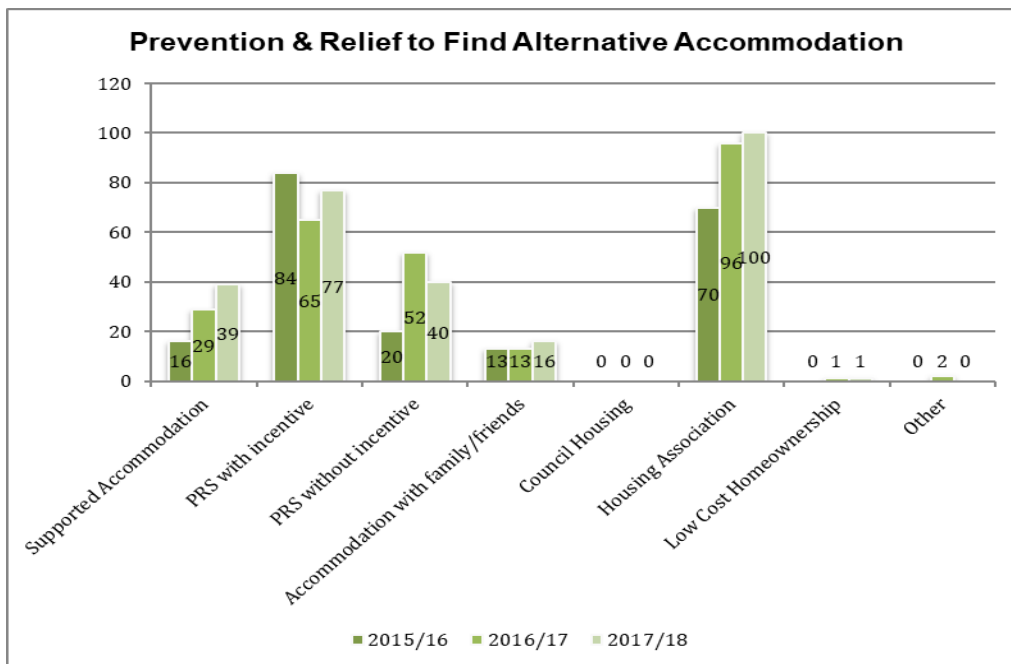


Fig 4: Source: Welsh Government Returns

In 2017/18 a total of 76 households had their homelessness prevented under s.66 by being assisted to find alternative accommodation, and a further 197 households had their homelessness relieved under s.73.

The most successful tool in enabling households to obtain alternative accommodation was providing assistance to access social housing accounting for 100 cases, a further 117 households were assisted to access the private rented sector.

In 2017/18 62% of those owed a relief duty had their homelessness successfully relieved.

Gwynedd had both the highest percentage of successful prevention outcomes (Section 66) and of successful homelessness relief outcomes (Section 73) in North Wales during 2016-17 at 78% and 66% respectively, and was higher than the Wales average.

### Use of Temporary Accommodation

At the end of March 2016 there were 77 households in temporary accommodation, this increased to 93 in March 2017.

At the end of March 2016 there were 12 households in bed and breakfast, this figure increased to 21 in March 2017.

The graph below shows the number of households accommodated in temporary accommodation (including B&B) at the end of each year. This figure is a snapshot in time, and therefore does not represent the total number of households placed in temporary accommodation over the year.

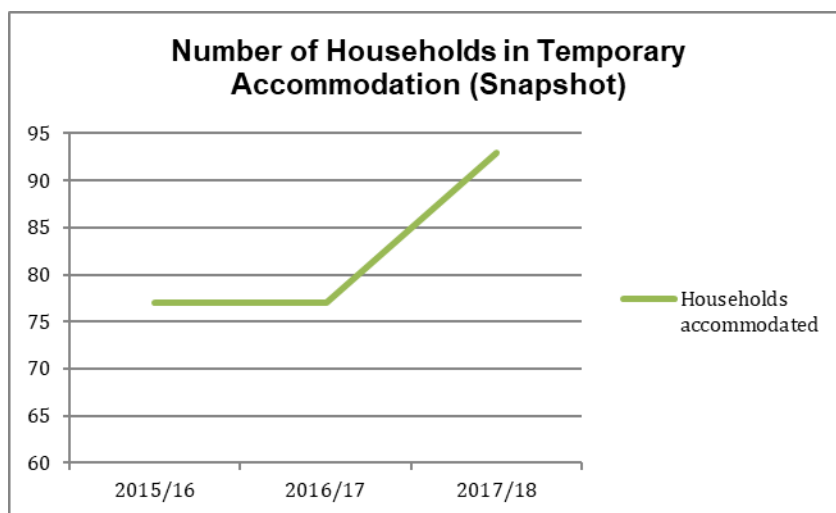


Fig 5: Source: WELSH GOVERNMENT RETURNS

The use of temporary accommodation increased significantly by 21% in 2017/18. This increase is not accounted for by an overall increase in demand for the service, as the number of clients approaching the service remained relatively static. However a larger proportion of clients approached the Housing Solutions team when they were actually homeless (s73) as opposed to when they were threatened with homelessness (s66) in 2017/18 compared with the previous year.

In 2017/18 a total of 365 households were placed in temporary accommodation during the course of the year, an increase of 16% compared with the previous year. The main increase is for clients being placed by the Arfon office.

The graph below shows the number of households accommodated in B&B at the end of each year. This figure is a snapshot in time, and therefore does not represent the total number of households placed in B&B during the year.

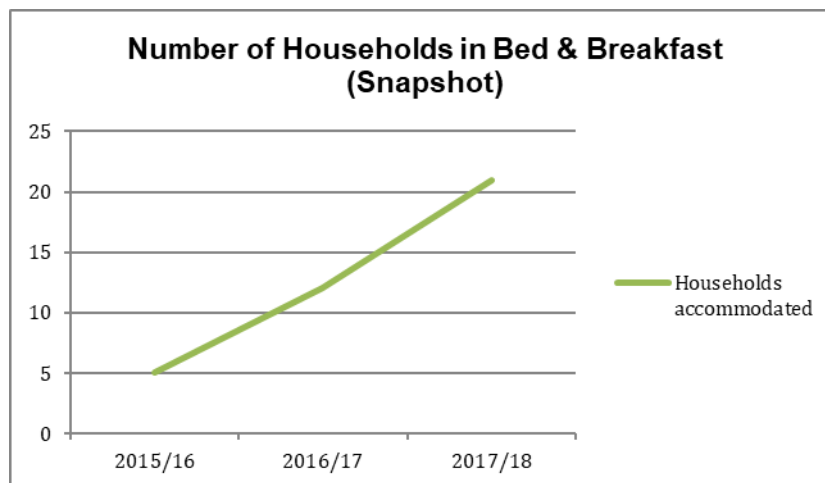


Fig 6: Source: WELSH GOVERNMENT RETURNS

The use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation has increased significantly over the last three years, with a 75% increase in its use between 2016/17 and 2017/18.

There is an increase in the use of temporary accommodation and Bed & Breakfast across all of the North Wales authorities.

The use of B&B accommodation is increasing in Gwynedd, this is in part due to a lack of more appropriate temporary accommodation, and an increase in the number of households approaching the service at the point that they are already homeless, and minimal throughput of the units available due to a lack of affordable move on options.

## Access to Accommodation

### Social Housing

In 2010 Gwynedd Council transferred its housing to stock to Catrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd (CCG). Within Gwynedd social housing accounts for 16% of the total housing stock. Of the stock 60 % is 3 bedroom accommodation and only 8% of the stock is 1 bedroom accommodation, in contrast with 40% of Housing Register applicants who are seeking 1 bedroom accommodation.

There is a low turnover of Social Housing, with an annual average of 550 lets, this figure is decreasing annually. In 2017/18 129 of these lets were general needs 1 bedroom accommodation and 217 2 bedroom accommodation.

At the end of July 2018 there were just under 2,000 households on the Housing Register. The greatest demand is for general needs two bedroom accommodation followed by one bedroom accommodation.

Analysis of the local housing register against the Social Housing Stock indicates that there is a mismatch of housing stock and demand.

The level of evictions from Catrefi Cymunedol Gwynedd housing peaked in 2014/15, it is likely that this is linked to the introduction of the bedroom tax. Since then the number of evictions has reduced slightly, however the figure for 2017/18 still remains higher than pre 2014/15 levels, and equates to 0.4% of the housing stock. It has not been possible to compare this with the other Housing Associations operating across Gwynedd as this information was not supplied for the Homelessness Review.

## Supported Accommodation

There is a high demand for supported accommodation and floating support services. During 2017/18 there was a total of 1876 referrals to Supporting People funded services, this was a 38% increase compared with the previous year.

In 2016/17 there were 66 individuals in accommodation based services who were unable to move on due to the lack of accommodation and a further 225 accessing floating support services.

## Private Rented Sector

In Gwynedd the Private Rented Sector accounts for 15% of the total housing stock. Given the limitations on the size and investment in the social rented stock, it constitutes an essential element in the provision of housing for people who may otherwise be homeless.

The private rented sector in Gwynedd is not a particularly affordable market, low proportions of properties are within Local Housing Allowance levels, with people in receipt of Local Housing Allowance often having to find significant funds to make up the shortfall in rent.

## Shared Accommodation

Shared accommodation is increasingly becoming the only affordable housing option for young single people but there is a limited supply and much of this accommodation in Bangor is targeted at the student market.

The lack of shared housing significantly restricts the affordable housing options available for single people particularly those who are under 35 years and in receipt of local housing allowance.

## Affordable Housing Need

The draft Local Housing Market Assessment 2018 identifies an annual shortfall of 231 affordable dwellings across Gwynedd.



## Rough Sleeping

The official rough sleeping count carried out in November 2017 found 3 people rough sleeping in Gwynedd, however work and evidence gathering undertaken in the period prior to the count estimated that there could have been an additional 30 people sleeping rough in Gwynedd.

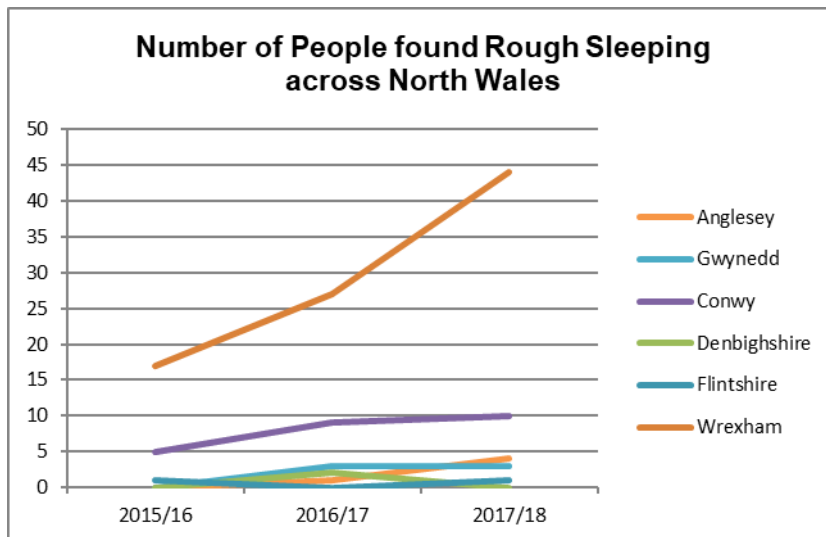


Fig 7: Source Stats Wales

During the last two quarters of 2017/18 the commissioned outreach service worked with a combined total of 184 rough sleepers, sofa surfers and those threatened with homelessness across Gwynedd.

The majority of rough sleepers are located within Bangor, however there are also individuals sleeping rough in the more rural areas of the County. Increasing levels of rough sleeping is a challenge for Gwynedd, together with many of the other Local Authorities in North Wales.

## Key Findings

The implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014 signalled both a legislative and cultural shift in the Council's response to homelessness. Gwynedd Council places a high priority on preventing homelessness with a focus on delivering individually tailored solutions for its customers.

The key findings from the Homelessness Review are:

### Homelessness Levels across Gwynedd

- There is an increasing demand on the Housing Solutions service following the implementation of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. An increasing number of households are homeless or threatened with homelessness in Gwynedd. Evidence throughout the Review suggests that this increase will continue.
- The main causes of homelessness in Gwynedd are:
  - Loss of rented or tied accommodation
  - Leaving prison
  - Parents and relatives no longer willing to accommodate,
  - Relationship breakdown
  - Domestic Abuse
- There are high numbers of households in temporary accommodation, and a high use of Bed & Breakfast accommodation. Further work is needed to more fully understand the temporary accommodation requirements, and how these are best met, including future projected demand, through the development of a temporary accommodation plan.
- There are a very high proportion of single people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness. Specific housing options and prevention solutions will need to be developed to meet the needs of single people.

### Rough Sleeping

- There is an increasing number of people sleeping rough across Gwynedd as indicated by a number of data sources and supported by consultation responses
- Data from the outreach service indicates a significant issue with rough sleeping and sofa surfing in Bangor. In order to have an accurate understanding of rough sleeping across Gwynedd and to be able to identify any trends and patterns a simple database or spreadsheet needs to be developed to record outreach findings.
- There is a need to develop targeted services in response to this growing need, including flexible direct access provision in line with a No Second Night Out (NSNO) offer.

## Services Available for the Prevention of Homelessness

- Gwynedd Housing Solutions provides a very good quality service and has had significant success in preventing and relieving homelessness, with a strong focus on putting the customer first. The integration of the Housing Solution, Housing Register and Supporting People teams provides an integrated service for customers, however there may be further opportunities to streamline working and provide a more joined up service.
- The current caseload size of Housing Solutions Officers is unmanageable and not sustainable in the long term. The high caseloads are impacting upon the team's ability to successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, with the inevitable impact this then has on the level of B&B and temporary accommodation placements. There is a need to review caseloads, structure, systems, processes and resources to ensure that caseloads remain at a manageable level and opportunities for effective prevention are maximised.
- The large geographical and rural nature of the County poses particular challenges in relation to service delivery. The service is delivered from 4 locations across Gwynedd. While this makes the service accessible for customers, it does, however, impact significantly upon staff resources, and consequently caseloads and morale. A mini-options appraisal could be undertaken to consider how the Housing Solutions service could be delivered moving forward, to provide an effective service across the whole of Gwynedd, while reducing the impact upon staff.
- The Housing Solutions service is able to both successfully prevent and relieve homelessness, and had the highest percentage of successful prevention and relief cases across North Wales in 2016/17. However, this may not be sustainable.
- There are many examples of excellent partnership working to prevent homelessness, there is a need to continue to develop these partnerships and implement joint protocols. There is a need for a more joined up approach to early intervention and prevention with adult social care colleagues. This is particularly the case for responding to clients with complex needs, including poor mental health, to ensure the right support is in place to resolve the underlying medical and support needs.
- There is a need to increase awareness of the Housing Solutions Service and other services available across Gwynedd to ensure that partners and customers are aware of what is available and how to access it. This is especially important if early intervention and prevention is to be achieved
- There is a need for a fit for purpose integrated ICT system for homelessness, supporting people and the Housing Register.

## Accommodation and Support Available for People who are Homeless or Threatened with Homelessness

- Owner-occupation is the dominant tenure within Gwynedd. However, accessing this tenure has become increasingly difficult given house price increases over the past few years, with a house price affordability ratio in 2017 of 5.8, compared with 5.42 in Wales.
- The social rented sector plays a vital role in providing affordable accommodation in Gwynedd. However the number of lettings made to new tenants is far outweighed by the number of

households on the housing register, this is particularly the case for single person accommodation and 2 bedroom accommodation.

- The private rented sector plays an important role in providing accommodation for a variety of households and income groups who cannot access owner occupation or social renting. Access to the private rented sector is frequently used to prevent homelessness. However loss of private rented accommodation is the main cause of homelessness in Gwynedd. It is becoming increasingly more difficult for Housing Solution's customer to access private rented accommodation, this is in part due to affordability, a competitive market, and reluctance from landlord's to accept tenants in receipt of benefits, particularly in relation to concerns regarding Universal Credit.
- Affordability is a significant issue within parts of Gwynedd in relation to owner occupation and privately renting. Low levels of income and reliance on benefits among households in housing need further exacerbates the problem. There are significant shortfalls between Local Housing Allowance rates and the average private rent levels.
- The impact of current and future welfare reform set against a backdrop of a difficult economic climate will continue to pose particular challenges and make it even more important that services for those at risk of, or experiencing, homelessness, are as effective as possible.
- There is a need to maximise access to social housing for households who are homeless or threatened with homelessness.
- There is a need to review the landlord offer in order to ensure that a comprehensive and competitive landlord offer is developed, that enables clients to not only access the private rented sector but to also successfully sustain this accommodation. This will be of critical importance in light of the Wylfa Development.
- There is a need to develop a range of affordable housing options for single people under the age of 35; this may include lodging schemes, house shares and supported provision.
- There are high levels of demand for supported accommodation. A formal needs assessment would provide a comprehensive understanding of the need for housing related support services across Gwynedd to inform a robust commissioning strategy.

## The Needs of Identified Groups

- Young people are over-represented in the homelessness statistics and supporting people data, when compared with population data, indicating a lack of suitable and affordable housing options for young people. It also indicates that young people are at a greater risk of becoming homeless.
- The North Wales Homeless Health Needs Audit identified a high prevalence of mental health issues for those that were rough sleeping (91%) and the majority of these did not feel that their mental health needs were being met by services. Consultation undertaken throughout the Review identified a lack of engagement from mental health services, with services only becoming involved once the client was in crisis.
- There are a very high number of complex cases, including both single people and families with multiple and challenging needs. There is a need to have a better quantitative and qualitative

understanding of these issues, alongside understanding if existing provision meets the needs of these customers.

- There has been an increase in the number of evictions from social housing (CCG) due to rent arrears. It is essential that social housing tenants are able to access debt and money advice, and that referral pathways with Citizen's Advice Bureau should be fully utilised. There is a need to review joint protocols with Housing Association partners, particularly with a view to reducing the impact of Universal Credit on rent arrears.

## Future Challenges

Whilst there has been considerable success in preventing homelessness in Gwynedd, there are many factors, which potentially may have an affect on the number of people faced with homelessness. It is important that these are recognised and, wherever possible, services enhanced to minimise the negative effect of each of the factors.

### National

- The continuing impact of the economic climate, financial pressures and personal debt.
- Financial pressures on local government budgets and homelessness services, including uncertainty regarding on-going Homelessness funding and the move to flexible funding.
- Many of the services which sustain people in their own tenancies or provide alternative accommodation options are funded through Supporting People. It is important to recognise that any reductions in funding would have a significant impact on future levels of homelessness.
- Reducing numbers of social rented housing through historic right to buy sales coupled with a reduction of void levels could result in less available accommodation for those on the housing register.
- Welfare Reform has already begun to have an impact upon homelessness levels, and it is likely that the further welfare reform changes identified within the Review will continue to impact upon individual's ability to meet their housing costs. In particular the roll out of Universal Credit has led to an increase in rent arrears amongst social tenants, this is likely to continue to increase, and potentially lead to an increase in evictions, as has been witnessed in other areas of England and Wales.
- Ongoing financial pressures on households may lead to overcrowding and breakdown in family relationships.
- Rent Smart Wales – the increased requirements of landlords, may continue to result in some landlords, including smaller scale, or 'accidental' landlords choosing to sell their properties, reducing the number of private rented properties available for Housing solution clients.
- The removal of intentionality for homeless families by 2019, will have an impact on services, with the need to find suitable accommodation options for families with often, complex and multiple needs, and a poor tenancy history, placing a demand on the Housing Solutions team.
- An increase in mortgage rates would result in an increase in people unable to meet their mortgage payments, with a likely increase in repossessions, including both home-owners and buy to let landlords.
- The end of interest only mortgages- the Financial Conduct Authority estimates that 600,000 interest-only -mortgages will have reached the end of their term by 2020 – and half of those borrowers have no means to pay back the debt. A third of the shortfalls are expected to be more than £50,000.

## Regional

- An ageing population will require appropriate housing and support to prevent an increase in homelessness amongst older households.
- The national increase in the prison population increases the risk of people losing their home whilst in custody. The new prison in Wrexham is likely to result in an increase in prison leavers accessing service provision in Gwynedd.

## Local

- The lack of one bedroom accommodation, and in particular affordable housing options for under 35 year olds, is likely to lead to an increase in young single people being unable to resolve their own housing issues. This will result in an increased demand from this customer group on the Housing Solutions service and other support and advice services.
- From the 1st April 2018 there will be a requirement for any properties rented out in the private rented sector to normally have an energy performance rating of E or above on an Energy Performance Certificate (EPC). The regulations will come into force for new lets and renewals of tenancies from 1st April 2018 and for all existing tenancies on 1st April 2020. This will have a significant impact upon Gwynedd given that much of the private rented accommodation in the County is older, and will not meet the required standards
- Affordability issues and the limited access to private rented accommodation, including shared accommodation options, makes it increasingly more and more difficult for the Housing Solutions service to be able to find affordable and sustainable housing options for clients. Unless affordable accommodation is available it is anticipated that homelessness will continue to increase.
- Wylfa Newydd will generate additional housing demand from up to 8,700 construction workers at its peak in the mid-2020s. There will be a significant requirement for additional housing over the build period and beyond which is likely to impact on the most vulnerable, and cause potential displacement in the private rented sector.

## Next Steps

In order to ensure that the information contained within this review is a true reflection of homelessness in Gwynedd the review will be made available to all stakeholders and the wider public for consultation.

Following this review and consultation responses the Council is required to produce and publish a Homelessness Strategy. Gwynedd Council is working with the other Local Authorities across North Wales to produce a Regional Homelessness Strategy. This will be supported by a Local Delivery Action Plan to respond to the issues in Gwynedd identified within the Homelessness Review

The Council is committed to working with its partners to preventing homelessness in Gwynedd, and working with the neighbouring Authorities to develop joined up approaches and initiatives to prevent and reduce homelessness across North Wales.



Meeting	Care Scrutiny Committee
Date	15 November 2018
Title	Recruiting and retaining domiciliary care staff in Gwynedd – Older People
Author	Rhion Glyn, Senior Business Manager
Member	Gareth Roberts, Cabinet Member Adults, Health and Well-being

## 1. Introduction

- 1.1. In April 2018, Cwmni CELyn was commissioned to research the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care staff in Gwynedd. It was recognised that the Adults, Health and Well-being Department was facing challenges as a commissioner and provider and that the research would be the basis to assist the response to the situation. As well as presenting the conclusions of the research thus far, this report will highlight the context and will draw attention to work which is already underway in the field of domiciliary care. It will also provide a basis and a starting point for the Scrutiny Committee to consider the work in greater detail in order to improve the situation.
- 1.2. Historically, it has been a challenge to ensure sufficient domiciliary care in the Meirionnydd area. By now the situation has deteriorated and for the first time there is a waiting list for care in parts of Arfon and Llŷn. This is a cause for concern for the department and means that a number of people have to go without care across the county. The impact of this is additional pressure on families or the users having to remain in hospital for longer than required. This problem in itself is not unique, throughout the Country there are reports of huge pressure on the sector but in Gwynedd the situation has got significantly worse recently. The implications of not being able to support people in their homes has an impact on a large number of people, staff and partners such as the Health Board.
- 1.3. In addition to this the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 reinforces the need for us to put individuals at the centre of what we do, to work with partners in a way which prevents needs from increasing. It also emphasise the need to ensure the well-being of those who need care and support in order to make sure that the right support is provided at the right time.
- 1.4. The brief for the research was as follows: To research the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care staff in Gwynedd and find out:
  - What is the situation across the sector in Gwynedd?
  - What are the reasons behind this?
  - Whas is the good practice based on research?

## 2. Background

- 2.1. The population of Gwynedd is ageing, particularly the population aged 85 and over. The average age of people who receive a social care service in Gwynedd is 84 years and 1 in 4 of the oldest people in Gwynedd are living with dementia. This means a huge challenge to ensure that suitable, timely and sustainable support is available for the older population.
- 2.2. The census data over the last decade shows that the population of those aged 65 and over has increased in Gwynedd by 28% and the population of those aged 85 and over has increased by 157%. By 2030 it is expected that there will be a further increase of 68%.
- 2.3. The Gwynedd Ageing Well Plan (2016) states that there is a high percentage of households with only one person, and that person is over 50 years old. The percentage is already higher than the rest of Wales – 28% compared with 24% - and it is expected that this will increase to 32% by 2030. At the same time, the aspirations of older people – and those of society in general are changing. All surveys show that older people wish to remain in their own homes, to be as independent as possible and to have as much choice as possible. Obviously, these will have implications in terms of the requirement to satisfy the care needs of an increasing proportion of the population and this at a time when local authority budgets are under continuous pressure. Preparing for ageing well will be a challenge for everyone, and we all have a part to play when trying to seek the best solutions for older residents.

- 2.4. The main aim and principles of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department are:

*“To provide social care services for residents aged 18 years old and over who require advice, information, support or care due to specific needs . The Department’s main principles are:*

- *Ensuring the well-being of those who require care and support*
- *Our services will focus on people, and give them a strong voice in the decisions made on the support they will receive*
- *Services will be provided by means of Partnerships and by collaborating*
- *Services will attempt to prevent the escalation of people’s needs, and endeavour to ensure that the right support is available at the right time*

The four above principles interweave in order to achieve the Department’s objective, namely to enable Gwynedd adults to: **‘Live my life as I wish.’**

- 2.5. Once a person comes to the department’s attention, the first step is that the worker discusses with the person what is important to him/her and how they can achieve that. This will encompass the individual’s health and care needs, and will take place jointly with health workers. If care and support needs are identified, any arrangements to respond to those will be discussed and confirmed with the individual and very often the family. If there is a specific need for domiciliary care, the lead worker (who can be a health or a social care worker) will contact the Brokerage Officers within the department and they will set about to find a provider who can provide care.

### **3. The conclusions thus far**

The initial conclusions of the research are summarised below:

- 3.1. The research has demonstrated that the situation regarding the current recruitment and retention of home care staff is very problematic and is now in 'crisis'. The situation is complex, there is no one reason which is causing the problem, but rather a combination of matters and factors.
- 3.2. Domiciliary care staff are completely vital for maintaining older people at home for as long as possible. There are waiting lists in areas where it hasn't been a problem before and providers report that they are finding it difficult to respond to the demand as a result of lack of capacity and that it is very difficult to run as a 'business' by now. The words "crisis" and "breaking point" are used often by carers to describe the seriousness of the situation.
- 3.3. The demand for care in the community is increasing as the population ages, but there is now no sufficient workforce to respond to the demand. The situation is not unique to Gwynedd, the country's challenging financial situation has an effect on the money available for the field and therefore has an effect on the level of payment that the authority is able to pay to providers. Nevertheless there are 'factors and unique matters' which are within the ability of Gwynedd Council to respond to, and to influence to address the situation and create a sustainable model for the future.
- 3.4 The conclusions of the research can be summarised under the following headings:

#### **3.4.1 Pay and conditions of service**

The research has demonstrated that current staff 'retention' is as much of a problem as recruiting from the outset, with providers competing against each other for a small pool of staff. Workers feel that their level of pay is too low to 'live' on, whilst the responsibilities of the post and the expectations placed on them have increased over the years. Staff also reported that it was difficult to maintain a balance between life and work because of the need for them to be available for lengthy hours, and that they are keen to work established block hours/shifts in order to have stability. They are often attracted to work in the Health sector and in the retail field.

It is concluded that the Council's internal workforce feels that the recent changes in their conditions of service have a negative effect on staff retention, with this in turn affecting the recruitment of new carers as they hear of the reasons why workers leave.

#### **3.4.2 Image, status and profile**

When talking to workers as part of the research work, some said that they felt that there was a lack of acknowledgement of the important work that domiciliary care workers do to keep people at home. Carers don't know what will be facing them when they enter someone's home and they need to be ready to respond there and then.

There are also concerns regarding the need to register providers by 2020, which, in the view of workers places further responsibilities on them without acknowledgement through pay to support that.

### **3.4.3 Attracting people to the field**

Although work has been happening to attract workers to the field jointly with schools, Careers Wales and the Jobcentre Plus, that work has happened on an ad-hoc basis. There has also been a lack of a clear career pathway in the field, unlike the situation in other fields, e.g. health workers.

### **3.4.4 Commissioning arrangements**

It appears that commissioning arrangements have an effect on the ability of providers to offer a sustainable service, and on the terms and conditions that they have agreed with their staff. Concerns have been raised by some providers that the care business is no longer profitable. Providers also had strong feelings that the sector is not sustainable and that we are currently in crisis with the problem of staff recruitment and retention at its worst.

## **4. Other considerations**

- 4.1 Gwynedd Council and the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board has a project underway which looks at a different model of providing home care. The intention is to commission jointly to achieve outcomes, rather than paying for specific tasks or hours.
- 4.2 The project thus far suggests that it is possible to reduce the demand by working with the individual and family on the outcomes, work on more of a community and flexible basis, and give more capacity for domiciliary care workers to make decisions. Although advantages are anticipated the research highlights the significant challenge regarding how home carers could see the change, the risk of losing experienced staff during a time of uncertainty, and therefore the need to ensure that they have been included along the journey and own the change.
- 4.3 A presentation was made to the members of the Care Scrutiny Committee on the initial successes of the project on 29th May 2018.

## **5. Next steps**

Some work continues to need to be done in order to complete the research, and the conclusions thus far have demonstrated that there are elements which need further work. Work is already underway with domiciliary care workers on the alternative model of provision and that will continue. The Scrutiny Committee is now asked to consider what further work is needed in order to reduce the effect of the current situation and remove barriers to providing a quality domiciliary care service which places the individuals at its centre. The final report will be available for members in order to carry out that work.

