
CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 3 FEBRUARY 2022

Present: Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Chair)
Councillor Angela Russell (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Menna Baines, Beca Brown, Anwen J. Davies, Alan Jones Evans, Richard Medwyn Hughes, Gareth Tudor Morris Jones, Linda Ann Jones, Olaf Cai Larsen, Linda Morgan, Beth Lawton and Dafydd Owen.

Officers present:

Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor) and Sioned Mai Jones (Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 5:

Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being), Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Mari Wynne Jones (Senior Manager Adults Services) and Matthew Hawes (Occupational Therapy Lead).

Present for item 6:

Councillor Dafydd Meurig (Cabinet Member - Adults, Health and Well-being), Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department), Rhion Glyn (Assistant Head - Adults, Health and Well-being) and Hawis M. Jones (Projects Team Manager - Adults, Health and Well-being).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Berwyn Parry Jones.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Declarations of interest were received from Councillor Menna Baines and Eryl Jones-Williams for item 5, as they had been involved with the Occupational Therapy Service in their personal lives. They left the meeting during the discussion on the item.

3. URGENT BUSINESS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 25 November, 2021 as a true record.

5. PROGRESS UPDATE: OCCUPATIONAL THERAPY SERVICE

A presentation was received from the Occupational Therapy Lead for the Moving and Handling work within the Community Resources Unit. Details were provided of the new team, which includes four Occupational Therapists and one Registered Nurse; this team will be specifically involved with the Moving and Handling work within the County.

He elaborated on the importance of the Moving and Handling work, which reduced the

risk of injuries, reduced hospital admissions and reduced the time spent in hospitals. He also added that the field was essential in order to assist individuals to live as independently as possible, and retain their dignity. One element of the work of the Moving and Handling assessors will be single care. By assessing and providing specialist equipment and timely intervention, it could mean that one person could provide care safely. This will release the capacity of carers and provide suitable care in a cost-effective way.

The Occupational Therapy Lead reported that he would share a bilingual copy of the presentation with the members. Members were invited to ask questions and offer observations.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by members:

- Gratitude was expressed for the presentation which provided a better depiction of the improvements that the Occupational Therapy service and the Moving and Handling team had made to the lives of Gwynedd residents.
- A question was asked about how residents in the community would be informed about the team's work and whether there were plans to engage with the public in order to make them aware of this resource. It was suggested that a presentation could be given to organisations such as Merched y Wawr or the Women's Institute (WI), who would then disseminate the message.
- It was suggested that it would be beneficial to provide this presentation to all of the County's Councillors.
- A further explanation was sought about the waiting lists that continued to exist for assessments in some areas and a question was asked about the length of the waiting lists and whether Occupational Therapists could be moved around areas. It was questioned whether the service was consistent across the County.
- It was asked whether there were plans to employ additional Occupational Therapists and further details were sought on point 3.7 of the report which referred to jobs in the Children's Service and the Learning Disability Service.
- The appointment of four Occupational Therapists and the Registered Nurse to establish the Moving and Handling service was praised and they were thanked for their work in supporting the residents of Gwynedd in a dignified way. It was added that it was nice to see the amount of work that had been achieved by the Occupational Therapy service over the past year. Particular thanks were expressed to the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being, the Senior Adults Services Manager and the Occupational Therapy Lead for their work.

In response to the above observations and questions from members, it was noted:

- That the service was seeking to disseminate the message about the service's existence through members of the Community Resource Teams (Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, district nurses and general practitioners), as well as thinking of different ways to connect with

individuals who would benefit from the service. The Occupational Therapy Lead added that he would be willing to provide a presentation and was eager for people to know of the availability of this service. He would be happy to collaborate with the Members and receive their ideas on how to contact communities to disseminate the message. He reported that the team was relatively new and that there was an intention to share the presentation with third sector organisations and other services, and that he was eager to include information in Newyddlen Gwynedd.

- It was confirmed that it was possible to move staff between areas, this already happened; but attempting to obtain the correct staff in the areas required at the right time, was challenging. It was noted that the team had to prioritise the most urgent and intense cases over the past year. It was explained that the population of Gwynedd meant that some areas received more referrals than others and moving staff to meet demands as they arose caused problems and shortages in other areas. It was added that the Department was aware of the challenges and was seeking to resolve them; it was noted that collaboration was taking place with the University by providing placements for students and was funding a trainee to complete an Occupational Therapy degree course. It was confirmed that the occupational therapy service had been fully staffed since the beginning of the year, but that the period where vacant posts had existed had created a workload that needed to be tackled. It was hoped that the new officers could provide support to reduce the waiting lists.
- In response to the enquiry as to whether five officers were enough to support the people of Gwynedd, the Occupational Therapy Lead explained that the Moving and Handling officers were new, specialist posts to complement the team of Occupational Therapists that already existed within the Adults Department. It was explained that the Learning Disabilities and Children jobs were additional to the jobs within the Moving and Handling team and additional to the Occupational Therapist posts that already existed in the Adults Department. It was anticipated in three years' time that another three qualified officers could be welcomed to the service. These were Occupational Therapy trainees who were at different stages in their degree courses. It was added that it would be desirable to have more staff; however, there was a need to be practical and realistic with the resources. Nevertheless, work was underway to seek to weigh up the demand and seek to anticipate what skills and expertise would be required in the future when staff left, i.e. consider what posts would need to be filled to address the needs.

It was added that the Service would not be in the position in which it found itself today without this Committee's intervention 12-18 months ago to obtain an additional resource to establish the Moving and Handling team. This would enable the Service to assist people at the right time and there was now potential to proceed with the work and achieve more for the residents of Gwynedd. It was noted that it remained early days but that the Occupational Therapy service was in a better position than it was 12 months ago, and it was hoped that it would be possible to report on the further successes of the team to this Committee in another year.

RESOLVED:

To accept the report that provided an update on the Occupational Therapy Service.

6. NORTH WALES POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT

The report on the North Wales Population Needs Assessment was submitted, noting that the needs assessment was drawn up as required in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

The Projects Team Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being reported that a request had been made to defer this work; it was believed that it was untimely to complete this during the busy pandemic period; however, the Government was eager for the work to proceed. It was added that it had been challenging to complete the work within the timetable. It was noted that the Unit had committed to undertake more detailed work on the needs of the people of Gwynedd as this report was a general report across north Wales; it was believed that the local assessment would be very valuable.

It was added that the full report would be submitted to the Cabinet on 15 February and then to a meeting of the Full Council on 3 March after receiving Cabinet approval. Here we find the basis to the report which shows what the public had noted about their needs, as well as the views of professional officers and third sector organisations. The assessment was based on a number of consultation exercises across north Wales over the past three years, and on a questionnaire that was open for individuals and partners to complete.

The Adults Projects Team Manager wished to obtain the views of the Committee on which elements to focus on in the Gwynedd assessment; it was expected that the Gwynedd Population Needs Assessment Report would be ready in September 2022. It was added that Members were also welcome to present any feedback after the meeting. Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by members:

- Gratitude was expressed for a comprehensive and honest report.
- It was asked how it was intended to work with the third sector.
- It was expressed that there were many negative findings in the assessment which showed discontent; it was questioned whether it provided a realistic depiction.
- A comment was made that the assessment referred to what needed to be improved, but that there was no reference to a timetable or to when the improvements would be delivered.
- More details were sought on mental health, particularly amongst children, and a question was asked about the length of waiting lists. It was asked whether the Council could do more to help with the mental health situation by sharing pamphlets or by promoting where assistance could be sought.
- Enquiries were made about the extent of collaboration between Local Authorities, the Care Sector and the Health Board. It was added that the report referred to a lack of collaboration and coordination, a question was asked about how much attention this was given by the Authority.
- An observation was made that the pandemic had underlined the shortcomings in the relationship between the Health Board and Care. A

question was asked about how this assessment could be used to increase the political pressure on the Government to address the impact of a lack of Local Government resources on the Health Board.

- Reference was made to the Gwynedd Older People Committee that came to an end over the pandemic period. It was felt that the contact with the elderly and supporting organisations had been lost. It was believed that consultation was essential in order to know what the concerns of individuals were.

In response to the above observations and questions from members, it was noted:

- That there was a need to collaborate better with the third sector; there was a need to identify the best way to achieve that by discussing with the organisations. It was expressed that there was a need to agree on different ways to provide services that were more specific in order to address needs and support people.
- That there was a need to check matters locally within the County in order to obtain the full and relevant depiction of Gwynedd. This can show different responses. It was emphasised that there was a need to look at the core matters, which could mean that the service needed to be transformed; it was added that this already happened with some elements of service within the Department.
- That this assessment would feed into the Area Plan for North Wales after it had been approved by the north Wales Councils. Then, work would commence on how to address the needs and matters raised.
- That collaboration happened in the mental health field; a presentation would be given at the next meeting of this committee held on 17 March, to provide more details on the developments. In addition, it was noted that work had commenced to look in detail at some of the services being provided; and that there would be a commitment to review. In the meantime, the suggestions of Members were appreciated on how to improve the situation in the short-term. It was added that there was a need to look in detail at the mental health field and for it to be re-shaped to meet the needs of the future.
- That very good collaboration took place with the Health Board in general, and that good examples of this collaboration could be seen; it was noted that the development in Penrhos was an example. It was noted that a change in systems and culture was difficult in an organisation such as the Council, but that seeking to coordinate changes jointly with the Health Board was very challenging. It was believed that it would take time to implement changes, particularly when processes and arrangements had existed for quite a while. It was reported that every effort was being made and that plans that made a difference would be considered; it was acknowledged that work was to be done here. It was added that creating a joint needs assessment gave an opportunity to identify problems jointly and an opportunity to collaborate on the answers.
- That there was a need to target and focus on specific fields. It was noted that today's Committee had mentioned problematic issues such as long

waiting lists for mental health assessments for children and the problem of releasing beds in the Hospitals. More detailed work would need to be done on these matters and then report back to the Government through the Regional Partnership Board in order to show what the situation is in Gwynedd.

- That it was important to identify minor problems before they increased. This meant that it was essential to receive information; another element that was as important was the use made of existing information. It was suggested that Members had access to useful information and that there was a need to share this information as well as improve the contact with service providers. It was suggested that there was no need to carry out further engagement exercises, but rather draw in and use the information and evidence that already existed. It was noted that the regeneration team would speak with Community Councils and take the opportunity to attend meetings in order to receive essential input.

In response to an observation about the principles of consulting and equality, it was reported that consideration needed to be given to the socio-economic duty when completing detailed work on Gwynedd. It was reported that more attention would be given in the Gwynedd report to these elements and the importance of addressing the needs of this group was acknowledged.

In response to a question as to whether there was a record of public gratitude or appreciation when they were happy with the service received, it was explained that this information existed. It was added that there was a need to look at how to advertise these successes.

It was added that the sample from Gwynedd was relatively small; 50 of the responses came from Gwynedd. This equated to 14% of the contact made within the assessment. It was reiterated that this was a piece of general work and therefore, there would be a need to consider what use would be made of findings locally, which will be subject to an awareness of the area. To close, it was noted that assessment on an individual level was essential, and to consider whether what mattered to the individual was being achieved, and if not, why?

RESOLVED:

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 12.15 pm

CHAIRMAN