



# Complete Agenda

Democracy Services  
Swyddfa'r Cyngor  
CAERNARFON  
Gwynedd  
LL55 1SH

Meeting

## **CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Date and Time

**10.30 am, THURSDAY, 23RD NOVEMBER, 2023**

NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10:00AM

Location

**Hybrid – Siambr Hywel Dda, Swyddfa'r Cyngor, Caernarfon and virtually through Zoom.**

**\* 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 15/11/23)

# **CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

## **MEMBERSHIP (18)**

### **Plaid Cymru (11)**

#### Councillors

Menna Baines  
Rheinallt Puw  
Linda Ann Jones  
Gwynfor Owen  
Einir Wyn Williams  
Jina Gwyrfai

R Medwyn Hughes  
Dewi Jones  
Linda Morgan  
Meryl Roberts  
Sasha Williams

### **Independent (6)**

#### Councillors

Elwyn Jones  
Eryl Jones-Williams  
John Pughe

Anwen J. Davies  
Beth Lawton  
Angela Russell

### **Labour/Liberal (1)**

Councillor Gareth Coj Parry

### **Ex-officio Members**

Vice-Chair of the Council – Beca Roberts

# **A G E N D A**

**1. APOLOGIES**

To accept 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 Chair for consideration.

**4. MINUTES**

4 - 15

The Chair shall propose that the minutes of the meeting of this committee held on the 21<sup>st</sup> of September 2023 be signed as a true record.

**5. DAY CARE SERVICES**

16 - 19

To consider the report.

**6. ARRANGEMENTS FOR MANAGING AND MAINTAINING CARE HOMES**

20 - 25

To consider the report.

**7. SUPPORT FOR UNPAID CARERS**

26 - 32

To consider the report.

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## CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE, THURSDAY, 21 SEPTEMBER 2023

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**Present:** Councillor Beth Lawton (Chair)

**Councillors:** Jina Gwyrfai, R. Medwyn Hughes, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Linda Morgan, Gwynfor Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, Rheinalt Puw, Meryl Roberts, Angela Russell, Einir Wyn Williams

**Officers in attendance:** Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor), Ffion Elain Evans (Democracy Services Officer) and Ellie Mai Evans (Democracy Services Administrative Assistant).

**Others invited:**

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being)  
Huw Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services)  
Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department)

**Present for items 5 and 6:**

Councillor Craig ab Iago (Cabinet Member for Housing)  
Carys Fôn Williams (Head of Housing and Property Department)  
Hedd Morlais Glyn Tomos (Assistant Head of Housing and Property Department)  
Gareth Wyn Parri (Commissioning Team Leader)

**Present for item 7:**

Amanda Ellen Davies (Learning Disability Practice Lead)  
Bethan Wyn Evans (Category and Development Specialist)

### 1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Menna Baines, Anwen J. Davies and Linda Ann Jones.

### 2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared that they had an interest in relation to the item noted:

- Councillor Elwyn Jones in item 5 as members of his family were homeless. The Member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and he did not withdraw from the meeting.
- Councillor Gwynfor Owen in item 8 on the agenda as his son was autistic. The Member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and he did not withdraw from the meeting.

### 3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

### 4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 22 June 2023 as a true record.

### 5. HOUSING ALLOCATION POLICY AND HOUSING WAITING LIST

The report was submitted explaining that a further update on the Housing Allocation Policy was in question and that the policy had already been submitted before the Care Scrutiny Committee in the past. It was explained that changes had been made to the Council's policy in the context of which bands housing applications were determined to and that the current policy had now been in operation for nearly three years. It was noted that the policy had managed to maximise the number of houses let to Gwynedd residents from 90% to 96.7% and that this was a very high percentage, especially considering that local connection could not be considered as an essential priority criterion in every application.

It was explained that the Welsh Government intended to publish a White Paper in October 2023 that would review the legislation and undertake fundamental changes on the way homelessness was dealt with in Wales. Due to the link between homelessness and social housing, the side effect of examining the legislation review on homelessness was the need to re-examine how social housing was let and any side effects that derived from that process.

It was noted that the Housing Department was waiting eagerly to see the White Paper to gain an understanding of the Government's direction. It was explained that they had a fairly good idea as they had attended regular meetings and discussions with the Government over the past few months and had been given an opportunity to note their opinions and feelings about the potential changes. Therefore, it was noted that they hoped that nothing too shocking would be included in the White Paper, but the department would need a bit of time to evaluate its contents and any impact it could have on Council policies. It was explained that considerable work was likely to face the department once the White Paper would be published.

*During the discussion, the following observations were noted:*

- The members expressed their thanks for the report noting pride in the success of the policy so far.
- Questions were raised about the definition of local connection and concern was expressed that the Council could say it had been successful when providing a house to someone from Aberdyfi in Bethesda. An explanation was requested of how it could be ensured that vulnerable people could remain in their communities.
  - o In response, it was explained that although every authority had an element of flexibility when it came to a Housing Allocation Policy, that statutory priority had to be given to 5 categories of people and, therefore, the local connection element had to be secondary to those statutory categories.
  - o It was noted that Cyngor Gwynedd had added a community connection tier which went further than local connection. In a situation where applicants were equal in the same priority band, it was explained that people with a

- community connection would be given priority over those who did not have a community connection.
- It was explained that 54% of the recent placements had been given to applicants with a community connection. Although the figure appeared low on the face of it, it was explained that there was a lack of suitable accommodation in some communities for example, no flats for single people in more rural areas, which directly contributed to the figure. It was confirmed that the figure was much higher if people with a connection to nearby communities were considered.
  - In the context of strengthening the local connection element, it was noted that it would be difficult to see what else could be done within the constraints of the current guidelines and legislation and, therefore, we would have to wait and see what was stated in the White Paper.
- It was confirmed that the Council received substantial funding from the Welsh Government every year to support people facing homelessness and that they collaborated with external agencies to ensure that people could keep hold of their tenancies.
  - In response to a question about the role of housing associations in the process of determining who was given a house, it was explained that the policy drove the decision and that a clear prioritisation system was included in the policy.
    - It was noted that the Council historically produced the priority list but officers of housing associations now did this. However, it was confirmed that the same policy was used and that a valid reason would be required not to give the property to the person on top of the list.
    - It was explained that decisions about individual applications should not be taken unless in exceptional circumstances as this was contrary to the policy.
    - It was noted that the Council was in the process of working on a computer system that would make it impossible to omit an applicant as it would not be possible to offer the property to the next person on the list.
    - In terms of accountability, it was confirmed that the Council was responsible for the register and that it received letting reports from the housing associations to be able to monitor the decisions being made.
  - It was explained that the Council itself did not construct social housing; it worked instead with partners and housing associations in order to construct them. It was noted that there had been an increase in available funding to construct social housing and, in terms of the process, it was explained that the housing associations identified potential schemes and then the Council assessed which ones they would prioritise.
  - It was confirmed that the revenue from the additional tax would be used to construct affordable homes, not social housing.
  - It was noted that the application form for social housing was available on the Council website and, although the form had been reduced from 20 to 12 pages, the fact that it was a long form that asked a number of questions was acknowledged. It was explained that the questions were asked for specific reasons although this was not always clear to the applicant.
  - It was explained that the process of ensuring that houses purchased by the Council were ready had taken longer than expected but it was hoped that they could be filled as soon as possible within the next few months.

- Concern was expressed about where essential workers fitted into the policy, especially considering that it was not possible to obtain workers in some parts of Gwynedd due to a lack of accommodation for them.
  - o In response, it was noted that the law noted that priority must be shown to 5 categories of people and that essential workers were not included in these.
  - o Despite this, it was noted that there was an element of flexibility for the Council to review this but there was a need to wait now to see the changes associated with the White Paper.
  
- Several questions were asked about how figures were duplicated when considering how many people were on the waiting list in different areas as some applicants were likely to be on the list in more than one area. It was also asked whether or not there was room to develop a better system of providing information about waiting lists.
  - o In response, an officer confirmed that 2346 applicants were on the register but the figure changed daily. It was noted that the team received approximately 27 new applications every week and had already received 950 applications this year.
  - o It was explained that there was increasing demand on the team to share the information and that it was currently much easier to report figures by area as it would become much more complicated when combining areas etc. It was noted that the team's priorities needed to be considered.
  - o Attention was drawn to the fact that the number of applications was not equal to the number of people as several applications included families. It was noted that the figures were shocking and that the department understood why councillors wanted to know what happened in their wards.
  
- It was noted that it was important that Councillors could know (with the applicant's consent) what information the department had as Councillors' intervention could often lead to providing full information to the department.
  - o In response, it was noted that the law and the code of practice from the Welsh Government explained what role the Councillors could play in the process. It was accepted that there was room for them to support or advocate on behalf of their electors.
  - o Officers explained that they hoped that developing the new system would facilitate the registration process for social housing which includes providing information to support the application. Although they were moving in the right direction, it was recognised that this had not yet been fully delivered.
  
- In response to a question about the role of salary or income threshold in the policy, it was explained that it was no longer a part of the policy and the Council had moved away from using this as the market could vary between areas. It was noted that the department considered the individual circumstances of the applicant depending on the type of areas they chose and concluded whether they had the income to comfortably meet housing needs in the private sector.
  
- Concern was expressed about houses that were difficult to let, for example, a four-bedroom house in rural areas, and how there was a risk for these to be let to people who were low on the list. It was asked whether it was possible to make better use of these houses, for example, by selling them to local people.
  - o In response, it was accepted that there were problems in some areas and there may be room for the department to have conversations with its partners to find a solution.

- It was noted that partners were proactive when trying to attract people to the properties but using social media and the internet to advertise properties increased the risk of drawing interest from outside the area. It was argued that this was where the policy stepped in and that applicants with a Gwynedd connection were prioritised and that it was fair to say that people without a connection who were given properties were exceptions.
- Attention was drawn to how the population was ageing and maybe some people were not in the most suitable properties for them. As a result, it was enquired how the Housing Department collaborated with the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to ensure that people lived in properties that were suitable for them and how it monitored that there was a sufficient number of suitable housing for Gwynedd's demographic needs.
  - In response, it was noted that systems were in place by partners to identify such examples of tenants and how it was possible to release this type of property for a more appropriate use.
  - When planning new properties, it was explained that a detailed analysis of needs was carried out in an attempt to meet needs across the spectrum within the development plan.
  - In terms of collaboration between departments, it was confirmed that a close relationship between departments was essential. It was explained that there was a close relationship between care and housing services as a high percentage of matters arising in the context of care related to the suitability of houses. There was cooperation between the departments in the context of housing adaptations to ensure that people could remain in their homes.
  - The fact that challenges arose in terms of the availability of funding and resources to make adaptations to houses, was recognised. Concern was expressed that there were insufficient resources to meet the need and that there was a risk for this to lead to an increase in the time people had to wait for a suitable home.
  - It was noted that the two new departments had started to collaborate on a piece of work to examine the situation in the context of housing suitability and to try to anticipate the needs over the next 25 years to see how it could plan and prepare to meet the coming need as a result of the ageing population.
- In response to a question about how a decision was made about bands, it was explained that the policy determined this.
  - There were comprehensive examples in the policy of what was considered as housing needs and what was considered as urgent housing needs. It depended on the individual's circumstances and how these were conveyed to the Housing Options Team.
  - It was explained that thresholds were clear in the policy and that the need for social housing had substantially increased and that people's needs had become more prominent and pressing since the Covid-19 period. As a result of this, it was noted that the team had had to refuse some applications in band 2.
  - It was noted again that there was a need to wait and see whether there would be any reference in the White Paper to changing the way of assessing.
- It was explained that representatives from the Council, the housing associations and occupational therapists from the children and adults' side were part of the



Specialist Housing Group and that the group sought to find solutions for cases where the traditional social housing stock did not meet the applicant's needs.

- In response to a question asking whether anything prevented the Council from constructing more social housing, it was explained that stock had been transferred to the housing associations, but the Council would continue to lead on the work and determine where the funding would go.
- It was noted that there were plans to build 700 additional houses before the end of the Development Plan and that the Council had already purchased 16 houses and that another five were in the pipeline.
- In terms of the consultation following the publication of the White Paper, it was confirmed that the Council would respond formally to the consultation. It was noted that the Government had not yet published the details of the consultation and therefore it would be difficult to say whether there was a role for the committee in the consultation.
- It was noted that today had been a good opportunity for the department to update the Committee of the changes to come.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) **To accept and note the report.**
- b) **To ask the officers to report back to the Committee in due course on any potential implications for the policy after assessing the contents of the Welsh Government's White Paper.**
- c) **To ask the officers to consider whether the Committee should contribute to Cyngor Gwynedd's response to the consultation following the publication of the White Paper.**

## **6. ESTABLISHING A ONE-STOP-SHOP FOR HOUSING ENQUIRIES**

The report was submitted, explaining that the intention of the One Stop Shop was to operate as a front door for all housing service enquiries and to facilitate the process for the customer. It was explained that a report on this had been submitted to the Committee in the past but work had substantially developed since that report had been submitted.

To begin, it was explained that consultation sessions had been held with key partners, including the housing associations and third sector organisations, over the past 18 months to identify opportunities to strengthen current arrangements and any potential impact on the nature of the contact that individuals would have with the organisations. Discussions had also been held with all department services to gain a better understanding of the contact with residents in the context of the enquiries the One-Stop-Shop would support.

It was noted that an initial consultation with the public had been held in January 2023 to receive feedback on the general experiences of Gwynedd residents who had contacted the housing service. It was noted that 154 responses had been received and that the majority of these had been positive. The fact that the consultation had highlighted a clear desire by the public to be able to complete an on-line application form for social housing applications was recognised, with over 70% of responses

noting that this would be a positive development. It was noted that this had already been identified as a priority for the department but there was no capacity within the current system to enable people to complete applications on-line. The consultation had also highlighted that some members of the public believed there was a need to improve communication between the Council and the customer and, therefore, better on-line presence to receive information without having to pick up the phone or e-mail would be beneficial.

Another key development noted was appointing a leader for the One-Stop-Shop in February 2022 which had enabled the department to research how an appropriate structure could be put in place for the shop's operation. In light of this, it was resolved to incorporate the Housing Options Team Unit in the One-Stop-Shop as this was the work area that received the majority of enquiries by the public. It was explained that the team's structure was now nearing completion as a deputy leader had been appointed in May 2023.

It was noted that the department had researched a new system that would enable them to store comprehensive and up-to-date information in one place. It was explained that the system chosen would modernise the service offered to the public and that the ongoing programmed work included arrangements to establish the system, a trialling period and dates for relevant training. It was also explained that the department had decided to use the FFOS internal system for the work of receiving calls and the shop's day-to-day administrative work as it was already linked to the Council website and website accounts.

In addition, it was noted that the Council had decided to establish a Single Point of Access (SPOA) for some projects and services that were funded by the Housing Support Grant. It was explained that the new system would simplify the process for individuals who were referred to services and providers that received funding from the Housing Support Grant. It was noted that the system would also allow a better overview of all the individual's needs and mean that up-to-date data could be used rather than historical information to gain a better understanding of who received support from the Housing Support Grant. It was noted that the new SPOA system was currently being trialled with internal units and that 220 Gwynedd residents had already benefited when receiving information and guidance with their relevant housing support needs.

Gratitude was expressed for the report, wishing the team well as they undertake the work of getting everything together to establish the One-Stop-Shop. It was confirmed that the beginning of the new year was the target to see the system going live.

*During the discussion, the following observations were noted:*

- Many Councillors expressed frustration about the complexity and time it currently took for Councillors to gain the right to discuss on behalf of electors and that there was a need to simplify the system for councillors to be able to help; it was hoped that the shop could ease things. In response, it was noted that there was no solution necessarily for the time it took to gain the right to discuss on behalf of electors as it was the law and not the officers that determined who received the right to see the information. It was reiterated that they were always willing to examine ways to try to ease things.
- The fact that establishing a new system would mean that on-line application forms could be completed was welcomed, especially as digitising forms was one of the recommendations presented by the Bevan Foundation in their report on poverty in

Arfon. Confirmation was received that paper forms would continue to be available for the individuals who required them as well.

- It was enquired whether it would be possible for councillors to receive information more regularly about the applications in their wards as councillors often felt that local people knew more than them about vacant properties in their wards.
  - o A few councillors proposed that establishing a system where an automatic message was sent to councillors stating that there was a vacant property in their ward and then another message to say when the property had been let would be a better way of giving councillors an idea of what happened in their ward.
  - o It was added that being informed why the specific individual(s) had been given the property would also be useful as councillors mostly received complaints about who had received social housing.
  - o In response, the Head of Housing and Property Department noted that she understood the councillors' frustration but establishing such a system would involve a great deal of work and be a big ask for the department. Legal advice would be required about how suitable it would be to share such information with councillors.
  - o It was explained that the department did everything it could within the policy at present.
  - o It was noted that they could examine what would be possible to do to facilitate things, but it was asked for time to establish the internal system and to get the One-Stop-Shop in place before being able to consider this.
- In response to a question whether the Council had lost an element of accountability as it did not own its social housing anymore, it was noted that the new system would facilitate the arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the policy.
- The Cabinet Member was thanked for organising the housing forum that was held every few months. It was noted that the forum was a good way of sharing information and giving members an opportunity to ask questions and voice an opinion in an informal manner. It was added that it would be useful to have a forum/channel to speak to officers of the housing associations as well, and that it would be good to see representation from the housing associations attending the scrutiny committees.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) **To accept and note the report.**
- b) **To receive a progress report within a year's time.**
- c) **To ask the Cabinet Member and the Housing Department officers to contact the housing associations to see if they could attend a meeting of the scrutiny committee and organise ways of facilitating communication between the councillors and the housing associations.**

## **7. GENERAL SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION INCLUDING LEARNING DISABILITIES SERVICES, MENTAL HEALTH AND SUPPORT FOR WOMEN.**

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being submitted the report to provide context and an update on the situation regarding supported accommodation for individuals with learning disabilities. He thanked the Senior Learning Disabilities

Manager and the whole team for their work stating that it was difficult to convey in words how important was this work.

It was explained that the Welsh Government's Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan 2022 to 2026 outlined the agenda for services for individuals with learning disabilities and that the department collaborated with partners to plan and develop supported accommodation models that were suitable to meet those needs. It was noted that 70 people were currently waiting for accommodation and that these were divided into three categories: the individuals who needed priority namely accommodation within the next year; the individuals who needed accommodation within the next two years and the individuals who needed to be planned for over the next years. It was noted that the department collaborated with the Housing Department and the housing associations and that this link was essential. It was explained that work had just been completed on a new house in Groeslon which would be able to provide support for three individuals and it was hoped to be able to accommodate people by November.

It was explained that the Council had a fairly full picture of the situation in the county and that it completed continuous assessments of families/individuals who came through the system and that preparing for the future was part of everyone's package. It was also confirmed that the Learning Disability Team and the Derwen Team regularly met to discuss the situations of individuals of transition age, i.e., approximately 6 months either side of 18 years old, in order to prepare and collaborate for those children who become adults.

*During the discussion, the following observations were noted:*

- The members expressed their thanks for the report and the developments were welcomed.
- It was noted that the contents of the report did not match the item title on the agenda and that the item on the agenda was much broader than what had been included in the report.
  - o In response, it was noted that this was a fair enough observation confirming that the other elements were part of the picture although there was no reference to them in the report.
  - o It was explained that the element in terms of support for women tended to overlap with matters that are under the responsibility of the Housing Department and this may be an example of an area where cooperation between departments could be strengthened.
- Concern was expressed that the definition of learning disability was too narrow and there was a tendency to focus on the definition alone, without considering how the needs are very similar to mental health needs. It was noted that better cooperation between the learning disability service and the mental health service would be very beneficial rather than placing the matters in separate blocks.
- It was noted that a similar body to Care Inspectorate Wales inspected services of this type in Scotland, but this did not happen in Wales as Care Inspectorate Wales only examined the service in its entirety. As a result, it was enquired what Cyngor Gwynedd was doing to inspect the service provided at the supported accommodations to ensure quality and that there were no problems or abuse.
  - o In response, it was confirmed that the Council prioritised the safety of the individuals at the accommodations and that partners provided a very good service.

- It was accepted that problems could arise within the agencies and within the Council's own provision and it was noted that the Council would step in if any problems arose.
  - It was noted that the Council sought to ensure that the monitoring work was undertaken appropriately but this was not always 100% guaranteed.
  - The fact that the Quality Assurance Team was not as strong as it should be and that they could not visit the services, internally and externally, often enough was recognised but the team attempted to make the most of available resources. It was noted that changes were being made to ensure that the team could reach more of the provision.
  - It was confirmed that the Inspectorate did not go in to inspect these properties specifically as they did in the context of residential homes.
  - Therefore, it was explained that cooperation between Care Inspectorate Wales and the Quality Assurance Team was important in this context.
- Pride was expressed in seeing a reference to the plans to redevelop the Fron Deg home in Caernarfon and it was enquired whether it would be possible to receive an update on this.
    - In response, it was recognised that the work had been in the pipeline for years and that the department was working closely on it with the Housing Department.
    - It was explained that progress had been made. In terms of the finance, it was explained that discussions were currently ongoing. It was possible that the development would include units for rent, meaning that it would be possible to use the rent payments to repay some of the construction costs.
    - It was noted that the department was examining the possibilities of withdrawing funding from regional and national funds for a care and housing provision.
- The intention to get people in out-of-county placements back to Gwynedd by attempting to provide more services locally, was welcomed.
  - Questions were asked about the 21 individuals who were in an out-of-county placement.
    - It was confirmed that the individuals were in out-of-county placements due to the expertise being offered there.
    - It was also added that some individuals had been at these placements since they were children and, therefore, considered them as their homes. It was emphasised that the most important thing was ensuring that regular discussions were held with these individuals to find out their wishes about staying or returning to Gwynedd.
  - Reference was made to the plans for the Penrhos site near Pwllheli, noting frustration about how long everything had taken to fall into place. It was asked whether it was possible to receive any update.
    - In response, it was noted that the commitment of all partners in Penrhos was still in place although the partners were under heavy financial pressures.
    - It was explained that any development relied on what happened in the next few weeks in terms of planning permission. It was added that considerable work had been undertaken in the background and that things looked promising.
  - In response to a question about the collaboration taking place across the adults services, it was noted that cooperation was essentially important as several cases were relevant to more than one department. It was explained that the social

workers, the occupational therapists and other individuals in the teams collaborated well with each other and they had a good working relationship with their colleagues in the Health Board.

- The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being added that teams collaborated effectively together and ensured that the individual was at the centre.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) To accept and note only the report on the situation regarding supported accommodation for individuals with learning disabilities in Gwynedd, as there is no reference to mental health and support for women in the report.**
- b) To ask the officers to share information with the committee members about supported accommodation that is provided by the mental health service and for providing support to women.**

## **8. AUTISM PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP BRIEF**

The draft brief was submitted as members of the Care Scrutiny Committee had decided at their meeting in April that they had not received sufficient information about Gwynedd's Autism Plan. In light of this, they were eager to receive more detail about the service on offer and, therefore, it was resolved to establish a Task and Finish Group.

It was decided that the Task and Finish Group would include members of the Care Scrutiny Committee and the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee, as well as representation from the Children's Department, Adults Department, Education Department and the Health Board. A request was made for three representatives from the Care Scrutiny Committee to undertake the work of the task and finish group.

*During the discussion, the following observations were noted:*

- It was noted that the brief was very general and although the committee's decision in April had referred to a discussion on the implementation of the plan in its entirety with the new team, there was no reference to this in the brief.
  - o In response, it was explained that this was an error, and the wording should correspond with the wording of what had been resolved at the committee meeting.
- It was proposed that the Task and Finish Group examined the Autism Plan in its entirety initially and maybe it would be possible to implement or examine specific matters in more detail following the group's recommendations. It was resolved that this would be a fair way of giving the new team an opportunity to make a difference and to implement its work programme.
- It was noted that more representation from the adults department would be beneficial as more than one team dealt with the matter and it was argued that it was essential for the Coordinator of the Autism Services Project to be part of the discussion.

It was explained that the Task and Finish Group would not be long, approximately 2-3 meetings at most. Councillor Jina Gwyrfai put her name forward to be a member of the Task and Finish Group. As all Committee members were not in attendance at the meeting, it was resolved that an e-mail would be sent to members of the Care Scrutiny Committee to enquire who else was interested in being part of the group. Should no names be put forward, then an invitation would be extended to the rest of the Council members. It was noted that representation from the Education and Economy Scrutiny Committee would be confirmed at the committee meeting on 9 November.

## **RESOLVED**

- a) To adopt the brief and add that the group will look at the Autism Plan in its entirety.**
- b) To elect Councillor Jina Gwyrfai to be part of the Autism Plan Task and Finish Group.**
- c) To engage with all members of the Care Scrutiny Committee via e-mail in order to receive two other names to be part of the task and finish group.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 2.20pm.

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>23 November 2023</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>Day Care Service</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>The need for assurance that there is a quality day care provision available across the County.</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Mari Wynne Jones</b>

## 1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The traditional model of providing Day Care in Gwynedd has not been reviewed for many years. We therefore appreciate the opportunity to inform the Care Scrutiny Committee of the arrangements in place by the Adults Service to review that provision. The review will consider how we can support individuals with care and support needs to meet their well-being objectives within their local communities.
- 1.2 The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 was introduced on 1 April 2016, and it provides a legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act changes the way that people are assessed and the way services are provided, promoting a diverse range of support available within the community to reduce the need for formal support.
- 1.3 The traditional model of providing Day Care in Gwynedd has not been changed to address the requirements of the Act and ensure what matters to the residents of Gwynedd. The existing model focuses on care provision for people in buildings rather than supporting people who have care and support needs to continue to attend community activities.
- 1.4 This is also very timely given the recent work by Welsh Government - ***Review of Day Opportunities and Respite/Short Break Services, 2023*** which states that the pandemic has led to essential amendments to the provision, and identifies many key issues moving forward.
- 1.5 The review is an opportunity for us to consider different, more suitable and flexible ways of providing support and services of a good quality which also give value for money.

## 2. THE TRADITIONAL MODEL

- 2.1 The Council used to provide a programme of traditional day care activities in specific locations in the county for adults who needed support, by professional staff. These centres allowed older people to socialise and take part in specific activities, giving some respite for those who looked after them from day to day. The provision was limited to locations in the main centres, at specific times, with a fairly limited offer of activities. Individuals would have to travel in to these centres, and transport was arranged for them.



### 3. WHAT IS BEING OFFERED AS PROVISION IN GWYNEDD

3.1 Before Covid, the access guidelines to the Council's traditional service stated that the individual needed to have personal care needs or needs involving memory conditions in order to be able to attend the Council's services. If low level well-being needs was what was needed, such as companionship, socialising and a meal, it was then expected for community/third sector provision to meet the need. These were the services provided by Cyngor Gwynedd before Covid:

Cyngor Gwynedd Day Centres	Commissioned day care.	Short respite provision available	Specialist Dementia Day Care Provision
Bryn Dysynni Tywyn - three times a week	Day care service in Council residential homes	Dementia Support Workers - one-to-one support for individuals and their carers for a few hours a week.	Plas Hedd Bangor x two times a week (CG&BCUHB)
Plas Hedd Bangor x three times a week	Day care service in private residential homes	Council residential homes providing respite care of up to a fortnight.	Hafod Hedd, Chwilog x three days a week (CG and BCUHB)
Encil y Coed x three times a week	Day care service in Cartref Bontnewydd centre (Age Cymru).		
Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog x three times a week			

3.2 Responding to the challenges which have landed on our doorstep as a result of Covid 19 has given us the opportunity to genuinely re-think the way day care is being provided to our citizens in Gwynedd. This period has shown how important providing social opportunities to individuals is, and ensuring that carers have short breaks from caring. It is an opportunity to learn from the experiences, and move away from services which are based on disability, age, buildings and to look at opportunities for individuals to regain community links.

3.3 Our services are traditional ones which have not been reviewed or evaluated for a long time. Our services are not ones which meet the individual and personal objectives of the individuals and there is a culture of fitting people around the services. The model was very unsuitable and posed many risks during covid, and as a result the centres had to be closed. Bringing a large number of people together to one site would have caused a great concern, and there were problems with the standards of some of those buildings as well.

3.4 Our day centres in Plas Hedd and Bryn Dysynni have reopened their doors gradually since Covid, however, staffing problems is an obstacle in many areas, and the other centres have remained closed.

3.5 The Council's traditional Day Centres are not evenly distributed across the Council either, and three traditional Day Centres have closed in recent years -

- Cysgod y Coleg, Bala, day centre with Age Cymru having developed well-being services in the area
- Noddfa Madog, Porthmadog Day Centre, with the users moved to Day Centres in Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth.
- Maesincla, Caernarfon, day centre with Age Cymru having developed a service in the area

3.6 The developments of the community hubs across the county have led to opportunities for everyone to collaborate at a very local level. This has already started in a few places e.g. Porthi Dre in Caernarfon where the local CRT is working with the Hub and the care provider in order to hold activities for older people in the area who may not be able to go out otherwise.

3.7 The review would be an opportunity to identify and develop collaboration opportunities with other partners as well, and offer a variety of different services. The focus would be on building on the strengths of those attending, strengthening skills and learning new skills and giving them a flavour of new experiences.

## **4. OUR VISION**

4.1 Our vision for the Adults, Health and Well-being service is for everyone of all ages to receive the support they need in the most suitable and convenient way for them. Since the needs of every individual and their family / carers are different, in order that they can continue to live their lives as they wish, we must adapt our services to be more closely tailored to the actual needs of those requiring our support. We will also be investing to develop provision to provide more breaks for individuals and their family or carers in our residential centres.

4.2 In order to deliver this, we will undertake a review and will consult and engage about day care provision arrangements within the Adults Service in Gwynedd.

4.3 Undertaking a review into Day Care provision arrangements within the Adults Service will ensure opportunity for all, and will overcome any health and care needs. It will be an opportunity to strengthen the health and well-being of individuals, focusing on strengths, targeting loneliness and social isolation, improving and raising confidence levels and basic living skills.

## **5. RECOMMENDATION**

5.1 We recommend that we review the existing provision, and move away from the term 'day care' and services provided in buildings. We will move on to focus on how we can address and support the well-being of individuals and their carers in a variety of different ways. We need flexible services that meet the need.

## CYNGOR GWYNEDD



### Report to a meeting of the Cyngor Gwynedd Scrutiny Committee

**Date of meeting:** 23 November 2023  
**Member:** Councillor Dilwyn Morgan, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being  
**Contact Officer:** Rhion Glyn, Assistant Head of Provider Services, Adults, Health and Well-being Department  
**Title of Item:** Arrangements for Managing and Maintaining Care Homes

#### 1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 A request was received from the Governance and Audit Committee for the Care Committee to scrutinise non-implementation of managerial procedures in Care Homes following an internal audit report that was submitted to them in February 2023.
- 1.2 Following an internal audit, actions were agreed for Plas Gwilym Home, Hafod Mawddach Home and Bryn Blodau Home in order to improve compliance with the controls and/or introduce new controls to reduce the risks that the service is exposed to.
- 1.3 The Committee is keen for the Care Scrutiny Committee to scrutinise whether the actions have been implemented and whether the managerial procedures are being followed by the care homes.

#### 2 Background to Care Homes Management and Maintenance arrangements

- 2.1 Cyngor Gwynedd has 13 care homes that support and care for adults across the County.
- 2.2 Two of those homes are care homes that support and care for individuals with learning disabilities.
- 2.3 The other 11 homes care mainly for older adults, but they also support individuals who have physical disabilities. These homes fall into three categories.

Specialist Dementia Care Home	X1 Home
General Residential Care Home	X5 Homes
General Residential / Specialist Dementia Care Home	X5 Homes*

\*Please note that these numbers are based on the fact that the Dementia Unit in Hafod Mawddach, Barmouth has opened.

2.4 Specifically in terms of management arrangements, it should be noted that the two Learning Disabilities homes (Frondeg, Caernarfon and Tan y Marian, Pwllheli) are within the Learning Disabilities Service structure, and the remaining 11 homes that are referred to in part 2.3 of this report are within the 'Provider Service'.

2.5 It is a statutory requirement that all care homes in Wales are registered with the Care Inspectorate Wales. As part of that registration, it must be evidenced that a Home is qualified to support and care for the residents of the Home.

2.6 We note here the various posts that exist in our internal care homes.

Role	Numbers
Registered Manager	x1 for each home
Deputy Manager	x1 for each home
Senior Care Assistant	x1 / x2 for each home
Care Assistant	Several, and dependent on the size of the Home
Care Assistant - Casual	Several, and dependent on the size of the Home
Cook	x1 for each home
Assistant Cook	x2 / x3 for each home
Domestic Assistant	Tends to be one part-time post for each home
Administrator	Administrators tend to support 3 - 4 homes each

2.7 These Homes are inspected frequently by a wide range of internal and external auditors. The following is a list of the main inspections.

Internal Inspections	External Inspections
Quality Assurance Team Inspection	Care Inspectorate Wales Inspection
Internal Audit Inspection	Medications Inspection (Health Board)
Building Inspection (Property Service)	
Fire Inspection (Property Service)	
Food Hygiene Inspection (Environmental Health)	

2.8 This report specifically addresses audits that have been undertaken by the Council's Internal Audit Service. During 2022-23 the Internal Audit Service conducted audits in x3 Internal Care Homes. We note that none of these care homes were learning disabilities care homes.

### **3. The results of the internal audits conducted during 2022/23.**

3.1 The purpose and scope of these audits was to ensure that suitable arrangements are in place for appropriately managing and maintaining the home in accordance with relevant regulations and standards. To achieve this, the audits encompassed reviewing the adequacy of the home's arrangements in terms of administration and staffing, budgetary control, procurement of goods, receipt of income, health and safety and

performance monitoring, together with ensuring that the service users and their possessions are protected.

3.2 Based on examining the control for risk mitigation, the following risk levels were identified for the three homes in question:

Plas Gwilym Home, Penygroes	<b>LIMITED</b>
Hafod Mawddach Home, Barmouth	<b>LIMITED</b>
Bryn Blodau Home, Llan Ffestiniog	<b>LIMITED</b>

3.3 The following provides a description of the assurance levels that were under consideration:

<b>HIGH</b>	Certainty of propriety can be stated as internal controls can be relied upon to achieve objectives.
<b>SATISFACTORY</b>	There are controls in place to achieve objectives but there are aspects of the arrangements that could be tightened to further mitigate risks.
<b>LIMITED</b>	Although there are controls in place, compliance with the controls needs to be improved and / or new controls introduced to reduce the risks to which the service is exposed.
<b>NO ASSURANCE</b>	The controls in place are considered inadequate and failing to achieve objectives.

3.4 As a part of the three audits, actions were agreed to mitigate the risks that had been highlighted. Full copies of the reports and the action programmes are included in the Governance and Audit Committee's Agenda, 9th February 2023 (Item 11).

3.5 During October this year a follow-up audit was carried out in the three Care Homes in question to ensure that the Service / Home has acted on the actions that they had committed to.

3.6 Based on the follow-up audits, the following assurance levels were noted:

Plas Gwilym Home, Penygroes	<b>SATISFACTORY</b>
Hafod Mawddach Home, Barmouth	<b>SATISFACTORY</b>
Bryn Blodau Home, Llan Ffestiniog	<b>SATISFACTORY</b>

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3.7 In accordance with the description for a Satisfactory level in table 3.3, the service has committed to implement the following steps to alleviate the risks highlighted:

#### **Plas Gwilym**

- *Ensure that the care plans are reviewed in a timely manner, and that daily notes are completed on time.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff receives supervision every three months.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff in the home completes Manual Handling, First Aid and Safeguarding training, and that they also complete the Council's mandatory e-learning modules.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff reads the policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults, and signs to state that they have done this.*

#### **Hafod Mawddach**

- *Ensure that every member of staff receives supervision every three months.*
- *Ensure that staff complete the mandatory e-learning training modules.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff who is responsible for administering medication receives an annual competence test.*

#### **Bryn Blodau**

- *A timetable in place to ensure that every member of staff receives supervision every three months.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff has current Manual Handling, First Aid and Safeguarding training, and that they also complete mandatory e-learning training modules.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff who is responsible for administering medication receives an annual competence test.*
- *Ensure that every member of staff reads the policy on Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults and the Medication Policy, and signs to state that they have done this.*

3.8 Although there are outstanding actions, we believe that the outcome of the follow-up audit in the three Homes is positive and shows that progress has been made following the original audits.

3.9 As a Provider Service and as individual homes we will monitor and ensure that the outstanding actions are implemented. We can give assurance that there are firm monitoring arrangements in place to facilitate this.

3.10 We anticipate that full copies of these follow-up reports will be presented to the Governance and Audit Committee on 14 December.

### **4 General Context and Further Considerations**

4.1 Many of the issues that still require addressing relate to staffing matters, such as training and supervision. We cannot report on these matters without highlighting the challenging situation that remains in the care sector with regard to vacant posts and the need to fill them.

4.2 The situation in terms of vacancies varies from home to home, but over recent times we can report that all of them have faced challenges where they have had to ask staff to work extra hours or use agency staff to fill shortages. The shortages also vary from being front-line care posts to management and leadership posts in the Home.

4.3 As you can imagine, staff shortages where there is a shortage of care assistants has often meant that the manager has had to prioritise the work of caring for residents above anything else. Often, the Managers of our care homes have reported that they have had to withdraw staff at the last minute from attending training in order to ensure that they have adequate staffing levels working in the home. Similarly, the Managers themselves sometimes have to work care shifts, which can then have a negative effect on managerial issues in the home. The comments in this respect are not made specifically in response to the three audits in question, they are rather general comments that are relevant to all our care homes across the County.

4.4 We should also take the opportunity to make a note of the comprehensive review that took place of the job descriptions of many front-line posts in the care field during 2022/23. The review led to changes in duties, and in many situations, to an increase in the job's pay scale. This review had an impact on several roles that exist in our care homes (Table 2.6). These changes were implemented in April 2023, and over the next few months we will continue to monitor its impact on our efforts to recruit and retain staff.

4.5 For years now we have seen that residents' care needs are intensifying. What we are now seeing in all of our homes is that the admission threshold (in terms of intensity of needs) is much higher than seen in the past. A report was submitted to the Scrutiny Committee on 20.04.23 which highlighted the increased demand for dementia provision specifically.

4.6 Taking account of the national and local trends, there is work to do in order to consider the possibilities present within our internal provision to increase the specialist dementia care provision. Although 6 out of our 11 homes (table 2.3) provide specialist dementia care, the number of general residential beds compared with specialist dementia beds is significantly higher (74% of the beds are General Residential and 26% are specialist dementia beds). Please note that this figure (26%) is inclusive of the fact that all the specialist dementia units that have been developed recently are complete and are in use. It should also be noted that ensuring sufficient staffing levels to open and sustain these units is a barrier.

4.7 Clearly, there would be a need to consider Care Inspectorate Wales's regulations to ensure there are appropriate staffing requirements to meet the need. Alongside this we would need to consider the implications of funding these staffing levels, as well as funding any necessary adaptations to the building. It is known that there is a need to invest (capital and revenue) to further change the balance, and the work program in terms of this is moving forward through various schemes.





<b>MEETING</b>	Care Scrutiny Committee
<b>DATE</b>	23 November 2023
<b>TITLE</b>	Support for Unpaid Carers
<b>PURPOSE</b>	Is there suitable support for unpaid carers in Gwynedd?
<b>AUTHOR</b>	Sian Griffiths, Well-being Leader, Supporting Health and Well-being Service

## 1. Purpose of the Report

A request was received from the Scrutiny Committee to provide information about the support available for unpaid carers in the county, which specifically considers:

- What existing support is on offer?
- Does the support meet the needs of unpaid carers?
- Are there new plans in the pipeline to improve the provision?

## 2. Background

2.1 Thousands of people provide unpaid care for members of the family or friends who are ill, elderly or disabled every day in Gwynedd. These numbers increase as the population ages.

2.2 These people are known as unpaid carers. They can be parent carers caring for a child with disabilities; parent carers caring for a child who has become an adult; an adult caring for another adult - partner / parent / friend or relative; children and young people who care, or help to care for a sibling, parent or relative.

2.3 **10,448 people identified themselves as unpaid carers in Gwynedd according to the 2021 Census, namely 8.9% of the population** - but, in reality, we know that the figure is much higher than this.

2.4 Unpaid carers provide the vast majority of care and support for vulnerable, disabled and unwell individuals in our society and, therefore, they save hundreds and thousands of pounds for statutory services every year. However, the effects of Covid, the cost-of-living crisis and the shortage of employed carers have worsened the situation of several unpaid carers. Therefore, the question whether we do enough to support them to continue with their caring role is a timely one, and the answer is simple - no we do not. But this is something that is recognised and we are eager to take action to improve the situation.

2.5 Every year, Carers Wales undertakes a survey of carers in order to understand their situation in Wales. According to the 'State of Caring in Wales 2022' report, carers are faced with increasing challenges with many feeling lonely, invisible and isolated, and in a very difficult financial climate.

## 3. Guidance from the Government

There is clear guidance and recognition of the role of unpaid carers from the Welsh Government and it is the duty of local authorities to recognise and take action on this. The Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 notes that carers are entitled to receive an assessment of their needs.

3.1 The Welsh Government's Unpaid Carers Strategy notes four priorities to support unpaid carers.

- Identifying and valuing
- Providing information, advice and assistance
- Helping to live as well as caring

- Supporting in education and employment

#### 4. What is the current support available in Gwynedd?

The type of support currently provided varies and relies on the arrangements of departmental teams, the capacity of local providers and on geographical location to an extent.

Our teams in Adults Social Services, Learning Disabilities, Mental Health and Children Services are involved with carers of all kinds in their day-to-day work. They work closely with the individuals receiving a service, and as workers they also provide emotional and practical support to those caring for them. This in itself is very valuable and it is not something that can be easily measured. Care and support are often provided in the home for the loved ones of those who care and it can certainly be of great assistance, but nobody should be expected to care continuously.

There is an Unpaid Carers unit within the Supporting Health and Well-being Service, which coordinates developmental work in the field and promotes engagement and communication.

##### 4.1 Carers' Assessment

In accordance with the act, the support for carers includes the offer of a carers' assessment for those people who come to the attention of teams in Gwynedd, and are identified as unpaid carers.

This is a good chat to understand and record the carers' situation, which gives them an opportunity to consider whether they need any additional help or support. Few carers are aware of the support available. At other times, they are reluctant to consider that they are entitled to support - such as an opportunity to have a break, help with costs or equipment as well as information about local services or groups.

This is usually offered as an individual or joint assessment. The term 'assessment' can be confusing and scary to some carers and there is a need to be cautious when presenting this. The carer is not always keen to receive an assessment, and the numbers formally recorded on our care management system (WCCIS) are relatively low, with the majority of them joint assessments. This provision is not entirely consistent across the teams, and there is an opportunity here to raise awareness of the right to receive an assessment, and to ensure that every assessment considers all aspects of the carer's life.

A care and support plan will derive from the assessment and arrangements or referrals can be made to various support including:

##### 4.2 Short respite

4.51 After understanding the situation of the carer through the assessment, the type of support that would be most beneficial to them can be discussed on a joint level. In the Adults Service, this may include the opportunity to have a short respite by means of a keep company/sitting-in service where the carer can have a chance to have a break from their caring role. The short respite can be a few hours per week or it can be accumulated for a whole day. This type of support relies on providers' staffing levels.

A small team of Dementia Support Workers provide support and companionship for individuals living with dementia in the county (primarily funded through the Regional Integrated Fund) and it ensures respite for those caring for them.

The Learning Disabilities Team provides a range of day opportunities for their clients, which is also a way of enabling the carers to have a period of respite. These include Shared Lives Scheme/respite group/Llwybrau Llesiant group sessions/short stay with friends.

### **4.3 Residential Respite**

The Adults Service can arrange respite care in a residential home for those cared for in order to offer a complete break for a period of up to two weeks.

The Learning Disabilities Team has Bespoke respite units at Sŵn y Môr, Pwllheli and Brookfield, Bangor, and they can help to refer clients to have short holidays e.g. Carers Outreach caravan in Hafan y Môr.

### **4.4 Direct Payments**

The teams can offer direct payments for carers giving more choice, control and flexibility for them in terms of the type of support than can be arranged. If an individual is eligible for support for their care and support needs, the Council can provide **funding** for them rather than **a service**. They can use the Direct Payments to arrange support that is most suitable for their personal situation.

At present, the number receiving direct payments is very low. A specific project looking at improving, developing and promoting opportunities to offer Direct Payments is currently ongoing.

### **4.5 Dementia Actif**

The Dementia Actif Team is preparing a range of activities, groups and sessions across the county for individuals living with dementia and those who care for them. These include low-impact exercise and socialising classes, Boccia League, Carers' Group, Gardening Group, Sporting Memories Club and walking groups.

### **4.6 Day Care**

The Council used to provide a programme of traditional day care activities in specific locations in the county for adults who needed support. A limited choice of activities was often available and some had to travel considerable distances to reach them. Despite this, a number of individuals and carers valued them - maybe when nothing else was available. A further scrutiny report notes potential developments in terms of support on a community level.

### **4.7 Aidi App**

A new website launched on a joint basis with Anglesey to help young carers to find information and support and to self-refer for an assessment. It is a unique app that corresponds with the website and is a way of identifying young carers, and they can use it in several local shops etc. for discounts. It is also a way of quickly contacting the school or college when they are running late as a result of their caring responsibilities. 61 young carers have signed up so far.

### **4.8 Information on the Council Website**

Although comprehensive information is available on the Council website, it is unclear how many people turn to these pages to search for information. In reality, information is available in several various locations which makes it difficult and confusing for carers. There is an opportunity here to consider how to collaborate to make the most of the resources available.

We have reviewed and reprinted the 'Looking after Someone' booklet, which is one way of offering information in one place. This will be widely distributed during the next few weeks.

#### 4.9 3rd Sector Support for Carers

The Council commissions two specific 3rd sector agencies to provide support for carers, namely Carers Outreach - for adults and Action for Children - for children and young people. They offer a range of services:

- **Carers Outreach** - Providing emotional and practical advice and support which includes benefits information, as well as specific support groups and advocacy and counselling service. They have two caravans on the Hafan y Môr site in Pwllheli, which is available for a reduced price for carers to have a break. They run the well-being grant on behalf of the Council for carers, and more recently, they administrate the Brêc Bach grant for all types of respite for carers. In addition, they administrate white goods vouchers for those facing financial hardship. At present, parent carers make the most use of these grants.
- **Action for Children** - This organisation is commissioned to undertake young carers' assessments on behalf of the Council, and they have closely collaborated with the Young Carers' officers in the Supporting Health and Well-being Service to develop the Aidi App for Young Carers. They offer practical support for children and young people who are carers, including advice and support for individuals, group support, trips and activities, well-being courses and help to gain access to further services. They also offer small grants and vouchers.

#### 4.10 Condition-specific Organisations

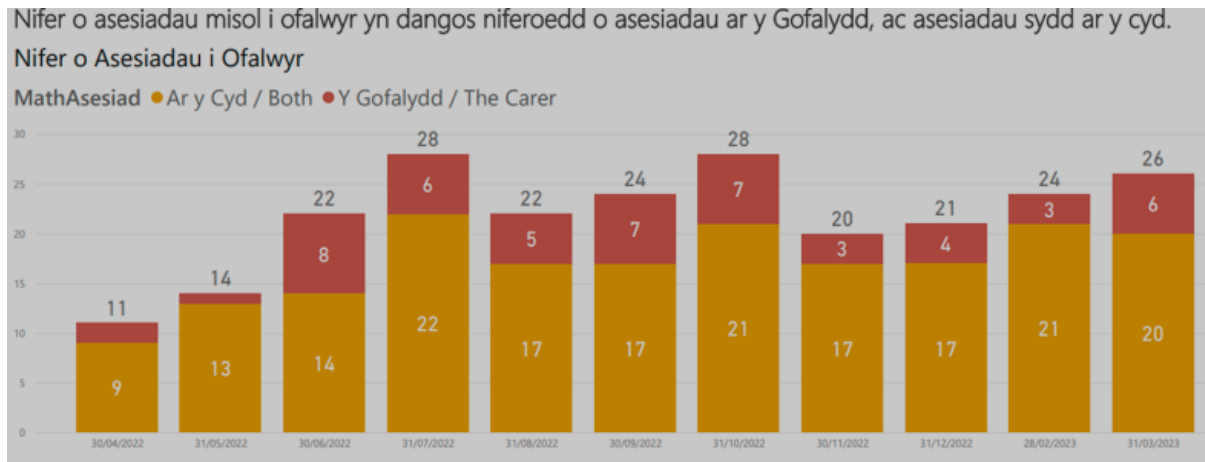
A number of organisations offer support and information for various health conditions, e.g. RNIB, but there are too many to note here. All of these can offer all types of information and support for carers.

#### 4.11 Community Provision

A number of community enterprises are operational in pockets of Gwynedd that provide all types of services on a local level. By now, a further range of provision is available for people in their local community with the development of the community hubs as centres that '*Understand needs and make the most of local assets, make connections, create relationships and co-produce solutions in the community so that people can live good lives*'. A network of lunch/supper clubs, warm welcome centres, drop-in sessions, transport schemes, well-being activities etc. now exist across the county. By collaborating, nurturing connections and jointly developing on a local level, it is hoped that it will be possible to develop and enrich the provision for unpaid carers per community.

### 5. The numbers receiving support - examples

## 5.1 Carers' Assessments 2022/23



## 5.2 Carers Outreach Services

There were 316 new registrations during 2022/23 (a total of 1627 receive support):

196 - have received support through the benefits support project

77 - have received support by the Ysbyty Gwynedd project officer

162 - have received a grant from the well-being fund

56 - have received support from the Ysbyty Gwynedd Dementia project officer (support in YG for carers of individuals living with dementia)

## 5.3 Action for Children

121 young carers receiving support via Action for Children in 2022/23

44 have received a new assessment during the period.

£2400 of financial support through the family emergency fund

## 5.4 Dementia Actif

The total number of people who have attended Dementia Actif sessions during 2022/23: 240

Number of these living with dementia or are carers: 95

Number of sessions held across Gwynedd: 17 various sessions per week

## 6. Does the support meet the needs of unpaid carers?

6.1 It was already noted that 10,448 people identified themselves as unpaid carers in Gwynedd according to the 2021 Census. Only a very small percentage of these people are open to us, therefore, the support available today meets the needs of a small number of carers, and probably a partial number. Much good work is taking place to support carers but further work is to be done to understand to what extent we meet their needs, and to reach out in a timely manner to seek to identify and support carers who are hidden to us, and this in a preventative context.

6.2 At a meeting this year of the Dementia super group, this is what the attendees (which included unpaid carers) had to say in terms of the type of support that they need:

- Need factual, appropriate advice and support for carers 'early' to be able to make informed choices and avoid an emergency.
- Look at how to share the information in an easy way and ensure that the information is consistent in every community.
- Practitioners, especially GPs, to take more note of the challenges that carers are facing and the impact on their health and well-being.
- Appropriate and meaningful respite for carers, which is consistent across the county.

- Better understanding of how to use direct payments to pay for respite.

## 7. Are there new plans in the pipeline to improve the provision?

'Supporting unpaid carers' has been identified as one of the objectives within the 'Caring Gwynedd' priority area in the Council's 2023-28 Plan.

7.1 There has already been an agreement on internal recommendations deriving from the Gwynedd Adults' Needs Assessment 2022-27 for the field, and work is ongoing to address the internal challenges including strengthening and reconciling the system of undertaking carers' assessments, promoting a joint understanding between Council services and our partners in the 3rd sector, and ensuring clarity on the charging policy for carers.

7.2 However, we are eager to collaborate with our partners to develop a strong and ambitious Carers' Plan on a joint basis for Gwynedd, and based on the four national priorities. This Plan will be a plan across all age ranges - children, young people and adults who are unpaid carers. We intend to understand what would help carers to live a good life as they continue with their caring role, what works at grass roots' level today, and address the challenges that face us within the field. This is an example of the type of priorities that have arisen thus far:

### 7.3 Priority Table

Theme	Priority area of work
<b>Theme 1. Identifying and appreciating unpaid carers</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Identifying ways of including carers in developments and plans</li> <li>• Promoting carers' assessments and reconciling arrangements across the Council</li> <li>• Raising the awareness of carers of their role and its importance and improving the recognition</li> <li>• A joint conference to raise awareness</li> <li>• Re-visiting the idea of electing an unpaid carers champion(s)</li> <li>• Scoping work to consider the benefit of extending the Aidi scheme to older carers in Gwynedd</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 2. Providing information, advice and assistance</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review and update the Council website creating a link to suitable information</li> <li>• Coordinate multi-agency information sessions across the county</li> <li>• Strengthen the Carers' Network - in terms of membership</li> <li>• Collaborate with local hubs to share information and attendance</li> <li>• Raise awareness of the right for a carers' assessment and what it entails</li> <li>• Improve access to information for workers in the field</li> </ul>
<b>Theme 3. Helping to live as well as caring</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Opportunity to give people more choice via Direct Payments - need to promote for residents/staff</li> <li>• Promote the awareness of people/staff of well-being grants/Time - especially older people</li> <li>• Promote awareness of Carers Outreach/Action for Children support among staff and residents</li> <li>• Collaborate to develop flexible and suitable community support for individuals and carers</li> <li>• Need a central system to share information about what is available in every community</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Make use and adapt the local assets available to offer suitable and flexible options</li> <li>• Raise awareness and collaborate with the community hubs and local care providers</li> <li>• Promote more of the local care micro businesses to give people more choice, and to consider extending business development support for small businesses that support children and young people (the emphasis has been on adults so far)</li> <li>• Consider how technology can support unpaid carers and their families</li> </ul>
<p><b>Theme 4. Supporting unpaid carers in education and in the workplace</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Continue to raise the awareness of pupils and teachers through the work of the Young Carers officer</li> <li>• Promote good practice in terms of policy/carers' rights to staff among partner organisations/county employers</li> <li>• Develop and promote the support for staff who are carers within the Council</li> <li>• Make further contact with Bangor University and Coleg Llandrillo Menai - share data and information</li> </ul>

## 8. Conclusion

8.1 Two out of three of us will provide unpaid care for our loved ones at some point in our lives, and therefore it is important that help is available as easy and soon as possible to ensure that this experience is as positive as possible.

8.2 We need to identify carers sooner - and this in terms of employers, health and well-being services, and within our communities, and ensure fair and timely support and recognition for them.

8.3 There is a need to recognise that this is a preventative agenda and that the aim is to support carers to continue with their role, and that this will benefit the carer, their loved ones and the statutory services. We know that there is room to extend the provision that is currently available.

8.4 The support that can be provided to unpaid carers in Gwynedd is very reliant on grant funding, and drawing up a county Carers' Plan that addresses the need, but is also affordable, is a massive challenge. There will be a need to carefully weigh up the obvious financial risks and the risks to individuals' well-being when planning for the future.

8.5 Members of the Care Scrutiny Committee are asked for any observations on the above plans, any ideas that they would add, or any challenge to what has been presented.