

# 2016/17 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES



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# Director's Opening Statement



**It is a real pleasure once again this year to present my Annual Report for 2016/17. The main purpose of presenting the report is to provide an overview of how we have provided**

**social services over the year gone by and present our main priorities for 2017/18. This report is an attempt to provide an assessment of the effectiveness of social services for adults, children and families here in Gwynedd.**

2016/17 has been an exciting and busy year. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 came into force in April 2016 and much work has been done over the year in terms of providing staff training and working in a different way. I wish to thank all staff members in the field and our partners for their hard work and professionalism over the past year.

During the year, we confirmed the post of the new Head of Adult Services, namely Aled Davies, on a permanent basis and I wish to welcome Aled formally. Aled joins me, and Marian, the Head of Children and Families Department, and I wish to thank them both for their work and support over the year. I work closely with both Heads of Department in order to ensure that we meet the requirements of the Act and also identify areas and matters requiring our attention going forward.

One of our main priorities over the year was responding to the need to improve the ways we support adults who receive health and care services. People have told us that arrangements can be confusing and complex at times, with a number reporting that they have been passed from pillar to post and have had to repeat their story time and time again. I believe that we have

made good progress with the work of improving this, although there is much more work to be done. I will highlight this work further within the report; however, it is important to acknowledge that it would not have been possible to carry out this work without working with our key partners.

Across the service, the work of preventing problems from arising in the first place, or responding as quickly as possible when issues arise, is one of the main principles of the Act. This requires us to think differently and a part of this is looking across the entire range of services and opportunities within communities, and supporting people within their communities so that they can thrive. We now have a service within the Children's Department that focusses specifically on supporting families who are experiencing profound difficulties. The team's results are very promising. Some of you may have also watched a television programme over Christmas entitled 'Hen Blant Bach', which was an opportunity to look at how to bring nursery age children and older people together. This is an example that has inspired many of us and we intend to develop this way of working further with assistance from experts from the University. I look forward eagerly to those results.

I hope that you will enjoy reading the report. I have attempted to keep it as concise and easy to read as possible, and adhere to the statutory requirements on me in terms of the matters to report at the same time.

After reading the report, if you have any specific observations to make on the contents of the report or on how to draw up services in the future, I am very eager to hear from you and you are welcome to contact me via the e-mail address at the end of the report.

***Morwena Edwards***  
***Corporate Director and Statutory Director of Social Services***

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# 1. Introduction



At the end of every financial year, every Statutory Director of Social Services is required to provide and publish a report regarding the duties of social services within the local authority over the previous year. Therefore, the purpose of this annual report is to evaluate the performance of the local authority in relation to achieving social services' duties and draw attention to any lessons that have been learnt or improvements that need to be introduced. The report should also set out aims in relation to promoting the well-being of people requiring care and support, and carers requiring support, for the coming year.

This report has been set out in relation to how Gwynedd Council has achieved against six quality standards of well-being as noted within the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The format of the report is a further requirement, and although this will only need to be used formally from 2017/18, we have decided to follow the procedure this year. Every local authority is requested to measure the performance of their social services by using the indicators and relevant performance measures against the quality standards.

## 2. Director's Summary of Performance

We have achieved much during the year and on the whole, I am very happy of the performance of Gwynedd's Social Services during 2016/17. During the year, we have continued to take advantage of opportunities to promote new and innovative ways of working. I take pride in the good relationship we have here in Gwynedd with the Health Board, this working relationship enables us to move forward further over the coming years to provide services in an integrated way. We are on an ambitious and challenging journey, however, the successes of 2016/17 show the ability we have to really respond to what people are telling us, and make a difference to people's lives.

It is also very encouraging that the auditors have praised the changes that have been made within adult services during the year. Although the establishment of a fully functional Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit has taken some time, I am proud of the progress made during the year. At our meeting in March 2017, the Inspectorate noted that the department had exciting plans in the pipeline and referred specifically to the work that has taken place in the adults and learning disabilities field. It was also noted that they considered our children's services to be robust and safe.

One of the main projects in the field is the 'Care Challenge' project. The intention is to ensure that the people of Gwynedd are clear regarding the challenge facing us within the care field and in doing so, encouraging and supporting communities to be more resilient. I hope that the community activity we are hoping to stimulate will lead to solutions of a preventative nature that will increase local options to people. We will continue during the coming year, along with our key partners, to work with communities to identify their strengths and the aspects that need to be developed to spur interest in community activity.

The intention during the year was to develop a preventative/early intervention strategy for the children's services. Unfortunately, this was not secured in full. Nevertheless, we have had an opportunity to reflect on our vision and agree on setting a firm direction on the way forward with the preventative agenda. To this end, we in Gwynedd are commencing a new and exciting chapter in the development of services for children and families. Children's services in the future are expanding their focus to develop a coordinated strategy that focuses on supporting families. The ultimate aim of this strategy will combine all the skills, resources and commitment of each professional worker across departments and sectors in a coordinated way to achieve better outcomes for the children and young people of Gwynedd.

A matter that continues to cause me concern is the increase in the number of children coming into care. We would have liked to see a change in the trend this year with the arrival of the Edge of Care Team. Nevertheless, it may be too early to see the true impact of this intervention on our looked after children figures, but we will look into this issue further during 2017/18.

The report will outline the performance in full, but I can confirm that I as Director can see progress in many fields and I also confirm that the change and transformation work required in the adults field has been established robustly and we can see real evidence of this change. In addition, the children's field continues strong in terms of practice and safeguarding work and is pressing on to address the work of supporting families in a more coordinated way in the future. I have real confidence for the future in terms of our ability to continuously improve and develop.

### 3. How do people shape our services?

One of the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations Act (2015) is the creation of a Public Services Board for every local authority in Wales in order to ensure that public bodies are working together to create a better future for the people of Wales. One of the Public Services Board's first tasks was to divide Gwynedd into eight areas and research has been undertaken on behalf of the Board on each of these eight areas in order to understand and learn more about their well-being. In an attempt to understand what is important for the people of Gwynedd, public sessions were held and on-line questionnaires were developed at the end of 2016. The questions asked about what was nice about living in your area, what was not as good, what within the area is important to well-being and quality of life, and what would you change about your area in order to make it a nicer place to live. Ultimately, the Public Services Board will use these assessments along with a number of other sources to draw up a Well-being Plan.

In accordance with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, the Council has also been working on a Population Assessment that focusses on the well-being of individuals with care and support needs. The initial report was released in April 2017. In order

to prepare the report, we looked at statistics, spoke with communities and used a broad range of information gathered by local councils, health services, charities and other service-providing organisations. From the local engagement work that has happened already, five specific themes have been identified, namely: dementia, well-being, loneliness, independent living and homes. A comprehensive work programme is in place for the five above-mentioned themes and I will report on our developments in future reports. In addition to the work on the two population assessments, the following has also happened: -

Since 2013, the Council has completed 34 engagement plans that have offered a range of opportunities for the people of Gwynedd to contribute towards the work of shaping the Council's services. 54% of the people of Gwynedd are satisfied with the information available to them about what the council is doing and will be doing in the future regarding the Council's performance. 72% of people said that the information available helps you to know how/what the Council is doing.

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

As outlined in chapter 1 above, the six quality standards noted by the Government are used here to outline what happened and the difference we saw. In addition, for each standard, we will provide an outline of what we intend to do in 2017/18.

### Quality Standard 1

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

**In order to achieve this, the local authority should:**


- ▶ ensure access to clear and comprehensible information, advice and assistance to support people to maintain their well-being and make informed decisions
- ▶ work with individuals, their carers and partner organisations, to support and maintain the independence of an individual without the need for care and assistance
- ▶ complete well-being assessments in a timely way
- ▶ ensure that decisions respect individual circumstances across the entire range of needs and that they give due attention to the United Nations' conventions and principles for children, older people and disabled people
- ▶ ensure that people are treated with dignity and respect
- ▶ enable people to have control over the planning and provision of care
- ▶ promote a healthy lifestyle and support them

- ▶ enable access to services and activities that maintain mental health and emotional well-being
- ▶ encourage and empower people to control their own health and well-being, to be active and benefit from care and proactive preventative assistance
- ▶ arrange independent advocacy where needed or refer to other types of advocacy to enable people to overcome obstacles to participation when reviewing and meeting needs
- ▶ arrange contact names and share relevant information with partners in order to allow for the smooth transfer of care and assistance across the services
- ▶ facilitate multi-disciplinary care and assistance plans
- ▶ put arrangements in place for assessing needs and deciding on eligibility
- ▶ explain challenges as well as achievements
- ▶ measure the impact of the care and assistance, and assistance to carers, on people's lives and well-being outcomes
- ▶ ensure that people are aware of the arrangements for paying and charging for care

### Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard 1

To ensure simple arrangements, the intention is to incorporate the Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) service within area teams. This work has commenced. We have also been working very closely with DEWIS Cymru to update the website (which provides information on what is available for people locally) and to promote its





use. Similarly, the Supporting Children and Families services have also been developing their IAA services over the year. The service is building on our current ability of referring children and families to preventative services. Over the coming months, the department will gradually develop its IAA service and will build on the idea of having 'one front door' for all referrals, again seeking to simplify things for people.

People are reporting to us regularly that health and care services are complex and frustrating. In response, we have tested a new way of working by drawing up person-centred work systems. The new way of working has been operational in one part of Gwynedd (Eifionydd Area), for over a year and the rest of the county is currently adopting the same arrangements. As part of this change, health staff, the Council's care staff and third sector representation are working as a single team. One important aspect of the change is ensuring that there is one lead person for individuals in order to facilitate their journey through the care and health system. This has proved to be a success with the individuals who have experienced the change. This is a huge change, and is based on a fundamental change in the way we are all working. To this end, it is early days, but this is clearly the way forward. The above change in the way of working means that staff naturally consider "what matters" to individuals as a starting point. Developing a person-centred multi-disciplinary system across health and care and relevant partners has meant that what matters to people is the driving force behind it.

This year, we have developed systems for collecting data from adults service users, and we have started to use this data in order to learn and improve our services continually. A number of questions are being asked through service user questionnaires relevant to Quality Standard 1, and the responses received to the questions have

been positive during 2016/17. 88% of older people and people with Physical Disabilities have seen an increase in terms of achieving what matters to them.

We are aware that some of our residents in Gwynedd have to travel far to access some dementia care services. Work has now commenced to develop a dementia specialist provision within the Council's homes, in partnership with the Health Board. We identified Llys Cadfan in Tywyn as the first home to be invested in. The adaptations in question will involve extending the current numbers from eight beds to 13 beds by October 2017. A higher level of support will be available from health workers to support the home with the more intense needs. This development will also lead to an increase in the number of short-term care beds in the home from two to seven. Day-to-day care facilities will also be upgraded in order to ensure the best care for service users across the site.

As a Council, we are attempting to promote the use of Direct Payments across the care field in order to provide flexibility, choice and control to individuals to achieve their care goals. Currently, approximately 121 individuals are taking advantage of Direct Payments and further promotional work is required during the year. During the year we have reviewed the policy in order to evaluate the options available to raise income under the requirements of the act. Every service user is offered an assessment of financial means before they are required to contribute anything towards the cost of their care.

In Children's Services, we have adapted our operating method during the year to ensure that we act in a child-centred way. A training programme is in place to ensure that all Children and Families Service staff members have been trained in the 'what matters' conversations. The children's field is obviously different to the adults,



and a key part of this work is to ensure that the voice for children and young people are heard under "what matters".

We have developed an outcomes framework for looked after children and child protection statutory reviews as part of a wider quality assurance model. The framework focuses on achieving outcomes for children and measuring the impact of the work undertaken with them. A percentage of core assessments required for children and completed on time (42 days) was 91% during 2016/17 which is an increase since last year. Having said this, it is important that our assessments are accurate, are based on evidence and are comprehensive. Due to the complex nature of some circumstances, we must acknowledge that a few reports will take more time.

Ensuring that we listen to the voice of the child, and that it is heard in everything we do, is very important. We need to ensure that we include their views, where possible, when making decisions when planning for them. During 2016/17, the percentage of case conferences where the voice/views (excluding children under 7) was heard was 84%. This performance has remained static over the past years, but we would wish to see some increase in the coming years to ensure that we act in a way that is based on the rights of children in Wales.

Our performance in respect of Advocacy is disappointing again this year, with only 28% of relevant children taking up the Service. Advocacy involves raising a voice on behalf of children and young people, thus ensuring that their rights are respected and that their views are heard. I am glad to report that a new National Advocacy framework will be launched during the year that will ensure that every child who comes into care or is placed on the child protection register will be offered independent advocacy where needed to

enable children to overcome obstacles.

## **Our priorities in terms of standard 1 for 2017/18**

### **Develop the Information, Advice and Assistance Services further**

2017/18 will see the Information, Advice and Assistance Support Services developing and maturing further, in both the adults field and the children and families field. It is vital that this is a priority so that we can be certain that individuals receive the correct information and advice in a timely way, thus prevent things from escalating.

### **Develop the joint arrangements with health and the Older People services further**

Joint Team with Health and Social Care will continue to be an important priority as we firmly embed the essential changes. It is a major change for us and has far-reaching potential; however, it must continue as a priority for some years so that we can be certain that we see the benefits for the people of Gwynedd.

### **Develop the Supporting Families Strategy**

Although good work has happened in terms of early intervention and preventative work within Children's Services, further work needs to happen in order to place the supporting families' strategy on firm foundations. The number of Looked After Children in Gwynedd is increasing, regardless of the work done and investment made. We will need to review our arrangements during 2017/18 in order to be certain that all our services play their part and are clear regarding their responsibilities.

## Quality Standard 2

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

#### In order to achieve this, the local authority should:-

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

### Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard 2

Within the Council, we have worked very hard over recent years to assist people to continue to be as independent as possible, and reduce the number of people requiring assistance in residential care homes. Alongside the Health Board, we provide a broad range of care options following a period in hospital or in order to avoid hospital admission. With the support of an investment from the Intermediate Care Fund, 23 short-term beds have been established in care homes across the County.

Despite these developments, the delay when transferring from hospitals continues to be a matter being addressed by the Council and the Health Board. We are working together to ensure that the older people of Gwynedd can be discharged from hospital as soon as they are ready. When they cannot be discharged on time, and when we cannot arrange the care and

assistance required to enable people to leave hospital, this is referred to as 'delayed transfers for social care reasons'. The rate of delayed transfers from hospitals for social care reasons has deteriorated, with an increase from 2.38% in 2015/16 to 4.44% in 2016/17. In response to the above, we are reviewing the care and health system, by following cases from end to end and attempting to create a system that will work better for patients thus removing the obstacles that people face. I really look forward to seeing the outcomes of this innovative work.

In June 2016, the Inspectorate published their report on Gwynedd services for adults with learning disabilities. Since the release of the report, I am very pleased to say that the learning disabilities team has made substantial progress to modernise the service. An exciting programme is in place to ensure a sustainable provision for adults with learning disabilities for the future. The new service has been designed to assist individuals to focus on their strengths and on what they can achieve safely on their own. The Council has secured funding from Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund to develop the new model of service provision that will benefit adults with learning disabilities, located at Arfon Leisure Centre initially. This project shows what can be achieved by developing innovative ideas that enables various Council departments to collaborate to provide services. This is a very exciting programme and our intention for the future is to ensure that this provision is consistent across Gwynedd.

Mental Health is a theme that has been identified across services during the year, not only within adults services but within children's services also. It has not been an easy period in terms of securing discussions with the Health Board; however, with the recent appointment of the Director for Mental Health, and the new structure within the Council, I am confident that there will be an opportunity



now to respond to the ongoing concerns. This Council will continue to seek the provision of a sufficient Mental Health provision across the spectrum of need jointly with our partners.

As I have already noted, there has been an increase again this year in the number of looked after children compared with previous years. Currently, there are 218 looked after children (at the end of March 2017), compared with 207 at the same time last year. Usually, children come into our care under very difficult circumstances. Often, they have experienced harm or neglect and they have many health and welfare needs. Issues regarding the health and welfare of looked after children have been addressed by the Corporate Parent Panel in order to ensure that these assessments are carried out in a timely way. Over the coming year, the Corporate Parent Panel intends to develop the current strategy (2017-20) further, in order to secure the best opportunities for children and young people and to probe further into some obvious issues such as health, emotional well-being and stability.

The Early Intervention / Preventative project for groups of vulnerable children and young people in Gwynedd has been a priority for the Council since 2015. We have already carried out an assessment of identified needs and specific fields which need to be targeted when planning early intervention into the future. These fields include: Speech and Language Delay, Parenting and Behaviour Support, Access to Mental Health Services and Support for Teenagers

We are commencing a new and exciting chapter in the development of services for children and families. In the future, we intend to extend our focus to develop a coordinated strategy that focuses on supporting families. The ultimate aim of this strategy will combine all the skills, resources and commitment of each professional worker across departments and sectors in a coordinated way to achieve better outcomes for

the children and young people of Gwynedd. I believe that effective preventative intervention makes children safer, healthier, and gives them the ability to develop and reach their full potential.

One of the highlights of the year was seeing the opening of Ysgol Hafod Lon in October 2016, following a £13m investment. The new school, which is located in Penrhyndeudraeth, educates children and young people with additional learning needs from the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas. It includes modern classrooms with the latest resources, as well as a hydrotherapy pool, therapy rooms, sensory equipment and an outdoor play area. Work has progressed during the year to establish a Respite Unit on the school site. This new service will offer care and support to disabled children from specialist staff in order to give families some respite. This service will allow families to have quality local support.

The Derwen Team is continuing to offer a specialist service for disabled children and children who are ill. Derwen is an integrated team with the Health Board and during the year it has received 209 new referrals across its services which include nursing and psychology services. Nationally and locally, providing an Autism service is a priority. Nationally, we are commencing the process of developing a lifelong integrated autism service that will attempt to overcome some of the obstacles that are being reported by families, namely the need for timely services, access to social activities and training and support. Clear themes are emerging in the field, e.g. individuals with autism without a learning disability or a mental health condition failing to access services. In Gwynedd, within the children's field during the year, the Derwen Team has been working jointly with the Health Board and the Education Department to establish a Neurodevelopmental team. These changes will need to be reviewed and close collaboration will be needed with families within this important field.

## Ein blaenoriaethau o ran safon 2 ar gyfer 2017/18

### Improve access to Mental Health Services

During the year, we have seen an increase in the number of people receiving a service from the Council who are living with mental health problems. Ensuring timely access to Mental Health services across the range of need continues to be a priority.

### Develop the Supporting Families Strategy

We are of the opinion that effective intervention makes children safer, healthier and gives them the ability to develop and reach their full potential. Developing a Supporting Families strategy will ensure that Gwynedd Council provides the right intervention at the right time.

### Develop our own Autism service

Nationally and locally, providing an Autism service is a priority. We will continue to work closely with our partners in Health and Education during the year in order to review the provision and ensure that we are operating in the best way.

## Quality Standard 3

### Safeguarding and protecting people from abuse, neglect and harm.

#### In order to achieve this, the local authority should:-

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

### Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard 3

In order to ensure that we achieve our safeguarding responsibilities, it is essential that awareness of the field exists across the Council's staff. Efforts are continuing in terms of improving awareness of safeguarding across the Council and, by now, the Council has ensured that we have adopted safeguarding policies and procedures across all Council services. We have undertaken an annual survey to measure the impact and



improvement of awareness levels of the safeguarding field, together with undertaking annual inspections to ensure that our arrangements are robust in the field. The Awareness Audit has shown this year that there has been an increase in the level of awareness of the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures.

The Adults, Health and Well-being Department has put robust arrangements in place during the year in order to ensure expertise and full understanding of all the issues in relation to safeguarding. This allows the Council to be proactive and able to respond appropriately and effectively to concerns as they arise. There has been a general increase in safeguarding referrals recently; however, from discussions with other Authorities within the region, it is clear that we are all in a similar situation. A meeting was held with a CSSIW officers at the beginning of March 2017 and, in acknowledging that there was still work to do and a challenge ahead of us, the proposed arrangements were robust. This feedback is very encouraging at the beginning of a period of change. The unit will be fully established by June 2017 and a comprehensive work programme has been developed.

Our measures in relation to adults and children suggest a solid performance again in 2016/17. It was seen again this year that the adults safeguarding referrals completed during the year had managed to control the risk 100% of the time.

One piece of important work that happened during the year within the field of safeguarding was the work of continuing to ensure the robustness of safeguarding procedures and policies, specifically within the field of Education. We also focused on our local response to the risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) which also receives attention regionally. Robust arrangements for gathering information are in place, which has improved our awareness and

have assisted us to understand trends. Multi-agency training was conducted during the year by experts in the field in order to develop skills to identify signs of CSE and how to identify those at risk of being exposed to exploitation.

Problematic/harmful sexual behaviour is a field that receives regional attention. We are seeing an increase in the number of children and young people who are referred to formal services due to their harmful or problematic sexual behaviour. The North Wales Safeguarding Board has jointly decided to work on a regional framework in response to these matters in order to ensure a robust workforce that can respond effectively to the concerns. The work of developing this framework will be led by the NSPCC.

Specifically regarding safeguarding children, the rate of risk assessments submitted to case conferences that were considered ones that showed quality when making decisions suggests a solid performance again this year - 95% in 2016/17 compared with 97% in 2015/16. The average time for children to be on the child protection register is 267 days, which is lower than the Council's target.

### **Our priorities in terms of standard 3 for 2017/18**

#### **Safeguarding and Quality Assurance Unit**

The inspectorate, as well as the Council, recognises the Council's need to continually improve the safeguarding arrangements and culture within adult services. Effective safeguarding is crucial to ensure that all individuals receive the same opportunities in life and to protect the most vulnerable in our society.



## **Continue to ensure corporate ownership of Safeguarding**

The Council is of the opinion that it is the responsibility of everyone to safeguard children and vulnerable adults. To this end, ensuring whole Council ownership of Safeguarding will continue to be a priority for the years to come.

## **Problematic/Harmful Sexual Behaviour**

In response to the increase in the number of children and young people being referred to Safeguarding services due to their harmful or problematic sexual behaviour. We will be prioritising the development of our understanding of the field and improving our response by co-working regionally and jointly with the NSPCC to develop a regional framework.

## **Quality Standard 4**

**Encouraging and provide support for people to learn and contribute in society.**

### **In order to achieve this, the local authority should:-**

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

## **Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard 4**

Ensuring the necessary social resources in order to attempt to address the risk of loneliness amongst our older residents is essential, and the Council plays an important part by attempting to improve Gwynedd's social resources. Libraries and leisure centres already carry out important work. Similarly, Age Well Centres have proved to be a great success. By now, over 1000 older people make use of the centres that have been established in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Llanrug, Nefyn, Bala, Cricieth, Penrhyndeudraeth and Dolgellau, with efforts in the pipeline to also establish provision in Abersoch, Caernarfon, Bangor and Penygroes.

I am extremely proud of the contribution made by the Community Arts Unit. The Unit offers a variety of arts activities across Gwynedd, some of them targeted specifically at older people. Among the projects, older people in the Caernarfon area receive the opportunity to produce creative work that has been inspired by their memories and experiences of the sea, and Dwyfor Community Art Group uses art therapy as a form of therapy and is provided in partnership with the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board.

The 'Hen Blant Bach' programme has definitely contributed towards this aim. Children from Plant Parciau Nursery came to the Maesincla Day Centre over the period of a week to socialise and contribute to joint activities. I'm very glad that the experiment has been an astounding success and this is reflected in the television programme broadcasted on 28 December 2016. It became very clear that a scheme of this kind had enormous potential to prevent loneliness, which is one of the main aims of the Day Centres. I'm very glad to report that additional work will be undertaken regarding this modern idea which bridges generations, and I look forward to sharing



a little more good news with you.

The DementiaGo scheme has held exercise sessions for people who live with dementia and their carers within leisure centres since 2015. This scheme has been very successful by encouraging people who live with dementia and their carers to keep active, and also to have the opportunity to socialise. By now, the scheme has expanded and has been developed to offer experiences for residents within our care homes, with some homes committing to be 'dementia friendly' and 'dementia champions'. It is intended to train the workforce within 11 Care Homes by the end of 2017/18. The scheme will ensure that residents have the opportunity to be as active as possible to reduce the risk of falling, reduce depression and increase the quality of life.

We are aware that the outcomes for children and young people who are in care are far from the achievements of their peers, which then also means that they are under more disadvantage to succeed and achieve their well-being goals. As I have already discussed, the role of the Corporate Parent Panel is crucial in ensuring that all looked after children succeed in reaching their full potential.

During this year, 64.1% of children in Care have received a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days. Although this is an increase on the previous year, the Corporate Parent Panel has set a priority for 2017/18 to ensure that the Education plans are of quality, are appropriate and ambitious. The percentage of children who have left care that are in education, employment or training 12 months after leaving care is 50% this year. Similarly, the percentage of children who are in education, employment or training after 24 months is 45%. These figures are not very encouraging, but I am pleased to report that the 'Ad-Trac' Scheme will become live at the beginning of this financial year which will place the

necessary emphasis to ensure that the children who leave care are identified as a priority to receive the support they need to secure further education, training or employment. It is an exciting programme, which will assist in moving forward and in raising the momentum of the work that is needed with Children in care or leaving care. I welcome the report of the Children's Commissioner, Sally Holland, 'Hidden Ambitions', and her recommendations in order to ensure that children who leave care have the same opportunities, support and help to find their way in the world.

Gwynedd has participated in a pilot programme for the 'When I am Ready' scheme since 2013 and, since April 2016, it has been a statutory responsibility for all local authorities in Wales. The aim is to offer stability and continuity to young people so that they do not move out of care before they are ready to do so. During 2016-17, 10 young people have participated in the scheme and at the end of quarter 3, six young people were still part of a 'When I am Ready' arrangement. Since the scheme began in 2013, 58% of the young people who were eligible have chosen to be part of the scheme.

Flying Start is a Welsh Government programme, which is offered in six catchment areas in Gwynedd. The project works with children under four years old, and its intention is to improve children's skills, prepare them for school, as well as preparing them for life in general. Flying Start also offers additional support for parents to assist them as their children grow and develop. During 2016/17, the attendance percentage of children who are two years old when starting Flying Start was 84%, which shows some progress on the 83% from the previous year. There has been a significant increase in the number of advanced parenting packages which has led to positive distance travelled, 89% compared to 48% the previous year.



## Our priorities in terms of standard 4 for 2017/18

### Measuring the Effectiveness of the DementiaGo Scheme

Hand in hand with expanding this scheme, there has been initial discussions for the need to show and measure the impact of the scheme. This will be crucial in order to justify continuous financial support from the Council and the Health Board in future.

### Improving the Achievements of Looked after Children and Children who Leave Care

Ensuring the best education and improving the achievement of children who leave care continue to be a priority for the Council again this year. We need to ensure that we reduce the gap between the achievement of children who have been looked after and their peers.

## Quality Standard 5

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

**In order to achieve this, the local authority should:-**

- ▶ Provide support for people to maintain relationships that are of importance to them, in accordance with the safeguarding needs
- ▶ Assist people to acknowledge unsafe relationships and to safeguard themselves from abuse and neglect

- ▶ Where appropriate, give consideration to the views of families, carers and other personal relationships when assessing care and support needs

## Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard 5

Carers are crucial to the health and social care system and are one of the groups that need to be considered when undertaking the Population Needs Assessment. One of the Council's priorities during 2016-17 was to review how effective our current procedures were for supporting carers, and our Scrutiny Department have conducted a review into carer services in Gwynedd. A number of recommendations derive from this review, and a work programme is now in place. Regionally, an Officer from Gwynedd Council leads on the work of developing the carer services across the region. There will be particular emphasis during this work on ensuring that we look at services from the carers' perspective.

The Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) provides specialist assistance for families, who have been effected by drugs and alcohol. Due to the intensive nature of this intervention, the service is prioritised for the families who need the greatest support. Over the course of the year, the service has worked with 35 families, and 67 children were present within these families. The team has succeeded to ensure a significant change within 26 families, and the feedback from service users was very encouraging.

*'I have been extremely happy with the level of support I have received from my IFSS worker. She has supported me to make changes in my life which has led to my daughter coming back to live with me. We need more workers like this.'*

Service User



The Edge of Care Team became active in January 2015 and the team is working intensively with children and families when their situations at home are very fragile. By working with the children and families, people's physical and mental health needs, and emotional well-being needs, are being met. Since April 2016, the team by now have worked with 96 children (46 families). Although it is early days in terms of measuring the effectiveness of the interventions offered, early indicators suggest success. We have seen a reduction in the factors that were present prior to involvement of the team by 79%. Although we still see an increase in the number of looked after children, we assume that the numbers would be higher without the intervention of this service. Nevertheless, further work will be needed to ensure that the intervention makes a real difference.

During the course of the year, the Youth Justice Service has been through a period of transformation as they move to a new assessment framework, which gives the child and their families a greater voice as they plan for them. "ASSET Plus" is a holistic assessment and planning framework which follows a young person from the beginning to the end of their period in the justice system. It ensures that the young person does not have to repeat their story time after time, and ensures that we listen to the children's voice and to the people that are important to them. The long-term intention is to ensure better-targeted interventions that will lead to better results for the individual. This year's results are very positive.

Over the course of the year we have been supporting children and families by offering access to services in the community or via a service which is co-ordinated by the Gyda'n Gilydd Team. The Gyda'n Gilydd Team offers support and early intervention for children, young people and their families to ensure that the problems they face do not become more severe and complex. 95% of

families report that they have seen significant improvement in their family lives since Gyda'n Gilydd intervention. This is an increase from last year.

*"Just wanted to say thank you for everything, you've gone above and beyond for me and my child and it means a lot to us, so thank you from the bottom of our hearts"*

One child's family.

## **Our priorities in terms of standard 5 for 2017/18**

### **Ensure better rights and support for carers**

Carers of all ages have been identified as one of the Council's priority groups. We acknowledge that the contribution the carers make to the society is valuable and we need to ensure that the experience of caring is much better.

### **Evaluating the Families First Programme in Gwynedd**

This will be one of our priorities for the year ahead. In the coming months, we will focus on evaluating the current Families First programme in Gwynedd in order to learn where we can improve and develop in order to offer better services for our families as part of our wider early intervention strategy.

## Quality Standard 6

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

**In order to achieve this, the local authority should:-**

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

## Evaluation of progress against Quality Standard 6

The Homelessness Service provides advice and support for people who are homeless or at threat of becoming homeless. The team fulfils the Council's statutory duty in accordance with the Housing (Wales) Act 2014. In addition, the team provides tenancy support for vulnerable people to ensure that they are able to retain their tenancy and avoid becoming homeless again. We saw a significant increase in the demand over the year with 722 tenants being offered a service. The unit's performance is among the best in Wales. With grant money from the Welsh Government,

the homelessness unit has also financed a project to co-ordinate a service for prison leavers. The project has developed a good relationship with the prisons, the Probation Service, and a number of other agencies who work with the individuals.

The Supporting People programme provides support for vulnerable people to manage and maintain their tenancy and live independently. During 2016/17, the programme in Gwynedd has supported 2,000 to gain access and maintain permanent or temporary tenancies, and prevent homelessness. Due to a change in the legislation and the conditions of the supporting people grant, more emphasis is now placed on homelessness prevention through offering targeted earlier and creative interventions. In light of this, we have developed a drop-in service in two areas that offer support for young people. Mapping analysis undertaken, confirm that our highest priority groups are the ones who flee from domestic abuse, young people, prison leavers, homeless people between 25 and 54 of age, those who misuse substances and single parents. The gap has become apparent over the previous year, with an increase in the number of our clients who report complex mental health problems and have become homeless or are at threat of becoming homeless. These matters will receive our attention during 2017/18.

The Hafod y Gest Extra Care Housing scheme, worth £8.5 million, is being developed by the Grŵp Cynefin housing association in partnership with Gwynedd Council. The new Hafod y Gest, which is located in the centre of Porthmadog town, is in an ideal site in the heart of the community and close to the town's shops and amenities and offers extra care housing for the area's older people. There will be 40 one and two bedroom flats with 24 hour care; a community hub for activities; hobby, fitness, beauty and therapy rooms; a lounge and dining room. I am pleased to report that the first residents of Hafod



y Gest will begin to reside there at the beginning of next year.

We have been focusing on ensuring that there is sufficient suitable housing for the needs of the people of Gwynedd as high prices are preventing local people from buying houses. In addition, we are aware that there is a shortage of suitable houses to rent. In response to the problem, the Council has attempted to provide a variety of affordable housing within rural communities of Gwynedd, and a development of nine houses has been constructed in Mynytho. The Council also continues with the partnership with Grŵp Cynefin, and hopes to develop similar plans in Penygroes, Bethesda and Waunfawr in future.

The OPUS project is now fully operational in Gwynedd. The aim of the project is to reduce the levels of unemployment in Gwynedd by increasing the employability of vulnerable individuals and move them closer to the labour market. The project is open for individuals 25 years of age and older who are economically inactive or long-term unemployed who are facing complex barriers to employment e.g. health, disabilities and mental health problems. We started receiving referrals in February this year and I look forward to report on the results of the project in future.

We plan carefully in order to ensure that children's needs are being met within their placements. In emergencies, or when circumstances change, a placement do change. The number of changes in placements continue to be low, however at times changes are positive as children move to permanent placements or adopted placements. At the end of the year, 66% of looked after children were at fostering

placements.

Recently, there have been a number of court cases coming to the decision to place children with their parents although we have highlighted safeguarding concerns. This creates stability for the child but is a challenge to manage due to significantly higher situations of risk. Our aim is to develop our services to stabilise these placements though continuing to invest in the skills of our foster parents. We have 103 foster parents registered with the Council and they receive good and appropriate support, and the number is on the rise compared to the 99 registered parents last year.

### **What are our priorities in terms of standard 6 for 2017/18 and why?**

#### **Developing suitable accommodation and care provision**

This is a priority, as we need to ensure that the people of Gwynedd have the most suitable accommodation and care provision to address their future needs within resource constraints. The Council will need to respond proactively to the demand.

#### **Supporting People with Mental Health Problems**

Priorities for the coming year include developing a new project jointly with the Supporting People Unit and the Mental Health Service. The purpose of the project will be to co-ordinate a service for people who suffer from complex mental health problems who are at risk of homelessness.

## 5. How we work

### **Our workforce and how we support their professional role**

The residents of Gwynedd receive social care provision from providers who are employed by Gwynedd Council, and private or third sector providers. Approximately 3,000 staff members have been employed in the Social Care sector during the year.

The National Standards framework sets out the learning objectives for new social care workers within three months in the field, which outlines the main learning objectives such as safeguarding, health and safety, communication and values. Gwynedd has been piloting a new internal provider staff induction programme since April 2016 which includes e-learning programmes and three days of face to face training. Our partners also get access to courses that correspond with the induction framework through our partnership website.

The qualifications framework for the Social Care Sector in Wales sets a foundation for suitable qualifications in the field. As part of the service registration process, the inspectorate expects care workers to complete a suitable qualification for their roles. By now, a high percentage of workers have completed the necessary qualifications. In terms of the service's registration, it is expected that the workers continue to develop skills and information and, to this end, the Workforce Development Unit offers a range of training programmes for internal providers and their partners.

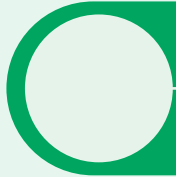
The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 outlines an expectation for home care workers to begin registering as a registered workforce from 2018 onwards, and residential workers from 2020 onwards. We have now began work to ensure that our workforce have the necessary qualifications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

turnover continues to be a problem, especially in the field of Home Care, and our Strategic Plan project attempts to address this, with a number of recruiting efforts having taken place during the year.

Training on the act's modules have been held and a series of particular training sessions for the managers of social workers have also been held in order to create an understanding of the culture change in the way of working. Training that focuses on the Person, Dementia, Collaborative Conversations and Active Support have been undertaken during the year. The Older People Commissioner noted in the document *Dementia (2016): More than Just Memory Loss* that there is a lack of general and specialist training in terms of dementia care. As a Local Authority, we are aware of this concern and have been following the Dementia Learning and Developing Framework for Wales. We have been holding training in accordance with the Framework for some years.

### **Our financial resources and how we plan for the future**

Despite the current financial pressures, the Council's objective is to ensure that the resources we have are used to give the greatest benefits to the people of Gwynedd. Work continues to ensure a consistent culture across the Council and the principle of placing the people of Gwynedd at the centre of everything we do. It is noted that time and effort have been invested over the past year in ensuring that we have the right material to promote the principles, to train Senior Officers in the principles and to implement the programme to develop leaders. By now, we are trialling a new way of working within eight services in the Council. Although it is still very early days, and a culture shift in a large organisation such as the Council will take time, some evidence can be seen that awareness has improved among staff members and examples where trialling new ways



of working has led to improving services for the people of Gwynedd.

The cuts in funding that the Council receives from the Government means that we must cope with receiving less money to maintain our services. We had identified that the financial deficit over the period of four years up to 2017/18 could be as much as £50 million. Consequently, we have been looking at ways of ensuring that the effects of the savings on the people of Gwynedd are kept to a minimum and to continue to deliver more in those priority fields.

The grant reduction we were facing in 2017/18 were not as much as expected. The deficit of £50 million to be met has reduced to £40 million through a combination of a moderate increase in Council Tax and delivering savings to the value of £31 million over the period.

It is crucial that the Council keeps within the budget and over the course of the last year we managed to keep within the budget of £469,000 (or 0.28%). Every year since 2013/14 it is seen that we have managed to keep within the budget available.

One of the year's main successes is that a further £6.15 million in efficiency savings have been delivered by changing the way we provide services, whilst maintaining or improving the standard of the service for residents at the same time. Further work needs to be done within some departments in order to ensure that they deliver their plans in full, in accordance with their pledges.

### **Partnership Work, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability**


For many years now, Gwynedd Council has sought to take advantage of opportunities to collaborate on national, regional, sub-regional and local levels.

In terms of work within care, the relationship is continuing to develop with organisations such as the Health Boards, the Police, the Third Sector, providers and carers. However, we must acknowledge that there is further work to be done, and specifically as I have already discussed, in terms of links with our communities on more informal levels.

The introduction of the act offers genuine opportunities to formalise and further develop those existing links, as well as open new doors for the benefit of our residents. I believe that we are continuing to break new ground in terms of collaboration and it is likely that the response of north Wales councils to part 9 of the act is clear evidence of this. Section 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 places the responsibility on Councils to make arrangements to promote collaboration with their partners in order to improve people's well-being outcomes. Additionally, the act makes local authorities responsible for developing regional partnership boards with a view to improve and increase efficiency.

In north Wales, the Regional Partnership Board has been set up with Councillor Gareth Roberts, Gwynedd Council Cabinet member who has led the Adults portfolio over recent years, as Chairman of the Board. The Board will proceed in coming years to ensure that collaboration and integration arrangements with Health will take place and gather momentum.

It is important that I draw your attention to Part 8 of the act, which notes the requirements imposed on me as the Statutory Director of Social Services. The Cabinet recently approved the 'Director's Protocol' - this is a protocol that outlines how we will ensure that we meet the legislative requirements. This protocol ensures robust governance arrangements along with strong lines of accountability. This protocol is available on the



website and it is important that staff and members also familiarise themselves with the requirements.

The Council has robust governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of social services including the contribution of Scrutiny. Work has been done in relation to the "From Hospital to Home" review and their ongoing scrutiny in particular fields offer me some important perspectives to ensure continuous improvement and to facilitate opportunities to improve the experiences of service users. We also have a robust departmental challenging performance structure. We also hold regular meetings with the Inspectorate to ensure that our procedures are sound. At our last meeting with the CSSIW, it was noted that, overall, we have performed well during 2016/17 and that some of our transformational schemes are exciting. During the year, we have also responded to the report of the Older People's Commissioner, 'A Place to Call Home' and we have assessed our progress against her recommendations. Although there has been good progress in the area of work, we acknowledge that further work is to be undertaken to ensure older people lead quality lives in our homes.

Providing Welsh-medium services in Gwynedd has been a priority for some years now and is an integral part of both the Council and the area's culture. I am the national lead for the 'More than Just Words' agenda on behalf of the Wales Directors of Social Services and am a member of the Welsh Language Partnership Board. By undertaking this role, I can influence the direction in general and raise matters that require national attention. It is also an opportunity to disseminate good practice which includes our practice here in Gwynedd. In addition to my role with this important agenda, there are regional arrangements in place where the main partners involved in care and health work together to

improve the provision of Welsh-medium services. An important element is the proactive offer, namely that individuals do not have to ask for services in Welsh, rather they are offered them at the earliest possible opportunity.

Gwynedd's progress against the 'More than Just Words' Framework objectives is very good. There is a good foundation here, namely a robust Language Policy and a bilingual Staff Recruitment Policy which have been in place for many years. Nevertheless, there is a need for the matter to remain a high priority, as receiving health and care services in the language of choice is crucial to ensuring service of quality. The Adults and Children Departments have designated a senior officer to promote the Welsh Language and we are currently reviewing our commissioning plans to enable us to continue to improve the situation in terms of future provisions. It is a continuous challenge to promote and ensure bilingualism and a Welsh culture within our provisions. We are working with external and internal providers to identify ways of overcoming obstacles and difficulties. One matter that is often raised is the lack of confidence amongst some staff to use their language skills at work and some greatly undervalue their ability. Our intention is to seek to look at how we can support staff to make full use of their language skills, and work will also take place on a national level on this matter.

Arrangements are in place to report back regularly on complaints, and every effort is made to resolve them, respond to them and learn from them as soon as possible. Although a report is submitted annually providing an overview of all complaints during 2015/16, I wish to take advantage of this opportunity to summarise the main trends. In the field of children in particular, unavoidable complaints have been made regarding parents' expectations in difficult situations. In the field of adults in particular, complaints have been made regarding the lack of provision in south



Meirionnydd, as well as weaknesses in terms of engagement and communication with service users and families before changing provisions. There was one Ombudsman's enquiry during 2016-17. The complainant contacted the Ombudsman as they were unhappy with the Department's response in relation to the decision to refuse to escalate their concern to Step 2 of the Social Services complaints procedure. A full explanation of the situation was provided to the Ombudsman along with documentation that was relevant to the complaint.

Thank you for reading my Report and I hope that it is a fair reflection of our present situation and our priorities for the future. If you have any comments or questions please do not hesitate to contact me.



## 6. Key documents and access to further information



### Performance Measures

<b>Childrens Performance Measures</b>	<b>2016/17</b>
Percentage of Case Conference where the voice of the child was heard (excluding children under the age of 7)	84%
The percentage of Looked After Children on 31 March who have had three or more placements during the year.	6%
Percentage of eligible children who have been allocated a personal advisor.	100%
Percentage of children who have a Personal Education Plan within 20 school days of coming into care.	64%
The percentage of statutory visits to looked after children due in the year that took place in accordance with regulations.	90%
The percentage of eligible, relevant and former relevant children that have pathway plans as required.	100%
Percentage of children discussed in Supervision where attention was given to significant harm	100%
SOGS Assessment 2 years of age (Schedule of Growing Skills) percentage of flying Start children reaching their developmental norm.	53%
SOGS Assessment 3 years of age. Percentage of flying Start children reaching their developmental norm.	51%
Percentage of school attendance within flying start	84%
Number of advance parenting packages that have led to positive distance travelled. (Flying Start)	89%
The percentage of risk assessments presented to Case Conferences, which were considered to illustrate quality in decision making.	94%
Percentage of families reporting improvements in their circumstance following involvement of the Team Around the Family	95%
The percentage of looked after children reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year.	91%
The percentage of children looked after at 31st March who have experienced one or more changes of school, during a period of being looked after, which were not due to transitional arrangements, in the 12 months to 31 March.	17.7%
<b>Adult Performance Measures</b>	
The percentage of adult protection referrals completed within statutory timescales	55%
Enablement – Percentage of cases that have received a period of enablement who have a lesser package of care after 6 months	80%
Enablement – Percentage of cases that have received a period of enablement who have no package of care after 6 months	74%
Number of days on average older people (65 and over) received support within care homes.	957
Average age of adults who go to reside in care homes.	84
Percentage of people who have received assistance through the Information and Advice Service that have not needed further assistance 6 months afterwards.	40%



# Useful Information produced by Gwynedd Council

## Annual Performance Report

### Gwynedd and Anglesey Well-Being Assessment

<http://www.llesiantgwyneddamon.org/>

### North Wales Population Assessment

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Do-gfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Gwasanaethau-Cymdeithasol-a-lechyd/Asesiad-Poblogaeth-Gogledd-Cymru/NW-Population-Assessment-1-April-2017cym.pdf>

### Training Information

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Busnesau/Cymorth,-cefnogaeth-a-hyfforddiant/Partneriaeth-datblygur-gweithlu/Rhestr-hyfforddiant-ac-archebu-cwrs.aspx>

### Language Policy

<https://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/cy/Cyngor/Do-gfennau-Cyngor/Strategaethau-a-pholisiau/Safonau-r-laith-Gymraeg/Polisilaith2016.Cymraeg.pdf>

### Ageing Well Plan

<http://www.gwynedd.llyw.cymru/heneiddionda>

## Regional Reports

### North Wales Safeguarding Board Annual Report

<http://www.bwrdddiogelugogleddcymru.cymru/gwybodaeth/>

## National Reports

### More than Just Words

<http://gov.wales/docs/dhss/publications/160317morethanjustwordscy.pdf>

### A Place to Call Home

[http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/Libraries/Uploads/Lle\\_i\\_w\\_Alw\\_n\\_Gartref\\_-\\_Adolygiad\\_o\\_ansawdd\\_bywyd\\_a\\_gofal\\_pobl\\_h%c5%b7n\\_sy\\_n\\_byw\\_mewn\\_cartrefi\\_gofal\\_pres\\_wyl\\_yng\\_Nghymru1\\_1.sflb.ashx](http://www.olderpeoplewales.com/Libraries/Uploads/Lle_i_w_Alw_n_Gartref_-_Adolygiad_o_ansawdd_bywyd_a_gofal_pobl_h%c5%b7n_sy_n_byw_mewn_cartrefi_gofal_pres_wyl_yng_Nghymru1_1.sflb.ashx)

### Hidden Ambitions

<https://www.childcomwales.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2017/02/Breudd-Cudd.pdf>

## Access to further information

### Dewis Cymru

<https://www.dewis.cymru/>

If you are worried that an individual is at risk of abuse or is being abused, it is very important to let the Council or the Police know:

### Child:

01758 704455

01248 353551 (out of Office hours)

### Adult:

01286 682888

01248 353551 (out of Office hours)