

Appendix 1

The Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services 2014-15

Content

| Section | Title | Page |
|----------------|--|-------------|
| 1 | Opening statement by the Director | 3 |
| 2 | Providing sustainable and integrated social services | 5 |
| 3 | Safeguarding | 9 |
| 4 | Improving Services for Adults | 11 |
| 5 | Improving Services for Children | 17 |
| 6 | Governance | 21 |
| 7 | Looking to the Future | 24 |

1. An opening word from the Director

It is a pleasure to submit my Annual Report for 2014-2015. Its purpose is to reflect on the performance of social services in Gwynedd during the past year and report on our priorities and intentions for 2015/2016. I hope that you will find the time to browse through it to see whether or not the priorities correspond with what you believe is important to you, your family and your communities. I would welcome any observations that you may have. I would particularly like to hear about ideas regarding how we can continue, together, to improve and develop the way Gwynedd residents are supported to live content, full and safe lives.

I am conscious that I, as Statutory Director, have spoken considerably about the need for change within the past year. The need comes as a result of numerous factors – the need to change to conform to new legislation, the need to change to ensure that we can make financial savings and the need to change due to the expectations of the people of Gwynedd having changed.

Constant talk of change can cause concern to people, but however from the Social Services in Gwynedd might take over subsequent years, I can assure you of two things:

- We shall prioritise the safeguarding of children, young people and vulnerable adults.
- We will make the utmost efforts to target resources so that they meet the needs of those children, young people and adults living with the most acute needs.

The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 imposes new responsibilities on us as local authorities as well as setting a direction regarding the provision of sustainable services for the future. This Act highlights the need for authorities to promote Well-being in day to day implementation for the population in its entirety. It also emphasises the need for authorities to work in close partnership with service users, prospective users, families, informal carers and communities. There is also an expectation that we will work very closely with Health Service and Third Sector. Additionally, the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 places a duty on the social services and housing services to collaborate to increase the supply of housing. This will lead to assisting in satisfying the housing needs of people and prevent homelessness, improve our communities and prevent the difficulties and lack of opportunities very often faced by vulnerable individuals.


Although Gwynedd Council has undertaken considerable preparatory work to achieve efficiency savings, the need to reduce the budget by over £50 million means that efforts to transform services will need to continue and indeed intensify. It is inevitable that this will have an effect on services. As I previously stated we have firm priorities however if we are to protect these we must change the way that we respond to the volume of referral that we receive. We will not refuse provision of service to any eligible person. We will however assist others to take advantage of the resources available within their communities, within their social networks and available through third sector activities rather than offer formal intervention as an initial step. This conforms to research results that show dependency can be created by arranging formal intervention at too early a stage.

As a Council, our aim is to meet the needs of the people of Gwynedd in the best way possible within the resources we have and this will be done by placing the people of Gwynedd in the centre of everything we do. Although there are obvious challenges facing us, we are also in a period where there are real opportunities for us to promote innovation and different ways of working in order to move the services transformation agenda forward. I am very confident that this report reflects that we are already on the journey to transform services, and although acknowledging that there is considerable work ahead of us, we already have successes here in Gwynedd of which we can all be proud.

Last year, we saw a movement towards joint-planning and implementing services jointly with the Health Board and third sector organisations and developing and strengthening the preventative and early intervention agenda both in the adults and children and supporting families fields in a more integrated way. The safeguarding structures of our most vulnerable children and families and adults have strengthened significantly during the year. As well as this, excellent work has been carried out in terms of raising awareness of the field across the Council ensuring ownership in departments outside the traditional ones alone.

To reiterate, last year has been a period of substantial change for service users, our partners and our staff. Two departments were established and two heads of department appointed. Unfortunately one of the department heads encountered a period of illness which meant having to cope without a head for half of the year. An interim appointment has been made to fill the void. Next year will be a period of further changes and transformation – structural changes, change in practice and change in the relationship with service users.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all of our staff, providers and partners for their commitment and hard work in ensuring that children, young people, vulnerable adults and their families receive the best possible services. Also, a special thanks to everyone who cares informally all year round for a member of the family or a neighbour. I also wish to thank the former Cabinet Member for Care, Councillor R H Wyn Williams, for his tireless guidance and support and to offer best wishes to his successors, Councillor William Gareth Roberts and also Councillor Mair Rowlands, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading 'A Edwards', with a stylized, cursive script.

Awen Morwena Edwards
Corporate Director and Statutory Director of Social Services
Gwynedd Council

2. Providing sustainable and integrated social services

2014/15 was a year when we continued to establish firm foundations to ensure that we have viable and sustainable social services in the future. This year, also was the first year since the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 received Royal Assent. This historical act will introduce the greatest transformation seen in the Social Services in Wales for over 60 years. It also makes it clear that a responsibility lies on the Council in its entirety to ensure the well-being of the Gwynedd population. In terms of local efforts, the Council has commenced planning to respond to various aspects of the Act when prioritising for 2014/15 and beyond.

2.1 Leadership

The functions of the 'Statutory Director' have now been transferred to Corporate Director level within the Council, which ensures leadership and accountability to this area of work on the highest level. During 2013/14 two new departments were established, the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department. Heads were appointed to lead both departments and work is ongoing to form new structures for these departments. The intention is to ensure robust governance arrangements so to transform services which will be suitable for the future.

Establishing a new department for children and families in Gwynedd means that all children and young people's services, with the exception of Education and Youth Services, have been brought together under the leadership of a specialist Head of Department. The Department has moved to concentrate on developing early intervention services across the whole range of needs so that it will be possible to offer support and services for families earlier than what existed traditionally and consequently reducing the dependency on statutory services. The objective is to reduce the dependency on statutory services.

Within the adults field we envisage substantial changes with regards the Department's structure and in relation to social work and care practices. The emphasis is on listening to the user and carer and co-operating with them to plan and develop services for the future. All conversation should commence with asking what is important to the user and all provision should be unique to the individual. Historically we have been dependent on a short and restricted menu of provisions. By now we will be concentrating on identifying the resources within the individual's community, identifying personal connections and utilising these to support people to live their lives as they choose.

With regards political leadership two Cabinet Members were appointed to represent the two departments. This ensures that the care field receives the appropriate attention. Over the past year various Gwynedd Council committees have discussed and scrutinised numerous aspects of the work areas and have scrutinised the changes. The performance monitoring panels (Achievement Panel) which include prominent members have also scrutinised progress.

2.2 Vision

The Council's vision includes placing a focus on what we can do, across Council departments, and with our partners, to support people in their communities in creative, flexible and cost effective ways. At the same time, we want to improve the experiences and choices that people with complex needs have and direct our resources to services of the highest quality.

Despite the change in emphasis we as Council shall ensure that we identify and respond to the needs of those people with the most acute needs thus prioritising our resources to meet these needs.

We have by now realised a strong interweaving between housing and accommodation considerations and care considerations. A suitable home can enable a decision to carry on living independently. There will be a need for the future to plan a range of accommodation provisions that shall meet the needs of Gwynedd people inclusion provisions such as Extra Care Housing.

2.3 Financial Situation

Although Gwynedd Council has undertaken considerable preparatory work to achieve efficiency savings, the need to reduce the budget by around £50 million means that efforts to transform services will need to achieve significant savings.

As a large percentage of the Council's annual expenditure is on social care, the savings target of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department (with the exception of Housing and Customer Care) for the next three years is £6.084m and plans for £2.968m of this sum have already been identified and work is underway to develop plans to find the remainder.

In terms of the financial position of the Children and Supporting Families Department, there is an efficiency savings target of £2.4m over the next three years with schemes for £1.259m of this sum already identified. The department is also in a position where a large number of early intervention services provided are grant-funded. As there is no guarantee that these grants will continue beyond 2017, we are facing the challenge of maintaining these services in the future.

The following provides a summary of the financial situation including the savings identified for 2015/16:

| | Budget 2014/15 £ | Budget 2015/16 £ | 2015/18 Savings identified £ | Savings from the 2015/16 budget £ |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Children | 14,479,000 | 13,778,000 | 1,259,000 | 761,000 |
| Adults | 40,571,000 | 40,143,000 | *2,968,000 | *1,671,000 |
| Central / Business Support | 4,006,000 | 3,951,000 | * | * |
| Total | 59,056,000 | 57,872,000 | 4,227,000 | 2,432,000 |

* Note that these sums are the totals for the Adults Services AND the Central and Business Services.

2.4 Integration and collaboration

We have already started the journey of trying to work in an integrated manner, especially with Health and the Third Sector but there is more work to be done if we are to secure services that offer the best outcomes for the people of Gwynedd.

In accordance with the requirements of the Welsh Government's document 'A Framework for Providing Integrated Health and Social Care', Gwynedd, in partnership with the remainder of north Wales local authorities and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB), agreed and published a Statement of Purpose for Integrated Care in March 2014.

To correspond with the work of developing the Statement of Purpose, a work plan was produced. The plan outlines the implementation expected on both a regional and county level, whilst acknowledging that priorities will vary subject to current service planning and political intent of the geographical area.

Here in Gwynedd, a County Forum was established on a strategic level to promote and encourage integrated working and has the representation of senior managers of the Council, the Health Board and the Third Sector. The relevant Cabinet Member and Older People's Champion are also members.

In order to promote the integrated working, a manager was appointed jointly with the Health Board to lead on the programme. The intention was to contribute towards improving the experiences of those people receiving health and social care services. This role bridged the work of the Council, the Health Board and third sector partners and was accountable to the County Forum.

Furthermore, and in collaboration with the Health Board and third sector, a revenue grant of £1.3m and a capital grant of £600k were secured via the Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund to improve the intermediate care provision in the county. These resources have funded a wide and extensive range of plans and initiatives, including increasing Respite Enablement and Intermediate care beds in the County so to facilitate the process of discharging from hospitals and reducing hospital stays. Also funded was an "intermediate care pharmacists" scheme operating in the homes of patients and residential homes so to review medications in order to improve compliance with medication, and to reduce errors and waste.

Living Well Centres have also been established, in partnership with Age Cymru Gwynedd and Môn, to develop or extend centres in the Blaenau Ffestiniog, Penrhyndeudraeth, Cricieth, Porthmadog and Tremadog areas. These work on long term preventative principles to keep older people active and healthy and improve and create social opportunities in their local communities.

"I live on my own, therefore have a full day is important. The centre is a place for me to go to, to have a cuppa and a chat. It is somewhere to obtain information – if there is something you don't understand about benefits that you are entitled to, you can receive more information, and within a homely environment."
Attendee of a Living Well in Gwynedd centre.

Resources were also used from this fund to establish a new multi-disciplinary team between the Council and the Health Board and in doing so trailing a new way of working. The Team has been working within the Older People and Physical Impairment fields and breaks new ground nationally in terms of working totally integrated.

2.5 Gwynedd's Unique Language and Culture

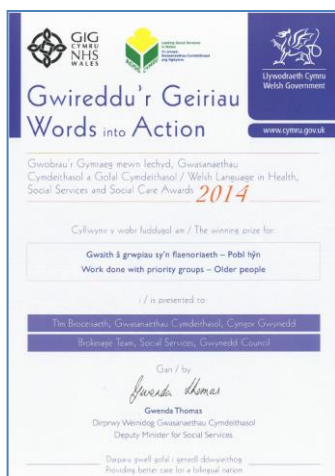
Gwynedd, like every other county, has its own characteristics. Gwynedd is recognised as one of the strongholds of the Welsh language and Welsh is the Council's administrative language. This, in turn, has influenced very favourably on our ability to offer services through the medium of Welsh to our citizens.

During 2014/15 work was undertaken to implement the second year requirements of the Welsh Government's strategic framework 'More Than Words'. We are confident that we are implementing the

recruitment guidelines of the Welsh Language Commissioner and satisfy our duties to plan, develop, implement and invest in a bilingual workforce.

Some of the successes in 2014/15 include:

- mapping the existing provision and capacity in order to provide a proactive service in the dementia service;
- nominate Welsh Language Development Officers in the Social Services and Corporate Support Departments of the Local Authority to lead on the staff initiative of “the language of care at work”;
- ensure training programmes and staff development to increase the ability of staff to provide services through the medium of Welsh; and
- commence an apprenticeship scheme in care with the intention of recruiting approximately seven young people who speak Welsh to work in our care homes.



In the 2014 Words in Action conference, the Gwynedd Social Services Brokerage Team was successful in the “Work done with priority groups – Older People” category.

The staff of the Derwen Team (an integrated team for children and young people who are disabled and sick) also received recognition for their efforts of providing services through the medium of Welsh. This team won two awards during the year, namely the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board’s Achievement Award for ‘Services to bilingual health care’ and also another award under the banner of ‘Working in Partnership’ under Words in Action.

3. Safeguarding

3.1 Strategic developments

Safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults is a priority for Gwynedd Council. It is not just a responsibility for social services alone and it is acknowledged that it is a responsibility for all staff members and all elected members. This is conveyed in the corporate policy and safeguarding children and vulnerable adults.

In order to monitor the progress in relation to safeguarding on a corporate level, a strategic panel was established with departmental representatives and relevant elected members. It is the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People who chairs this panel which leads on setting a strategic direction, monitors progress in performance, identifies gaps and drives forward developments in the safeguarding field. A Safeguarding Operational Panel was established to be accountable to the Panel which is attended by representatives of each Department within the Council.

As part of the work programme the training programme for internal and external staff and elected members continued so to ensure that awareness of the important issues in question spreads further.

With the intention of quality assurance and developing expertise in the safeguarding field, a specific safeguarding unit was established during the year.

Also, as a result of the report, the Council's procurement systems were strengthened and a Procurement and Contracts Task Group was established as a sub-group of the Safeguarding Operational Panel. Guidance on safeguarding issues was included in a booklet and the need to testify that safe recruitment, appropriate safeguarding training and compliance with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) happens is emphasised. It was also noted that there is a need for a designated manager to be responsible for safeguarding issues in every organisation.



3.2 Safeguarding Children

The number of children on the child protection register remained constant. At the end of 2014/15 there were 84 children from 47 households on the register (85 children at the end of 2013/14). We have a local indicator to measure the 'percentage of children who were discussed in supervision, where consideration was given to substantial harm (and the answer was recorded)' and our performance was 100% during 2013/14. Another element that we measure is the 'percentage of risk assessments submitted to Case Conferences which were considered as exhibiting quality in decision making.' Our performance for 2014/15 was 98%.

During April and May 2014, a four-day inspection was held by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW) of the Council's arrangements for planning care for those children and young people who were the most vulnerable and who exhibited challenging behaviour which placed them in danger. It asked the question if our practice promoted listening to the voice of children and promoted better outcomes for them. The inspectors concluded that standing arrangements were in

place in Gwynedd and the workforce was described as stable with a high morale. Noted were several lessons to be learnt and fields to be developed along with positive messages. The findings of this inspection have been shared with the Corporate Parent Panel, the Corporate Safeguarding Strategic Panel and the Council Cabinet.

3.3 Safeguarding Adults

During 2014/15 there was a change in the safeguarding adults' structure. Now, there is a Regional Panel in place with local Operational Groups on a sub-regional level which are accountable to it.

During 2014/15, 178 Protection of Vulnerable Adults (POVA) referrals were received in Gwynedd, compared with 187 in the previous year. In terms of Escalating Concerns cases, we dealt with 4 cases in 2014/15 compared with 2 in 2013/14. We have collaborated with the remainder of North Wales authorities to agree on a regional Escalating Concerns procedure including publishing common guidance for the North.

Following Chester West's judicial review verdict, the criteria to implement the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) regulations have been adapted. We have seen substantial progress in the number of DoLS applications here in Gwynedd. In 2013/14 there were 7 DoLS applications but the number increased to 365 in 2014/15. During the year training sessions were arranged for staff and for providers. During 2014/15 a co-ordinator was appointed for Gwynedd and 3 Best Interest Assessors were provided training to assist with addressing the increase in applications.

4. Improving Services for Adults

4.1 Indicators

Of the four statutory national indicators, the performance of two this year was better than last year, one had deteriorated and another one, although it had reduced, it had improved according to our local vision. This service has also had 24 other indicators, which are a mixture of non-statutory national and local indicators. With 17 of them, the performance can be compared with the performance in 2013/14. Of the 17, the performance of 8 of them (47%) had improved, 1 (6%) had remained constant and 8 (47%) had worsened between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

Our success to complete statutory reviews of care plans has gradually increased over the past six years but it has fallen somewhat this year to 82.7% compared with 85.3% last year.

We managed to perform particularly well in terms of avoiding delay when discharging patients from hospital for social care reasons. This is testament to the way we continually endeavour to collaborate on a practical level with the Health Board. Our performance for 2014/15 was 1.2 per 1,000 of the population over 75 years old* (*local data, to be confirmed by the Government's Data Unit in the summer as it is Health who is reporting). The figure for Wales for 2013/14 was 4.7 per 1,000 of the population.

At the end of 2014/15, our performance for the percentage of people supported to live at home was 45.44 per 1,000 of the population of people over 65 years old, compared with a very similar figure for the previous year, namely 46.21. It is noted that in our historical observations, collecting the indicators was inconsistent across authorities but this year it has come to fruition as new guidelines have been sent to Councils.

In 2014/15, arrangements were developed for analysing our provision and expenditure on domiciliary care in fine detail on the basis of: geography, age, needs, costs, intensity and nature of the service. This means that it is possible for us to analyse the data in such a way that we are able to identify exactly where and, therefore, why changes in the service happen and this enables the service to respond and act appropriately when needed.

At the end of 2013/14, across Wales, an average of 19.84 people per 1,000 of the population of people over 65 years old were supported in a residential or nursing home. Our corresponding figure this year was 25.59 for 2013/14 but this has now decreased to 24.15. Following analysis, it was clear that the increase in 2013/14 had been in Nursing Care and the reduction in 2014/15 has also been in that field.

4.2 Improvement Programme

Review to Set a Direction for Older People Services and Integrated Working

2014/15 has been a period of setting firm foundations for Adult services in Gwynedd. In order to achieve this, a Review to Set a Direction for Older People Services was undertaken, a detailed review of current practice and recommendations for future practice. These will be published in September 2015. Hand in hand with this review, the staff of Social Services and the Health Service have been reviewing the way that the system as a whole works for Older People and People with Physical Disabilities in Gwynedd. With the support of a specialist company, Vanguard, attempts were made to discover what is important to our users, and as a core part of this, seeking to understand the mind-set which has led us to be working in this current way.

This work has resulted in trialling a new way of working with the establishment of a multi-disciplinary team jointly between Social Services and the Health Service. This encouraged us to visualise what 'perfect' would look like by giving us a new purpose and a new set of operational principles:

New purpose: "Help me to live my life as I want to live it"

New operational principles:

1. What matters to the individual is at the centre of all we do.
2. We have a conversation with the individual about their story and the strengths they wish to build upon; supporting the individual to make informed choice.
3. We make decisions with the individual at the right time in the right place.
4. Interventions are based on what matters to the individual by working in partnership with their personal networks.
5. We retain ownership and pull in expert support as required.
6. Information focuses on what matters to the individual and is readily accessible to all who needs it.
7. Our measures drive our learning and whole system way of working.
8. We all work as one team.
9. Leaders act to remove barriers to enable effective service delivery.

The team has now been operational in the Porthmadog area since January 2015, and though the work is developing and it is still early days in terms of measuring impact, very positive results are already appearing.

Dependent on the success of the work in the field of Older People and People with Physical Impairments, we anticipate that we will develop and implement the same approach in the remaining fields in the Adults department, namely Learning Disabilities and Mental Health.

A Review of Care Homes – Older People's Commissioner for Wales

Following the publication of "A place to call Home", which is a review of care quality within Residential and Nursing Homes in Wales by the Older People's Commissioner, we set about drawing up a work programme to respond to the requirements. By now we work programme has been given the Commissioner's approval and senior managers are ensuring that the appropriate implementation is taking place. We were confident that the monitoring of 'hard' matters such as health and safety were already happening but were less confident that we were monitoring the quality of care from the user's perspective. This scheme will ensure that we do so and we shall report annually on our findings.

The Ageing Well in Wales Programme 2014-1019

The Ageing Well in Wales is a five year strategic programme that has been designed to improve the lives of older people by concentrating on preventing ill health, social isolation and improving independent living. It operates on the basis of the individual's strengths and concentrates on a number of life aspects such as frailty, inter-generational work, preventative and early intervention work. It also emphasises the importance of listening and hearing the voice of older people and implementing in the basis of what research tells us is effective.

It is the Office of the Commissioner for Older People in Wales that drives this agenda. All Welsh Local Authorities will need to publish local plans that address the Welsh Government Strategy for Older People (Phase 3) 2013-23 and the Ageing Well in Wales Programme 2014-19 by end of October 2015.

Preventative and Early Intervention Services

In accordance with the requirements and expectations of the Social Service and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, the focus on preventative services and early interventions has increased in the County. Before implementing any substantial developments, there is a need for us to undertake more analytical work in order to ascertain where exactly we should focus our efforts in terms of early intervention and prevention.

In 2014/15, we had committed to discover what was the nature of the community assets that existed within the county, and to try to define the nature of the necessary preventative intervention and seek an agreement on what the third sector's role and contribution should be in terms of meeting these needs. Although we have undertaken marginal work, it will now be 2015/16 when this work will be delivered and it will be developed in parallel with the work of drawing-up an ageing well work plan for Gwynedd and the regional work of which the Council is part in terms of developing an electronic Directory of Services.

However, several preventative and early intervention schemes have been developed and funded in 2014/15 by means of the Welsh Government's Intermediate Care Fund (see Chapter 2). Obvious examples are the DementiaGo sessions held in the County's leisure centres; supporting male carers in the Dwyfor and Meirionnydd areas; undertaking minor adaptations to older people's homes to facilitate their discharge from hospital.

"Brilliant. The exercises are great, the class is such a stress release and I don't want it to stop. It's the highlight of my week. I feel happier going home to look after my husband after the class. A real stress buster."
User of DementiaGo sessions who cares for her husband who is living with dementia.

At the end of March 2015, a session was held at the Galeri Caernarfon for care and health sector partners to re-launch the Falls Risk Assessment Tool (FRAT) and to promote the work of the North Wales Falls Prevention programme. The programme is supported by partners from Health, Local Authorities, and the Third Sector in hospitals, in the community and in care homes. The Falls Prevention service, in addition to the FRAT assessment tool, is available to anyone over 65 years of age who has had a fall or is fearful of falling.

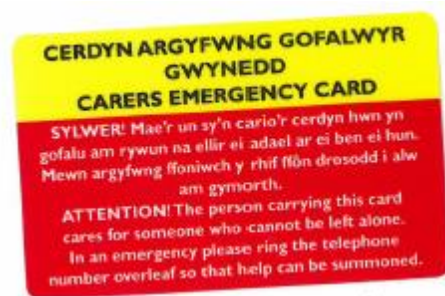
In addition during 2014/15 exercise classes were held in order to prevent falls through Gwynedd's National Exercise Referral Scheme (NERS) and the Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board's Physiotherapy Department. The classes for falls prevention and balance exercise class run for 32 weeks and are for those over the age of 65. There are seven components within the course including strength, balance, flexibility, endurance, floor activities, getting up and off the floor and Tai chi. A referral from a local doctor is a necessity to participate in the NERS scheme.

During 2014/15, we reviewed and amended our procedures for providing Telecare support. The access stream has been reviewed and amended which means that everyone has to sign an agreement. The simple telecare packages have been popular for some time and bearing that in mind, there was no great increase between 2013/14 (406 packages) and 2014/15 (an increase to 466 packages). However, last year there were efforts by the service to promote the complex equipment and this proved successful with the number of complex packages increasing from 30 packages in 2013/14 to 146 packages in 2014/15.

Work has commenced in the Learning Disabilities field to incorporate the principles of the 'Moving Forward' model in every aspect of services offered. In essence, the vision is ensuring that every individual achieves to the best of his/her ability and is always encouraged to aim higher and nurture new skills and experiences. Efforts were made in 2014/15 to review individual packages and to strengthen the relationship with the Health Board. There were also efforts to develop day employment opportunities and establishing a safe place scheme to be piloted in Bangor. This work will continue in 2015/16 and will include engagement with users and their families and re-designing care plans to reflect the expected outcomes for the service users.

There is considerable focus in the Social Service and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 on the field of Carers and efforts have been ongoing in this field again in 2014/15. A carer's strategy document has been drawn-up for Gwynedd under the supervision of the Gwynedd Carers Partnership. An emergency booklet was drafted for carers and also an emergency card initiative launched. Discussions continue to ensure better collaboration with the Anglesey Carers Partnership in the future.

The Gwynedd Carers Emergency Card scheme is open to anyone who is looking after someone who depends on a carer because they are ill, disabled or frail. By signing up with the scheme, which is free, the carer receives a card the size of a credit card, which notes their membership of the scheme along with a unique identification number and phone number for the Social Services.



The emergency services and hospital staff know the significance of the card and from seeing that the individual is carrying the card, if he or she is taken ill or has a serious accident, they will know that someone who is totally dependent on basic care will be in a difficult situation due to the carer's absence. The Care Services will contact those people as nominated by the carer.

Intensive provisions

A Review of the Reablement Service

This service is based on the principle of promoting independence and not creating dependence. It has been operational in Gwynedd from January 2010. The service is available for a specific period of time, which can vary from a few days to up to 12 weeks. It is a service provided by home care workers with specialist support from occupational therapists.

It appears from the measures we are using that we are succeeding with our reablement plans and as a result have secured savings. However, a managerial review was undertaken by the Older People

Service in 2014/15 and it appears although some aspects work well, other should be changed for the future.

These are the main aspects that need to be changed or where lessons are to be learned:

- it appears that there are examples of individuals receiving an enablement service who would have strengthened without this intervention.
- the enablement service is a relatively expensive service to provide and a need to ensure best use of the resource through effective targeting and robust monitoring.
- The performance measure should look at achieving outcomes agreed with the user at the beginning of the intervention.

Gwynedd Council's Accommodation Project Board

Substantial developments are taking place under the banner of the Accommodation Project Board. The work of developing living units for people with learning disabilities on the site of Pant yr Eithin, Harlech is nearing completion. In terms of the work of developing the site of Frondeg, Caernarfon, the options for the site have been identified and they need to be evaluated and a decision made regarding the way forward to ensure suitable accommodation for the future.

In terms of the Council's vision to secure extra care housing units in the Porthmadog area, the Council has now secured the sale of the former residential home of Hafod y Gest, Porthmadog to a local registered housing association. It is foreseen that the construction of the development will commence in October 2015 and it will be completed by April 2017.

Construction work at the £8.35 million older person's extra care housing scheme 'Cae Garnedd' in Bangor is now complete and residents started to move into their new home in December 2014. The scheme includes 15 high specified one and 27 two-bedroom apartments.

Cae Garnedd' is an older person's extra care scheme developed in partnership between North Wales Housing and Gwynedd Council. The extra care scheme is the first of its kind for Bangor and offers an alternative way of living for older people, providing independent living supported by care and support.

By the end of 2014/15, we had published the final draft of the Older People Accommodation Strategy which incorporates residential and nursing care. This document (which is envisaged will be adopted finally by autumn 2015), will establish the direction in terms of the future of our residential homes. It will also facilitate the work of influencing the Local Development Plan and private providers and some third sector providers that could be interested in collaborating with us to develop the best possible range of accommodation opportunities for older people.

Gwynedd's Short-term Care Units

In January 2015, Gwynedd Council opened short-term care units in four of its residential care homes. This is a joint venture with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. By working together they are trying to ensure that the residents of Gwynedd are getting the 'right care at the right time, in the right place and by the right professional people'. The units are located in Plas y Don, Pwllheli; Bryn Blodau, Blaenau Ffestiniog; Llys Cadfan, Tywyn; Plas Pengwaith, Llanberis.

This provision can be used flexibly to provide a period of respite care for service users who usually receive domiciliary care, or to provide a period of care for individuals who have been assessed as

people who might benefit from a period of intervention and support. The aim of this will be to prevent hospital admissions or the need for long-term residential care. They could also provide a period of enablement/rehabilitation for individuals suffering or recuperating from an acute illness/falls and who need assistance or need to be monitored or rehabilitated by community rehabilitation teams, community nurses, residential care and assistance staff.

5. Improving Services for Children

5.1 Indicators

Although the department has been in a period of change, the performance against the majority of the national and local targets have either seen a continuous improvement or have maintained last year's performance. Once again, our performance was amongst the best in Wales in those fields which have a positive effect on the lives of children, specifically the stability of placements, and the educational results of looked after children and the timely response to referrals to the Service.

Of the 8 national indicators, the performance of 2 was better than last year, and the performance of another 2 had remained constant (50% as good as, or better than 2013/14). This service has also 58 other indicators, which are a mixture of non-statutory national and local indicators. With 52 of them, the performance can be compared with the performance in 2013/14. Of the 52, the performance of 44 (85%) had improved or remained constant between 2013/14 and 2014/15.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, in its review of the performance of Gwynedd in 2013/14, highlighted the need to improve or maintain performance in terms the timeliness of initial assessments, reducing the number of children who are re-referred, and the timeliness of child protection conferences.

In terms of initial assessments, it was noted that there was a need to improve the percentage of the initial assessments completed within seven days. During the year, the Council succeeded in completing 70% within the time requirement, which is an improvement on 67% in 2013/14 but still somewhat lower than the average percentage of 72% for Wales in 2013/14. In terms of the response steps, one social worker's post has been added to the structure of the Referrals Team. There is now an arrangement in place for a senior worker to approve assessments in order to improve the seven day performance and regular reports produced to remind managers of the cases which need to be closed.

With regard to re-referrals, this was seen as an improvement in Gwynedd's performance which was heartening and builds on the improvement of previous years. The 25.7% in 2014/15, compares with 26.6% in 2013/14 and 30% in 2012/13, but it is lower than the 22.2% for Wales in 2013/14. The Children and Supporting Families Department are monitoring this closely to ensure that the continuous improvement is maintained and there are now systems which differentiate between referrals and notifications, where this was not true in the past, which has resulted in an improvement.

During the year, and despite staffing problems, the performance was maintained in terms of the timeliness of child protection conferences in Gwynedd. (The percentage was 95.7% in 2014/15 compared with 96.9% the previous year.)

One field that was addressed during the year, at the level of the Council's Services Scrutiny Committee, was the percentage of statutory visits to looked after children that were undertaken in a timely manner. In 2014/15, the achievement was 88.9%, which is a continuation of the annual improvement in performance since 2010 and an increase on 83.7% in 2013/14 and it is also higher than the level for Wales of 85.3%.

The Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales national review of Looked After Children identified the need to develop opportunities for looked after children to take advantage of basic health services and moving on accommodation. As part of their corporate parenting responsibilities, the Council acknowledges its responsibility to ensure that it is possible for the children that it looks after to use

basic health care. The performance for registering with a GP within 10 days was seen to improve in 2014/15 and it was 87.4% but it was still slightly lower than the level for Wales of 88.3% in 2013-14. Although the percentage of the health assessments of looked after children has improved yet again this year to 50.6%, it continues to be much lower than the average percentage for Wales, namely 81%. This is a cause of concern for the Council and it is a field that is being addressed by the Corporate Parenting Panel and it is continuing to try to hold a discussion with BCUHB to see if the situation can be improved.

5.2 Improvement Programme

Corporate Parenting Arrangements

The Corporate Parenting Strategy was developed in 2014/15. This work is still ongoing with a draft version of the strategy having been drawn-up and it has been the subject of discussion at the meetings of the Corporate Parenting Panel. The Corporate Parenting Panel worked with looked after children during 2014/15 to provide an outline of the action steps that the Council will have to take in order to assist looked after children.

Members will need to provide more assistance to ensure that the strategic aims are owned in an effective manner and translated into action steps across Council services and partner agencies. This will ensure appropriate health care, a better educational ambition with suitable and appropriate support and viable employment opportunities and work experiences in the Council for looked after children.

Strategic Planning

In its review of Gwynedd's performance in 2013/214, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales highlighted the need for looked after children panels to make better use of the information in order to describe trends and needs of the population. It was highlighted that the Council's systems did not capture the profile of the population of looked after children regularly and their assessed needs and that this information was critical if the authority was to evaluate the effectiveness of its placement and continuation strategies, and to forecast the need for resources in the future.

The Children and Supporting Families Department already have continuous care planning panels, a resources panel to examine applications again, along with the statutory placement commissioning panel. The Placement Management Panel has been established in addition as a result of the findings of the children's 'End To End' review. This will keep the focus on new placements to ensure that the placements satisfy the needs of children, that there are appropriate plans in place to plan for the future for children and avoid any delays, and that the Council receives value for money from the placements. We are moving towards strengthening the way that we summarise the information received regarding care needs from these panels to feed into the service's care strategies. The Department will be able to identify trends stemming from these panels but it must be acknowledged that in reality this will be a process that will happen over time.

During the year, there were also developments in terms of strategic planning with BCUHB in the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). Regular meetings are now being held to improve the strategic relationship for the future.

Providing support – awareness and use of the advocacy service

The CSSIW national review into Looked after Children reported that young people had stated that they were encouraged to attend their reviews and that advocacy was available. However, it was realised

that some of the young people seen were unaware of the advocacy service and that the numbers who took advantage of the service were low. It was noted that the lack of Welsh speaking advocates was a barrier.

During the year, work has been ongoing via a regional task and finish group to re-design statutory advocacy services for children and young people to ensure a high quality service which provides value for money and satisfies the Welsh Government's guidelines as well as the recommendations of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. The result of this work is that an advocacy provider has received a contract to provide the service across the six counties in north Wales and is operational from 1 April 2015. As a result of this also, we are contributing towards a review of national advocacy services with the aim of establishing a national service in the near future.

Preventative and Early Intervention Services

During 2013/14, the 'End to End' review, which had been commenced in the Children's field, was completed. Its main conclusion was that there was a need to reduce the number of looked after children, as well as the costs that derive from this. Most of the work programme for the Children and Supporting Families Department for 2014/15 was based on the recommendations made in light of the review.

Flying Start

Developments are in the pipeline to develop several initiatives through the sponsorship of Flying Start capital. Last year has been a period of preparing and planning for these initiatives which will mean that the service is available in Bethesda and Talysarn which will substantially increase the numbers of pre-school age children receiving services. It is anticipated that this will maximise opportunities for children and will satisfy the requirements of the plan comprehensively. During the next phase, it is intended to extend the plan more widely to include areas of Dolgellau, parts of Penygroes and Gallt y Sil in Caernarfon.

The Gyda'n Gilydd Team

The Gyda'n Gilydd team (Team around the Family) sits within the new Department. Prior to April 2014, the team was the responsibility of the Education Department. The purpose of the team is to assist families in order to address social, health and educational problems they develop by establishing the team around the family. It is a voluntary programme which means that other services, such as Social Services, do not have to step in to resolve things. The team continues to develop and awareness of the team continues to strengthen with a constant and appropriate stream of referrals coming to the team's attention from a wide variety of agencies.

"Our mantra at Gyda'n Gilydd is to put the family at the centre of the services so when they are in need of help – for example if they lack the skills to balance their budgets or their children have behavioural problems – all the different services join together to support them."

Gwynedd Council's Children and Young People Cabinet Member

During the year, a report was commissioned and received from Oxford Brookes University to evaluate the Team and it came to very positive conclusions regarding the quality of the Service and also submitted several recommendations to be considered during the coming year. Further work is to be done to agree on the team's strategic direction for the future as a result of several changes that will come into effect with the Social Services and Well-being Act. However, it is heartening that close cooperation is developing between the team and the statutory services in the Department and there have been developments regarding agreement on referral arrangements from one service to the other in order to better target the needs of families and thus manage the demand for statutory services.

Edge of Care Team

One of the matters that were being developed at the end of 2014 was establishing the Edge of Care Team which was a result of the 'End to End' review held in the service. The team has been operational since the end of February 2015 and is working on cases. The purpose of the team is to work intensively with families to either save a child from being taken into care or to return a child home from care where it is safe to do so. This is an exciting and important development to transform the service and to improve outcomes for children and young people. The early signs are heartening in terms of outcomes for families from the few cases that have been addressed and the next phase will be a golden opportunity to take advantage of this team's skills to transform the service.

Intensive provisions

At the end of March 2015 the Department had 106 registered fostering units and recruitment work continues to be strong. An annual review of the fostering service was completed in December 2014 which concentrated this year of the quality of life of children and young people in foster care. We are extremely proud of the results of the review.

"... those people using the Fostering Service think highly of it... the fostering service provided by Gwynedd Council ensures that there is a variety of fostering placements for children and young people... the service has made progress by encouraging foster carers to participate in the process of developing the service ..." (Fostering Report of CSSIW 2014)

We continue to be part of a Regional service in the field of adoption and the service is currently under review as the original partnership agreement is nearing its end. Its management board was re-established and Gwynedd is fully represented.

The Department has been one of three authorities which are part of the Welsh Government's 'When I'm Ready' pilot scheme. It is a scheme which promotes young people to extend their foster placements beyond their eighteenth birthday and to move out of care at a time in their lives when they are more ready to do so. During last year, seven young people in Gwynedd have taken advantage of this scheme and have benefitted from the opportunity.

During the coming year we will participate in national workshops and seminars to share information about the scheme prior to it becoming statutory in 2015/16. The monitoring group has submitted a report to the Government at the end of the pilot period.

Job and training opportunities for young people continue to be promoted and encouraged and we continue to work closely with career officers to ensure that young people receive opportunities to participate in courses to prepare them for work.

6. Governance

There are a number of supportive functions that need to be achieved effectively across the fields of children and adults in order to set foundations that will enable us to maintain standards.

6.1 Performance and Quality

The need to improve quality assurance arrangements was highlighted by the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales in the annual appraisal report of last year. One of the main developments during the year was establishing the Safeguarding and Quality Unit across the children and adults services. The protection of vulnerable adults co-ordinator is a member of this team along with independent reviewing officers and the child protection coordinator under the leadership of one manager. The unit has succeeded in maintaining a very satisfactory performance in the field of undertaking statutory reviews and child protection conferences.

The unit contributed extensively to holding safeguarding workshops for managers and elected members during the year and it is intended to continue with this work in the year to come, along with preparing for the changes that will come as a consequence of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in the field of child and adult safeguarding practice when the Act comes into force in April 2016.

The Council's capacity to report on performance in a detailed manner has continued to improve. The risk assessment arrangements in the service have improved by regularly utilising a risk register and updating it. We also monitor through a system based on the social services governance model.

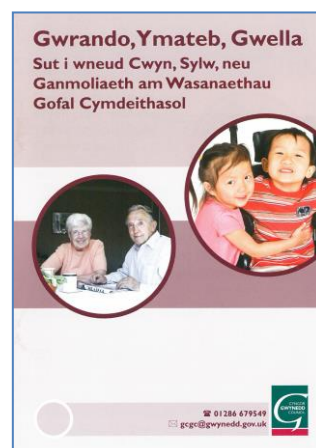
In terms of data, in March 2014 a new system was developed which draws out data directly from the Department's Data Recording Management system and reporting on data quality. Work is ongoing on to prepare a quality assurance strategy for the Adults Health and Well-being Department and arrangements were piloted in 2014/15.

We will prepare a quarterly report by drawing together the main messages from complaints, the performance indicators, any inspections and information by means of the contracts monitoring procedure. The aim of the report will be to summarise all the information and then highlight the main messages and risks. Undertaking social work practice quality inspections are now part of the plans.

A children's quality assurance guarantee framework will be formalised as part of the work programme of the Children and Supporting Families Department in the 2015/16 performance year.

Complaints

On 1st August 2014 a new statutory complaints process came into force thus superseding the "Learning and Listening" national guidelines. We responded by launching a new local policy that convey the changes, held awareness raising sessions for staff and managers and launched a new leaflet for users. A project is on the horizon to



collaborate with a young person to develop a specific sheet for children and young people on the complaints process.

Learning from complaints and using them to improve services is an important theme in the Gwynedd initiative of ensuring that the citizen is central in everything we do. The Corporate Director now considers all the investigations undertaken by the Ombudsman.

6.2 Information Governance and our Information Technology and Communication Strategy

During 2014/15, a wide training programme was held to increase staff understanding of the importance of respecting information as a consequence of an increasing number of cases in the past where data had not been protected effectively.

Following playing a lead and central role in the procurement project for a national and integrated system for Social Services and Health (Community Care), the procurement process has come to a positive conclusion of choosing a successful supplier and has also secured central funding from the Welsh Government to contribute to the purchase (£6.7m).

We are collaborating regionally to install the new CCIS (Community Care Information System) system in the near future and this will be the successor to the present system (RAISE) in Gwynedd but it will include further benefits stemming from collaboration and information sharing.

6.3 Commissioning and Procurement

Strategic Commissioning

Developing our relationship with the third sector has been a field where we need to strengthen to ensure that we move towards working on a much more joint productive basis with the sector. This is crucial in order to establish the direction and the vision for the future in terms of what will be commissioned in the field of health and social care.

Work will continue on preparing current commissioning plans for the fields of adults, learning disabilities and this year we have commenced on developing a mental health commissioning plan for the first time. We will ensure that these will incorporate the principle of more integrated working and increasing the focus on co-producing preventative and early intervention services for the future.

The commissioning arrangements and structures of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department will be reviewed as part of the restructuring process of the Department, with the possibility of commissioning on the basis of care pathways in the future.

Procurement and Contracts

Gwynedd Council has been part of the 'Three County Procurement' regional project, and in light of this work we have now committed, on a joint basis with Flintshire and Denbighshire, to move towards a system of Category Management. During 2015/16, steps will be taken to replace the social services Commissioning and Contracts Unit and to establish a Category Management Unit that will implement the new system of procurement in the future. It is expected that this will strengthen our relationship with our providers and improve arrangements in terms of purchasing appropriate services to meet needs.

6.4 Workforce Development and Training

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 has been a priority in 2014/15 in terms of national and regional collaboration regarding the workforce development needs of the services. Training has been arranged for social workers with a series of more specific courses to be arranged for different groups of staff during 2015/16.

The 'Active Support' training scheme (similar to enablement) in the field of learning disabilities has been successful and the follow-up sessions has assisted with the process of integrating the learning with practice. The risk model training continues to be a priority in the field of children and we are moving towards a panel for workers who wish to move to the next level of higher training by showing their understanding of the learning and how it works in practice.

Now, several workers have registered on the Porth Agored Consolidation Programme and thus far, five of Gwynedd's social workers have successfully completed the qualification. In 2014/15, an apprenticeship in care scheme has been run successfully with two workers placed from local colleges in homes in the Caernarfon area. The two have now completed an appropriate qualification for their jobs and they have received posts with the Council. The scheme is to be extended to the Meirionnydd area during 2015/16 to try to assist with the challenge of recruitment in the area.

The staff of the Derwen Team (an integrated team for children and young people who are disabled and sick) have also contributed extensively to the learning and training agenda during the year. The unit participated in joint training sessions with Children in Wales to discuss integrated working with disabled children and their families and with regard to providing services through the medium of Welsh.

The Workforce Development Unit Manager sits on several regional or national groups and this ensures that we are in a position to influence developments.

6.5 Engagement and co-production

Efforts of the first half of 2015/16 will include mapping the engagement requirements of the Department over the next phase in relation to the service transformation programmes.

In terms of co-production efforts, members of staff have attended courses and events for promoting co-production when developing and implementing services in the future. In terms of the recent success of co-production, last year we formed a Task and Finish Group, including service users, to jointly produce policies and guidelines for Direct Payments in Gwynedd. These policies and guidelines were approved by Gwynedd Council's Cabinet in April 2015. Our intention for 2015/16 is to continue with the co-production work and establish new arrangements with the aim of increasing the use of direct payments.

7. Looking to the Future

7.1 Gwynedd Council Strategic Plan 2013-17

There is no need to emphasise again the financial challenge facing this field in the future; therefore, in this chapter, focus is placed on the actual opportunities ahead of us in the coming years. The arrangements that are in place to achieve and address these challenges are also noted.

By reviewing the Strategic Plan and focusing the Council's main strategic emphasis on some key transformational schemes, corporate performance arrangements will ensure appropriate attention in order to deliver. Particular focus will be placed on further developing the collaboration and integration underway with the Health Service and key partners. We will also endeavour to ensure that the people of Gwynedd are aware of the challenge facing the field of Adults and how they can contribute on a community basis.

In terms of the children field, strategic attention will be given to ensure a range of preventative services for groups of vulnerable children and young people in Gwynedd. As mentioned in the report, the Edge of Care Team has been established this year and we will be monitoring the outcomes of that work during the coming year.

As well as the Adults and Children and Young People field, the field of Safeguarding will be given particular attention in the Strategic Plan and specific projects have been identified to continue to improve arrangements, awareness and ownership on a departmental level as well as corporately, of course. Though key steps have been taken during the last year, the nature of the field means that it is essential to persevere to learn from local and national cases and ensure that we continue to respond proactively.

In the body of this report, there are several references towards what we intend to achieve during 2015/16 to improve our services. A copy of the Plan, which contains details regarding all the projects, results and individual measures by priority, can be seen on the Council's website by following the link <http://www.gwynedd.gov.uk>.

7.2 Other Priorities

We will be seeing further developments in terms of corporate parenting, and will ensure that procedures and responsibilities are understood clearly by Council officers and elected members. By confirming the Council's commitment and reiterating corporate responsibility, we endeavour to ensure that the life opportunities of children and young people improve, and the results gap narrows.

Every year, we welcome the support and comments from external regulators and commissioners on how we can improve to the future. Clear work programmes have already been set and next year there will be an opportunity to respond proactively to the recommendations.

On a departmental level, the Adults, Health and Well-being Department will continue to use the Programme Management procedure to focus on and ensure an overview of the key projects. The Children and Supporting Families Department will also continue with firm project management

arrangements which resulted in completing the 'end to end' review in order to ensure that the review's action plan is realised in full.

7.3 Close

You are welcome to offer any observations or ask questions in relation to this plan if you would like to do so. Please contact the Customer Care Unit, Adults, Health and Well-being Department, Gwynedd Council, Castle Street, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH or e-mail: gccgc@gwynedd.gov.uk, or phone: 01286 679268. The unit can also assist you if you would like to receive a copy of this report in a different format or language.