

<b>Committee</b>	<b>Care Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date</b>	<b>20 April 2018</b>
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	<b>Councillor Dilwyn Morgan</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Supporting Families Strategy in Gwynedd</b>

## **1. Introduction**

- 1.1** Local Authorities are undergoing a period of substantial change. The legislative change resulting from the Social Services and Well-being Act (2014) sets a clear baseline and framework for the provision of social care services in Wales. The Act means that some traditional areas of service provision must be transformed due to the emphasis on promoting people's independence and the new focus on ensuring the availability of preventative and early intervention services, and their greater accessibility. The Act places all these services on the same statutory platform, and therefore Gwynedd Council's services need to respond to this challenge by using the available resources.
- 1.2** In Gwynedd, a robust attitude towards the provision of preventative services for families has been developed in the past on a multi-agency basis. A number of work packages have been established through Gwynedd's Families First Commissioning Strategy 2012 – 2017, that has ensured that a wide range of services are available to support families with a targeted need. This was a partnership strategy and builds on the positive multi agency working relationship. It was shaped by the Gwynedd Children and Young People's Partnership, which had the foresight to develop a long-term agenda for an integrated model of service provision. The vision was for families in Gwynedd to be 'strong, resilient and prosperous'.
- 1.3** This programme has ensured that Gwynedd has been able to use evidence from the work undertaken over this period to identify the need to move the agenda forward for the future. There is now a need to look more widely at our Supporting Families Strategy rather than focusing solely on a Commissioning Strategy.
- 1.4** A comprehensive review of the Strategy was commissioned during summer 2017, ensuring that an evaluation was made of the financial and non-financial impacts. The main message was that the programme had been successful, and that it was evident that the new commissioning strategy needed to play its part within a wider strategy where the Council's aims for moving forward can be clearly set out.

## **2. Background and relevant considerations**

- 2.1** In 2013/14, the Council decided to change the departmental structure and create a new department, the Children and Supporting Families Department. One reason for this change was to bring together the services involved with preventative and early intervention services for children and families in the same department as the services related to the statutory element, namely children in need, safeguarding children, looked after children and young people leaving care. In doing so, there was an expectation that these services could work more closely, that it would avoid

duplication and lead to opportunities to use different working methods to improve outcomes for children and families.

- 2.2** It is fair to note that we have not yet fully delivered this intention, but it is important to recognise the good work that has taken place over this last period through examples of integrated teams (Gyda'n Gilydd/Edge of Care). There is a need to build on the principles that have been referred to, and to increase this method of working in future. It is also fair to note that, despite the good work that is apparent across this department and other departments that work with children and families, the work is not as integrated as it could be. It can be seen that there is work duplication, and also gaps in our efforts as a Council and partners.
- 2.3** In taking stock of the situation in the context of the new legislation, the department is of the opinion that a substantial change is needed in its focus, and its collaboration with other departments and external partners.
- 2.4** One factor that has contributed to the situation today is that a number of work streams in this area are funded by Government grants and, consequently, there were substantial restrictions on how the money was spent. There are examples of projects and services that have not been available to all children, young people and families, due to their 'status' within the system; consequently the mind-set that drives the services and interventions has not truly been main-streamed in the day-to-day work of each worker and team. This must be embedded and main-streamed in order to ensure the sustainability of the model and the vision for the future.
- 2.5** Therefore, our intention is to develop a Supporting Families Strategy on a corporate level and beyond in order to ensure that our efforts are far more integrated – and this is not always achieved by changing structures; it can be delivered by working around the family and children on a local level in a far more coordinated way. It is a challenging vision as it includes a number of departments and partners, but the rewards of doing this are valuable.

### **3. The basic principles (the basis of the Strategy)**

- Ensure that the child and family are at the centre of everything we do
- Provide services to families in Gwynedd with a clear focus on the family, which will be responsive to the family's unique needs, focusing on strengths in order to assist families to find their own long-term solutions.
- Include families across the needs spectrum when forming a plan for them, giving an opportunity for them to give their views on the type of services that would benefit them
- Encourage families to build on their own ability to develop their independence rather than create dependency.
- Plan services in a way that will identify opportunities for multi-agency collaboration across the Council, aligning existing activities and projects or those in development to ensure that we make the best use of resources and avoid duplication
- Use the Ffordd Gwynedd mind-set in the organisation of our work, avoiding complex referral procedures between various professional bodies. If referral procedures are

unavoidable, they will be clear in order to ensure that families have access to the right support at the right time.

- Develop integrated teams, starting by merging social work statutory teams and team around the family officers, information for families services and the information, advice and assistance service (IAA) from April 2018 onwards. In the long-term, when developing integrated teams, we will co-locate teams whenever this is possible.
- Ensure that each family has a single point of contact for their support arrangements
- Develop clear purposes for our services and the integrated teams, and develop a series of local measures in order to measure performance against these purposes.
- Develop an extensive training programme for implementation and delivery, to ensure that the supporting families workforce across the agencies and partners employ similar practices, and ensuring that staff have the requisite skills to identify when a family requires intervention and how to access suitable services.

#### **4. Conclusion**

**4.1** This report is submitted for information to the Care Scrutiny Committee, and the Supporting Families Strategy can be submitted to members once it has been developed.

**4.2** It must be ensured that there are sufficient resources within the Children and Supporting Families Department to lead and drive the important strategy and programme forward.