

# GWYNEDD COUNCIL CABINET



## Report to a meeting of Gwynedd Council Cabinet

<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>15 December 2020</b>
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>	<b>Councillors Dafydd Meurig and Dilwyn Morgan</b>
<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Morwena Edwards, Corporate Director</b>
<b>Title of Item:</b>	<b>Care Inspectorate Wales Annual Letter</b>

### 1. THE DECISION SOUGHT

- 1.1. Following the publication of Care inspectorate Wales Annual Letter (CIW), Cabinet members are requested to consider and accept its content.

### 2. THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

- 2.1. Sharing CIW's judgement on the performance of our social services publicly is good practice in democracy. It is important that the Cabinet is given an opportunity to agree on any response or action that may be required following the letter's publication.

### 3. INTRODUCTION

- 3.1. CIW undertake annual reviews of the performance of every Local Authority in fulfilling their statutory roles when providing social services. The reviews are undertaken in accordance with the principles of the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 (the 2014 Act).
- 3.2. The CIW letter can be seen in **Appendix 1** and measures Gwynedd Council's performance over the period April 2019 until March 2020. The letter's purpose is to look back and evaluate performance and offer any future improvements, to assist the Council and its partners to continuously improve.
- 3.3. Despite Covid-19, the Council and CIW have managed to meet over the last few months and have had an opportunity to discuss the contents of the letter, and I believe that it is correct to say that everyone is of the view that it is a fair reflection of the situation.

### 4. OUR RESPONSE TO THE LETTER

- 4.1. Firstly, we welcome the receipt of the reviews and constructive observations that will enable us, where needed, to strengthen our services for the people of Gwynedd.

This is not a report by CIW, but rather a general letter. It is therefore more of a general comment on their opinion of our social services rather than a detailed report.

- 4.2. This year CIW have allocated a Welsh speaking Link Inspector as the link between them and the Council, and of course we welcome this. The ability to communicate and read Welsh has facilitated the work of analysing our internal arrangements, but it is also essential to effectively measure the opinion of our residents about our services.
- 4.3. The letter acknowledges that 'Gwynedd Council continues to have a stable, capable and experienced workforce'. This comment was made about our staff in 2019/20, however, the challenges of Covid-19 in 2020 has proven without a doubt that this continues to be true. We are extremely proud and grateful to our staff in the Adults and Children's Departments, and also in other departments, who provide care and support to Gwynedd residents. Of course, we are also very grateful to our independent providers, the third sector and unpaid carers for their work during this challenging period.
- 4.4. The contents of this letter, and the result of every inspection or other 'focused activities' that CIW undertake with Gwynedd Council receive appropriate attention in the Statutory Team, comprising the Director of Social Services (Corporate Director) and the Heads of the Children and Supporting Families and Adults, Health and Well-being Departments. Team members maintain regular contact with the CIW link inspector, to agree on action plans when responding to review outcomes. Depending on the work area in question, and the specific service, the relevant Head considers the recommendations from the reviews or activities, producing an action plan to correspond to the recommendations.
- 4.5. More often than not, the recommendations and comments of the inspectorate agree with the assessment and opinion of our managers regarding what needs to be strengthened and improved. Therefore it will not surprise you that the risks in the risk register and our plans and work programmes often correspond to what the inspectorate have noted, and we see here that the matters that arise within the letter are matters that receive attention within the plans of both departments and have been noted in the department's risk register. With some matters, as noted in 4.9 below, a specific action plan has been put together to respond specifically to matters that the inspectorate highlighted in focus activity within the Adults Department.
- 4.6. As you are aware, a great deal more detailed information regarding the performance of our social services has been published, therefore, to read more go to the [Director for Social Services Annual Report](#) and [Gwynedd Council Annual Performance Report 2019/20](#). CIW have confirmed orally that they are satisfied with the contents of these reports as a fair and balanced reflection of performance.
- 4.7. The letter refers to a number of strengths in the services the Council currently provides. We agree with these outcomes and are very pleased of the attention the inspectorate has given to these successes, and those services will continue in the future. These include: Dementia Go, a service in the individual's chosen language, team within children's services responding to the 'Prevent' agenda, undertaking end of placement reviews for children, and working in partnership to develop services.

- 4.8. The letter also refers to a number of challenges, many are external where the Council has not much control over them, and they include: continued increase in the number of Council looked after children, delay when providing resources slowing down the process of hospital discharges, and recruitment of staff especially to the care field. As Cabinet members are aware, there are plans already under way to respond to these challenges, and although we do not envisage that we will 'solve' or get rid of the challenges completely, we are doing our best, by working in partnership with others, to alleviate the impact these matters have on our residents.
- 4.9. Lastly, the letter refers to some areas that CIW will continue to monitor: Arrangements for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards, ensure that the voice of the individual is fundamental to care planning work, continue to ensure that safeguarding and balancing risk arrangements receive attention coupled with managing the demand and develop and understand when an advocate can support the work to determine and achieve results.
- 4.10. The Director, together with the two Heads of Department (Adults and Children) are satisfied that the matters noted within the letter that require attention, are part of work programmes already included within the Council's Plan, or part of specific action plans. Arrangements are in place to regularly discuss progress against these plans with the Link Inspector.

## **5. NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE**

- 5.1. Cabinet Members are requested to consider the contents of the CIW letter, together with the opinion of the Director and the two care field Heads, and to highlight any matters considered to require attention above the measures that are already in place.

### **Views of the Statutory Officers:**

#### **The Monitoring Officer:**

No observations to add in relation to propriety

#### **Head of Finance:**

Should any new action be required following receipt of Care Inspectorate Wales' annual letter, any request for a financial commitment should be submitted through the Council's normal 'bids' procedure. Other than that, I have nothing to add to the report from a financial propriety perspective.