

<b>NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>	<b>Services Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING</b>	<b>4 June 2015</b>
<b>TITLE OF ITEM</b>	<b>Changes in the Learning Disability Services</b>
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	<b>Councillor Gareth Roberts</b>

### **Purpose of the Report**

1. The Scrutiny Committee has asked a series of questions requesting information about the Learning Disability Service. This report seeks to respond to those questions and also provide the responses in the context of developments in the Learning Disability field. I trust that the discussion on the responses will create an opportunity for the Service to obtain views, comments and any concerns that members may have about the change. The committee requested the following information:
  - The background and brief details of the Learning Disability Services Transformation Project, including a timescale.
  - Show how the needs of individual children are assessed in advance before they grow up to be adults.
  - Identify how the changes in the Independent Living Fund (ILF) impact on planning and commissioning services with partners.
  - Is there a service to assist vulnerable people to choose home insurance and similar matters?
  - Show details of the advocacy arrangements that are currently available, together with your methods of promoting the service, and the numbers that use it.
  - Is the Service for Young Adults with Learning Disability/Autism ending?
  - What are the arrangements for maintaining this service during 2015-16 and in the longer term?
  - Should the service be cut in the future, what do you estimate will be the likely financial effect of this on the costs of maintaining other services?

## **Transforming the Learning Disability Service**

2. It is widely recognised that Learning Disability services must change in order to be more responsive and better address people's needs. The services we provide need to comply with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.
3. We must also continue with the direction that has been set by the Council to improve the quality of life of individuals who have a Learning Disability in accordance with the Welsh Government's Strategy, 'Policy and Practice for Adults with a Learning Disability' 2007.
4. Gwynedd Council along with every other local authority is facing a challenging financial situation. Services must be transformed in order to respond to this challenge, ensuring at the same time that we adhere to the principles of the strategy and the Act. It is intended to complete the work that is associated with our Learning Disability project by the end of 2017/18. The main objectives of this project are outlined in this part of the report.
5. Currently, the Adults, Health and Well-being Department is carrying out extensive work to look at ways of improving services further, which include making greater use of a model of support with more emphasis on promoting independence and self-care. This enablement method supports people with a learning disability to maintain control of their own lives and to take their place as citizens in their communities, contributing to and participating in activities and services.
6. To effectively achieve this transformation, we will need to continue to work in partnership with relevant stakeholders to develop opportunities and to ensure that people with learning disability have genuine choices, in terms of socialising, learning and employment. Amongst other important considerations, it is important to ensure the sustainability of community resources, and to provide value and ensure support for carers.
7. Every effort is needed to ensure that more people live, work, learn and take part in community life as equal members of their community, and have the opportunity to use mainstream services such as leisure and enjoy opportunities to volunteer.
8. Enablement / reablement is a fundamental element in the work of Adults Social Care. It helps people to learn skills that they never had the opportunity to learn previously, or helps people to re-learn some skills they have lost.
9. As part of transformation we must develop and provide support to meet the needs of individuals who have learning disability in Gwynedd, and it is important to have the right balance of paid and unpaid support for every individual. Through work which focuses on enabling individuals, people who are more able will be enabled to be as independent as possible. This could mean that they receive a lower level of support than currently provided as they learn independent living skills. Consequently, their needs could change, such as their living/accommodation arrangements.

10. It is important to recognise that there will be some people with complex or high level needs for whom the ability to enable them to live independently will be limited. Some people will require intensive and continuous support throughout their lives, and this should be provided in a way that focuses on the person. Support must be secured which enables them to reach their full potential whatever their circumstances.
11. When assessing people to see what their support needs are, the focus of Adults Social Care is person-centred, and looks at the person as an individual and explores with them what things they are able to do for themselves. There will be a need to look at who and what they have around them, in their natural networks (family and friends) and those in the community, to meet their needs. The aim will be to give everyone the opportunity to become as independent as possible, which could lead to changing arrangements in terms of their support packages, and in a number of cases this could mean that there is no need for some people to receive paid services, and that they could find better and more creative solutions to their support requirements through other methods.

### **Developing New Models**

12. There is a need to secure a range of services in order to offer appropriate and suitable support, and that could lead to developing new models e.g. the Core and Cluster model which would offer more flexibility for the tenant. Assistive technology services could also be used in order to create a safe and supportive environment for individuals, without an overprovision as is often seen for people who have complex support needs. Other models such as the 'Key Ring' give a feeling of security and community for people with much lower levels of support and change, and consideration must be given to whether we could make greater use of such models.
13. By modernising the service it is hoped to provide more opportunities for people with learning disability in their own community. This will include learning new skills, gaining qualifications, and assistance to find training and employment. To facilitate this we are keen to look for opportunities to support the development of small businesses and social enterprises where at least 25% of their employed workforce on a contract will be people with disability and/or people who are at a disadvantage in the jobs market. There is also a need to continue working with organisations to develop opportunities to work in the community, whether on an employed or voluntary basis.
14. A service that is provided by and on behalf of the Council will need to offer support that is focused on results. They will need to focus on enabling individuals and continuing to develop opportunities to respond to people's needs by exploring opportunities within the community to enable and ensure social inclusion.

### **The Independent Living Fund and Supporting People**

15. Changes in the Independent Living Fund (ILF) also mean that individuals who choose to receive support can use the fund in a different manner.

16. Following the responses to the consultation on the ILF, the Minister for Health and Social Services, on behalf of the Welsh Government, has decided to transfer the ILF funding and responsibility to local authorities in the form of a special grant scheme in the first place. The scheme will run from July 2015 until March 2017. Welsh Government officers will now contact the representatives of local authorities and their organisations and stakeholders to work through the details of the grant scheme to ensure that it is in place by June 2015.
17. Many people with learning disability receive support to assist them with maintaining a tenancy through the Supporting People Grant. This support could include aspects such as assistance to arrange home insurance.

### **Changing Practice**

18. Meeting the requirements of the new legislation will mean that local authorities and their partners will have to reassess cases regularly to ensure that people see progress towards their individual targets, either by having full independence outside the services that are paid for, or by moving on to have longer-term support. When longer-term support will be required, it is important to ensure the correct balance between natural/unpaid support and paid support in order to secure the greatest possible independence for people with a learning disability. There is a need to develop the Council's workforce and service providers to fully understand the enablement support model and to ensure that they implement it effectively.
19. Listening to, hearing and acting on individuals' wishes is emphasised in the new Act. There will be a need to build on individuals' strengths and refrain from providing services that create dependency. Teaching and improving people's understanding of the objectives of enablement amongst individuals who use the services and their families will be key if we are to implement them effectively and promote independence.
20. As progress is made and targets are adjusted, it is intended to consult with all the relevant parties to give them an opportunity to contribute to the changes that are needed as they develop.
21. In adapting the way services are provided, it will be essential to address the expectations of individuals and their carers. Looking back at the traditional methods of working it could be argued that a culture of over-dependency has been created over several years. We need to change this and acknowledge that people with learning disability can develop and learn new skills, and as a result, on occasion this can lead to a change to the support they are receiving, to facilitate further development.

### **Transition Age**

22. There are clear guidelines in place to promote, reconcile and create a pathway to guide people through the procedure of transferring between the services for the young

person and his/her family, and providing a definite direction for staff within the Health Trust, Children's Services, Education Service and Adults Services within Gwynedd Council.

23. Where there is sufficient and current information within the Children's Services for the requirements of the access criteria to a service and permission is given to the Adults Services to have access to any assessments and reports when a young person reaches his/her fourteenth birthday, this begins the process of transferring from one system to the other.
24. When the Children's Services are aware that a 14 year old young person is likely to require services as an adult, they will obtain written permission to begin the process of referring the young person to the Adults Services from the young person and his/her parents or carers.
25. A discussion is held regarding the young person at the relevant Transition Age Area Forum, where details are shared about the young person's needs in terms of a day service or employment / support services / accommodation etc. From the information shared, the representatives of the Adults Service can inform the service planning procedure in advance of the strategic needs.
26. Transition Age Forums are arranged in every area by the Transition Age Social Worker within the Specialist Children's Services. These forums provide an opportunity for the relevant services to discuss individuals from 14 years old upwards in order to ensure that the process of sharing information to refer and plan between the children and adults services happens effectively.
27. Within the forums young people can be identified where there is no provision for them after they reach 18 years old, and the forum will pass the information to the Good Practice Group for strategic planning.
28. It must be acknowledged that difficulties have arisen with the transfer arrangements of a small number of individuals. This has mainly happened in cases where the care package has been funded jointly by Health and the Local Authority. To overcome this problem a task group has been established with representatives from the children and adults services, the Health Board and the Education Service in order to secure a procedure which will lead to a smooth transfer pathway.

### **Advocacy Service**

29. A formal independent advocacy service is available for the users and carers of the Adults Service in Gwynedd. The service assists individuals to contribute to the process of making decisions which could affect their quality of life and the services they receive. It creates opportunities to enable people to achieve their full potential in work and in their personal and social life. The service:
  - Provides an independent advocacy service to all the users and carers of the Adults Service in Gwynedd who have received a Social Care Assessment, regardless of the result of the assessment.

- Supports five advocacy groups based in Warws Werdd, Manton, Menter Fachwen, Seren and Antur Waunfawr to meet every six weeks.
- Facilitates 'Finger on the Pulse' arrangements, holding quarterly meetings with representatives from every self-advocacy group.
- Two representatives are supported to attend the Service Improvement Group. This is a group that includes a broad range of stakeholders, and its purpose is to include people with learning disability as we develop new ideas and develop a different provision.
- Assists staff and Service Managers that are likely to refer service users to understand the role of the Independent Advocate and know how and when to have a service.

### **Autism**

30. The Welsh Government has confirmed that there is funding available to fund a Community Support and Monitoring post for the first six months in 2015/16. There is no certainty of a further resource to extend the arrangement beyond that time. The Government intends to transform and design an integrated service for the future, but no guidance has been received to date as to what exactly is intended.
31. It is difficult to anticipate the effect should the scheme end and the service be cut in the future. The Community Support and Monitoring post jointly between Anglesey and Gwynedd has been essential to contribute towards supporting individuals, and has been working on a preventative basis. As a result the service has managed to keep people independent without being overly reliant on services. Once guidance is received from the Government it will be possible to consider the way forward with this field.

### **To Close**

32. The Learning Disability service needs to be transformed in order to ensure that individuals with learning disability reach their potential. Individuals have rights to live healthy, productive and independent lives. We need to ensure that the support offered in Gwynedd is pioneering and enables individuals to realise their potential.
33. Staying still is not an option. We need to introduce changes which will find savings, but more importantly, improve the outcome for the individual. We believe that the schemes that are underway in Gwynedd are moving us in the right direction for achieving this.
34. Transforming the services will not be easy. There will be a need to communicate and promote the changes and secure the support and understanding of individuals and their families, staff and internal and external providers. Developing a robust and supportive working relationship between elected members and officers will lead to

collaborating effectively towards reaching the aim and providing better services that meet individuals' needs.