



Arolygiaeth Gofal a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru  
Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales

# Performance Evaluation Report 2014–15

Gwynedd Council Social Services

October 2015

This report sets out the key areas of progress and areas for improvement in Gwynedd Council Social Services for the year 2014–15

# Annual Review and Evaluation of Performance 2014 - 2015

**Local Authority: Gwynedd County Council**

**This report sets out CSSIW's evaluation of Gwynedd County Council's performance in delivering its social services functions.**

## 1. Summary

- 1.1. The council has made steady progress improving social services and preparing for coming changes. The council has a vision to support people in their communities in creative, flexible and cost effective ways and improve the experiences and choices for people with complex needs. The council has begun to develop services along these lines and the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (SSWB Act). The greater engagement and support of the health board is noticeable, as it previously hampered development.
- 1.2. There is greater alignment between the wider council and departments providing social services as seen in the shared priorities and approaches. There has also been support for the department with its recent reviews in both adults and children's services.
- 1.3. The effort to work more cost effectively and more efficiently, coupled with planned council tax increases, has enabled the council to halve its financial shortfall from £50 million to £25 million, with further efficiency savings of £18 million to be realised over the coming years.
- 1.4. The performance in some areas of social services has been incrementally improving year on year, and there are solid areas of practice and good outcomes, such as for looked after children. Change in service design has been slow in other areas, such as in services for people with learning disabilities and adult accommodation strategy.
- 1.5. The planned changes in social services will require changes in established practice and culture. The nature and scale of the changes faced by social services present significant risks that require a high level of leadership and support to be delivered in a timely manner. The new arrangements with a cabinet member for adults and health and a cabinet member for children and young people should provide a clearer line of sight on the new service developments, and engagement with the health board.
- 1.6. The council has strong performance in implementing the requirements of

More Than Just Words – the framework for the Welsh Language.

**2. Response to last year's areas for improvement**

<b>Identified improvement last year</b>	<b>Progress in 2014–15</b>
Strategic planning with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) in adult services	There has been significant progress in joint planning and development of adult services.
Strategic planning with BCUHB in Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)	Some progress in establishing regular meetings with senior managers in the health board. The impact of the improved relationship is yet to be evaluated.
Using information from looked after panels to describe the population needs and trends	Progress has been made in the panels reporting practice that will enable the council to identify patterns over time.
Timeliness of initial assessment in children's services	Slight improvement in performance. New arrangements have been made to further improve timeliness.
Continued improvement to reduce the number of children re-referred	There has been year on year improvement in performance. There is a growing understanding of the data and separation between notifications and referrals.
Awareness and use of advocacy services	The advocacy service was re-tendered regionally in 2014 and awareness-raising arrangements are now in place.
Consistency in responding to complaints	Improved performance – greater management and oversight of complaints.
Access to health care and accommodation for looked after children	The performance in respect of looked after children's health assessments remains significantly behind the Wales average. Move on accommodation still needs development. The council has established the "When I'm Ready" scheme, giving a further option for looked after children.
Evaluation of the impact of the corporate safeguarding structures	Safeguarding is given a high priority within the council. Evidence of the impact of the new arrangement is yet to be evidenced.
Timeliness of child protection	Performance in holding initial child

conferences	protection conferences improved slightly but is below the average in Wales (85% compared to 93%). This remains an area for improvement.
Raise awareness of the implications and requirements of Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) and improve the governance arrangements for the operation of the procedures	There has been a significant increase in DoLS applications and the council has increased the number of assessors.
Quality assurance	New safeguarding and quality unit has been established. New processes to be worked through.
Corporate parenting support for looked after children by the council and partners	The membership of the Corporate Parenting Panel has been refreshed and there is greater corporate support for looked after children.

### 3. Visits and inspections undertaken during the year

- 3.1. Site visits provide CSSIW with an opportunity to speak with people who use the services, their families and staff who manage and work in the services. During 2014/15, site visits were made to:
- Cae Garnedd Extra Care Housing
  - The Integrated Health and Care Team (located at Alltwen Hospital) for older people and people with disabilities
- 3.2. CSSIW also met with senior officers of the council throughout the year to review social services performance and discuss progress with the areas for improvement identified in last year's performance evaluation. The council engaged effectively with CSSIW and readily facilitated access to enable site visits to take place.
- 3.3. During the year, CSSIW undertook inspections of regulated services run by the council and by independent operators. This included reviews of the in house fostering service, adult placements service, care homes and domiciliary care services. Details on these are contained in published reports and available on CSSIW's website.

### 4. Areas for follow up by CSSIW next year

- 4.1. A number of specific areas for improvement have been identified in the body of this report. The council's progress in relation to these will be discussed with the council during regular engagement meetings in the

coming year. Specific areas for follow up will include:

- Improvements in the Protection of Vulnerable Adult (PoVA) practice
- Modernising learning disabilities services
- Mental health commissioning strategy and services.

## **5. CSSIW inspection and review plan for 2015 -16**

- National review of domiciliary care
- National review of services for people with learning disabilities
- National review of care planning for looked after children.

## **6. The extent to which the experiences and outcomes for people who need care and support are improving their wellbeing**

### **Adults**

#### **Overview**

- 6.1. The council is making progress towards its aim of ensuring that people receive the right care at the right time, in the right place and by the right professional people. The council has worked in partnership with the health board to achieve this. An example of services developed to meet the need of people with complex needs is the four short term units within the council care homes to avoid hospital admissions. The rate of delayed discharge from hospital because of social care reasons remains significantly below the Welsh average, and lower than the previous year.
- 6.2. Performance in completing annual reviews of care plans improved and was above the average in Wales (83% compared to 80%). During the year it was identified that the council and health board should ensure that they have effective joint policies, procedures and practice to ensure timely re-assessment of the care needs of care home residents.
- 6.3. The number of people the council supported in care homes per 1,000 of the population over 65 years of age at the end of the year has reduced compared with the previous year. However this remained among the highest in Wales (24 compared to average in Wales of 19). For many years the council has supported significantly more people in community

homes than the average in Wales, and people are more likely to live in council-owned care homes than in other Welsh councils.

- 6.4. CSSIW's inspections of the council's registered adult care homes found that residents spoke positively about the quality of care they received. Inspections of these services identified concerns about the administration of medication and maintaining effective registered managers, but the council took timely and effective action when concerns were identified.
- 6.5. There was evidence in the Corneli Cudd project of good practice that had been developed in partnership with Bangor University and its arts innovation centre Pontio. Here a musician and young people from the local school played music and sang Welsh language songs. The music and songs were an inherent part of many of these people's identity and early life experiences. The music and stimulation improved the quality of life of people living in the homes.
- 6.6. Safeguarding is a priority for the council and it has implemented corporate arrangements to improve safeguarding practices. It now needs to implement changes in its adult protection processes. The council has a corporate policy for safeguarding children and vulnerable adults with an established strategic panel of members and senior officers. The strategic panel is supported by an operational panel with managers from all council departments. There is evidence that the corporate safeguarding processes have led to actions that have promoted safeguarding across the council. The panel has done this by seeking information and reports regarding specific local events within council services, and learnt from the experiences of vulnerable individuals. The strategic safeguarding panel is implementing a work programme based on learning from local and national cases, looking at the lessons from audits, developing training, new policies and a safeguarding dashboard. There is evidence that the operational panel and council departments are implementing plans to improve safeguarding practices. There is a need to ensure the consistent, timely implementation of the identified improvements to safeguarding.
- 6.7. During the year there were 178 Protection of Vulnerable Adult (POVA) referrals in the year, six fewer than the previous year. Of these referrals 100% were completed where the risk was managed. The council contributed to an adult practice review that identified improvements needed in the council's Protection of Vulnerable Adult (POVA) practice. When implemented, these will increase the involvement of care providers and provide greater clarity regarding the investigation and its outcome. Adult safeguarding will be an area for CSSIW to follow up in 2015-16.

- 6.8. The council managed four escalating concerns processes regarding care homes and a domiciliary care service, where there was concern about the quality of care provision; this was twice the number of the previous year. The council worked effectively in managing the closure of a domiciliary care agency through good use of the council's brokerage team, the council's own services and resources working well with key partners and made prudent contingency planning.
- 6.9. The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) provide a legal framework to protect people living in care homes and hospitals who are vulnerable because of mental disorder and lack of mental capacity. The council had a significant increase (from seven in 2013-14 to 365 in 2014-15) in applications for Deprivation of Liberty Safeguard (DoLS) authorisations which has result in a delay in assessments being undertaken. The council has responded by appointing a co-ordinator and increasing the number of best interest assessors.
- 6.10. The council has begun to develop a mental health commissioning strategy and mental health services will be an area for us to follow up in 2015-16. The council identified that it needs to modernise its learning disabilities services and developing a range of person centred services to increase independence. The council is adopting the progression person-centred development model for learning disability services that aims to better realise aspirations in achieving independence. This approach promotes the learning of new skills and helping people to safely do as much as they can for themselves. This is an area that CSSIW will follow up in the coming year. In 2014-15 the council has also being undertaking a review of adult services. The council stated that the review would be published in September 2015.
- 6.11. The number of people using direct payments has increased to 120 enabling these people to have more choice, flexibility and control in maintaining their independence. During the year the council established a task group and coproduced with service users new guidelines for direct payments and plans to continue to coproduce the arrangements in the coming year.

### **Key National Priorities (adults)**

#### **Preventative and early intervention services**

- 6.12. During the year the council has developed preventative services with partners, opening a second extra care facility during December 2014 in Bangor and it plans to open another in Porthmadog in 2017. The Cae Garnedd extra care facility in Bangor was developed by a partnership



with North Wales Housing and provides high quality accommodation. The people living in Cae Garnedd described receiving a high quality of care. The facility was establishing its community and social activities. The carers working in the extra care facility said they were well supported and able to provide safer and improved care in the new development.

- 6.13. The Ageing Well programme was developed during the year in partnership with Age Cymru with centres in Blaenau Ffestiniog, Penrhyndeudraeth, Cricieth, Porthmadog and Tremadog established on the preventative principles of keeping older people active and healthy, and to improve and create social opportunities in their local communities.
- 6.14. The council assessed or reviewed the needs of 241 adult carers in 2014-15 which is a reduction from the 298 carers assessed the previous year. This is a concern as the number of carers of adults receiving an assessment of their own needs has risen over the past four years in Wales, whilst the number has fallen continually in Gwynedd. The number of carers of adults who were assessed or re-assessed in their own right during the year, who were provided with a service in the year, was 132 people.
- 6.15. During the year the council reviewed the effectiveness of the reablement service and identified that the service has produced savings of £1million, and that 58% of people who receive the service do not need a service again for at least a year. It was identified that the service could be further targeted to improve efficiency and become more focused on agreed outcomes for the citizen, rather than aiming to reduce future use of the service.

### **Integration of health and social care services for older people with complex needs**

- 6.16. The integration of health and social care was prioritised by the local service board and delivered through an integrated transformation team and the county forum, that included the third sector and housing partners. Integrated working was enhanced by some co-location and improved communication between information technology systems. A transformation manager was jointly appointed across health and social services, and schemes funded by the intermediate care fund demonstrated improved outcomes for people. One example is the use of a community pharmacist to visit people at home that has improved the effective use of medication, reduced waste and improved wellbeing of individuals.

- 6.17. The council and health board progressed towards seven day a week working and enabled discharge from hospital over the weekend. This is to be accompanied by an integrated discharge lounge in Ysbyty Gwynedd that aims to improve multidisciplinary communication and reduce the time people are in hospital.
- 6.18. The council made significant progress in setting up its new way of working at Ysbyty Alltwen, Porthmadog, where a team of social services and health staff work jointly to provide services for older people and people with disabilities. There was strong engagement with the health board in the development of this service through evaluating the traditional way of working, establishing new values and providing a senior level of support in implementing the programme. The service is people focused implementing the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, using the 'what matters' approach and building on people's strengths. The service aims to make timely decisions as effectively as possible. The leaders in the council and health board have been at the forefront of challenging and changing practice, by overcoming bureaucratic obstacles and stripping inefficient processes. There will be challenges for the council and health board in mainstreaming on a larger scale the values and ways of working developed in the pilot. The new way of working could potentially bring about significant changes and efficiencies in adults services and will influence the new direction for older people's services.

### **Areas of progress**

- Strategic and operational working with the health board
- Development of person centred practice in line with principles of the SSWB Act.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Adult safeguarding
- Support for carers.

### **Children and young people**

#### **Overview**

- 6.19. The performance in children's services was similar to the previous year, with good outcomes achieved for looked after children and a need for improvement in performance in the assessment, care management and review within children's services.

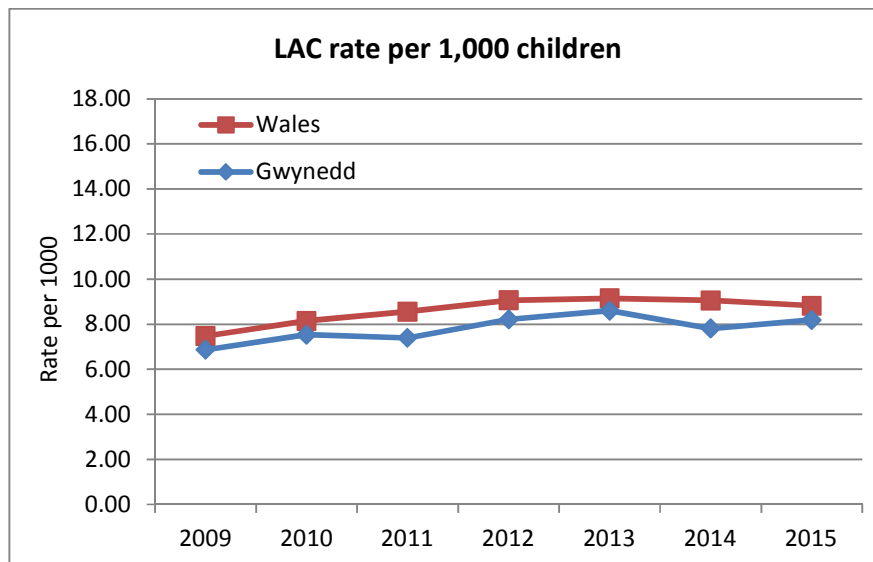
- 6.20 There has been year on year improvement in the council's management of referrals. Notifications and referrals are being separated, resulting in a falling number of children in need referrals. However, the re-referral rate remains above the average in Wales (26% compared to 21%).
- 6.21. Performance in the timeliness of initial assessments has improved but remains below the average in Wales (70% compared to 76%) and it remains an area for improvement for the council.
- 6.22. The council's domiciliary care service for disabled children provided good quality, tailored care in accordance with individual needs, choice and preference. The service should develop a better evaluation of its capacity to provide the service required.
- 6.23. The number of children on the Child Protection Register at the end of the year was similar to the last three years after a rise in 2012-13. The council's performance in holding initial child protection conferences improved slightly but is below the average in Wales (85% compared to 93%). The council's performance in holding statutory reviews and review child protection conferences on time also dipped. The loss of the child protection co-ordinator and staff sickness contributed to the downturn in performance in these areas. The timeliness of child protection conferences remains an area for improvement. The council also needs to maintain and improve the timeliness of reviews of looked after children now managed by the safeguarding and quality unit.
- 6.24. CSSIW's experience during the year has been that safeguarding issues are addressed promptly, and that strategy meetings and child protection processes are well managed.
- 6.25. The council has followed through in delivering on action plans to improve safeguarding services, following a domestic homicide and serious case review that were reported on last year. There have been two multi-agency reviews during the year and another that has progressed to an extended child practice review. The officers in the council have undertaken the child practice review training and contributed to reviews across the region. The council has taken action regarding improvements identified in the CSSIW thematic review on safeguarding and care planning of looked after children and care leavers who exhibit vulnerable or risky behaviour. Progress has been made in improving the understanding derived from panel information and the challenge provided by elected members. However, progress is slower in areas such as improving the provision of physical and mental health services for looked after children.

## **Key national priorities**

### **Preventative and early intervention services**

- 6.26. The preventative and early intervention services moved during the year to be under the management of the children and supporting families department, and this has assisted with closer working with the teams. This will also allow for better planning of service to meet the requirements of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act. During the year the council has developed its prevention and early intervention services. Extending the Flying Start provision to Bethesda and Talysarn has significantly increased the number of pre-school aged children receiving support to improve their skills before they go to school. There are further development plans to extend this to Dolgellau, Penygroes and Galt y Sil. The Team around the Family - Gyda'n Gilydd service supported 85 families, and research from the University of Wales found that 80% of families reported that the service had supported them to make long-term improvements. External evaluation by Oxford Brookes University also gave external confirmation that the service is of a high quality and makes a positive contribution to families. The Integrated Family Support Service, which works closely with families to achieve behavioural change, is operational and there is positive feedback regarding the service, but a more detailed evaluation of the work will be possible in 2015-16.
- 6.27. The council's end to end review of children's services identified the benefits of the establishment of the Edge of Care Team to avoid children being placed in care through short, intensive intervention. The team has been operational since the beginning of February 2015. The council is reporting good initial outcomes from the service and intends to use the skills developed to transform children's services.

## Looked after children (LAC)



### Numbers of LAC as at 31 March

	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Gwynedd	163	179	175	195	203	185	194

- 6.28. The number of looked after children has fluctuated around 194 for the past four years. Over the last seven years the council has had an increasing number of looked after children as was the trend across Wales. At the end of the year this was 8.19 children per 1,000 in Gwynedd (compared to a Welsh average of 8.82).
- 6.29. The council's end to end review in 2013-14 concluded that the council should reduce the number of looked after children. During the year 64 children became looked after, 55 stopped being looked after, and five were adopted. There is a growing number of children placed with their parents over the past three years increasing from six, to 17, to 27 in 2015, whilst the number of placements with family or friends fell over three years (similarly from 45, to 33, to 30). The number of out of county placements has stayed steady at around 13, with a reduction in the number of agency foster placements over three years (from 31, to 28, to 24).
- 6.30. For the last three years all looked after children placements began with a care plan in place; permanence plans are nearly all completed in time. The performance in attendance and educational achievement of looked after children was generally good, and the external qualifications

achieved by 16 year olds was well above the average in Wales (average external qualification points of 428 compared to 274).

- 6.31. The health board has only made a small improvement to the percentage of looked after children who receive a health assessment in the year and this remained significantly behind the Wales average (51% compared to 81%).
- 6.32. Again this year 100% of care leavers had a pathway plan and an allocated personal adviser. This has been the same for the past three years and the council is consistently above the average in Wales of 90%.
- 6.33. The council has run one of three pilot schemes that extended foster placements beyond young peoples' 18th birthday. The "When I'm Ready" scheme has provided seven young people with more choice of accommodation and the opportunity to work closer with these young people to prepare them for independence. The council has been able to learn from the pilot and contribute to the development of the service.
- 6.34. CSSIW inspected the council's fostering service in October and November 2014 and it was found to be a highly regarded service, responsive to the needs of children and well run. Looked after children were seen regularly by social workers, encouraged to express their views, and led an active family life.

### **Areas of progress**

- Maintained good outcomes for looked after children
- Development of preventative services.

### **Areas for improvement**

- Timeliness of initial assessment
- Timeliness of child protection conferences
- Timeliness of looked after children's reviews
- Timeliness of health assessments for looked after children.

## **7. The extent to which leadership, governance and direction for the council is promoting improvement in outcomes and wellbeing for people who need care and support**

- 7.1. The council has developed a protocol that describes the relationship of the statutory director to the key post holders. This protocol is identified in the council's new constitution, and is being worked through and approved by the key post holders. The council made appointments to the new posts of head of adults, health and wellbeing and the head of children and supporting families.
- 7.2. The absence of some key staff has hindered the council's ability to progress developments during the year, putting significant demands on the corporate director and her team. The council made arrangements to share responsibilities and progress the departments' work, including secondment of an existing head of department to be the temporary head of department for adults, health and wellbeing. There have been significant challenges for the council of providing capacity and professional leadership in adult services, during a time of significant change.
- 7.3. The statutory director of social services has been at a corporate director level in the council for nearly two years. During this time there has been increased awareness and prioritisation of social services matters in council business. The council has clearly prioritised social services issues and has supported the change in work practice, required by the SSWB Act, evidenced in the work at Alltwen.
- 7.4. Capacity has also been reduced as a result of changes in the corporate structure with a reduction from three to two corporate directors. It is important that the leadership in social service is allowed sufficient time to focus on the statutory responsibilities and transformation of services.
- 7.5. The council has contributed to and benefited from regional initiatives that have developed social care and the sector. The challenges faced by social services are a priority for the council with the Anglesey and Gwynedd Partnership identifying as its three key priorities older people, dysfunctional families and sustainable communities/community regeneration.
- 7.6. The council previously had difficulty engaging the health board. However, there is good evidence that this is improving at strategic, operational and political levels, for example the Alltwen pilot and consideration at the council scrutiny committee of the performance and

improvements in hospital discharge practice. The health board's new area working arrangements have improved the partnership working in Gwynedd.

- 7.7. In the departments' new way of working they have adopted a system thinking approach focussing on working arrangements, behaviours and culture that puts people at the centre of everything the council does. There is considerable alignment with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, the Alltwn pilot and Ffordd Gwynedd. The approaches put people at the centre, overcome structural and bureaucratic obstacles and efficiently deliver what is important to people.
- 7.8. Corporate attention has been given to supporting the modernisation of social services and responding to the Act. The two significant reviews of operational arrangement in children's and adults service have been supported by corporate services. The new departmental structure has allowed for closer alignment of children's social services and preventative services.
- 7.9. The council has made use of opportunities and continued to incrementally develop its services. The council identifies that it needs to improve its communication with partners in order to co-produce services. The council did not fully develop and implement its previously published commissioning strategies. There is a need for a wider range of services including for people with dementia and developing domiciliary care services in isolated rural areas.
- 7.10. The social services budget for 2014-15 was £59,056,000 with a savings target for the next three years of £6,084,000. The council is facing a budget shortfall of £50,000,000 up to 2017-18 and for it to address this there may be further reductions in the social services budget. This will put additional pressures on social services and the risks associated will need to be managed and scrutinised.
- 7.11. During the year the long standing cabinet member for care retired from his post. He was replaced by a cabinet member for adults and health and a cabinet member for children and young people. Supported by new arrangements in the department, the cabinet member for children and young people will lead on corporate parenting. The cabinet member for adults and health should have a clearer line of sight on the new service developments and engagement with the health board.
- 7.12. The council has strong performance in implementation of the requirements of More Than Just Words – the framework for the Welsh Language. Implementing the second year of its action plan, the council has developed its understanding of where it needs to improve Welsh



language resources and taking practical steps in developing its Welsh speaking workforce. In the More Than Just Words conference 2015 the council won awards for developing innovative resources for working with people with children with learning difficulties, working in partnership in developing preventative services and leadership, and in developing healthy schools. The corporate director of the council also takes a lead role on this agenda nationally and is contributing to the strategy that will follow on from More Than Just Words.

- 7.13. The council has improved its oversight and management of the complaints service. During the year, key staff members returned to their substantive roles in managing the complaints process and there is greater oversight of complaints by the corporate director. The council has implemented the guidance for managing complaints that came into force in 2014 and there has been a significant fall in the number of complaints that have progressed to the formal investigation. There were no stage two formal investigations during the year. One application was made for a stage two formal investigation; however, the independent investigator found that a very comprehensive investigation had already been completed at stage one. There has been an increase in the number of enquiries and comments suggesting earlier resolution of issues. However, not all complaints were managed within the expected timescales, with 13% of children's and 26% of adult stage one complaints not being in timescale. There were various reasons for these delays but primarily the delay was a result of a lack of management capacity.

#### **Areas of progress**

- Increased alignment between the council and the department
- Implementation of More Than Just Words
- Improved oversight and management of complaints.

#### **Areas for improvement**

- Implementation of modernisation programmes
- Scrutiny and oversight of implementation of modernisation programmes.