
CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 16 FEBRUARY 2023

Present: Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams (Chair)
Councillor Linda Ann Jones (Vice-chair)

Councillors: Jina Gwyrfai, R. Medwyn Hughes, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Beth Lawton, Linda Morgan, Gwynfor Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, John Pughe, Rheinallt Puw, Meryl Roberts, Angela Russell, Eimir Wyn Williams and Sasha Williams.

Officers in attendance:

Bethan Adams (Scrutiny Advisor), Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor) and Lowri Haf Evans (Democracy Services Officer).

Others invited:

Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being)
Huw Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services)
Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department)
Alun Williams (Senior Business Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being Department)
Mari Wyn Jones (Senior Manager Adults Services)
Hawis Jones (Commissioning, Contracts and Projects Manager, Adults, Health and Well-being Department)

Present for item 5:

Myfanwy Moran and Huw ap Tegwyn (Care Inspectorate Wales)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Menna Baines and Anwen J. Davies

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following members declared that they had an interest in relation to the item noted:

- Councillor Eryl Jones Williams in item 5 on the agenda as his wife received care from Cyngor Gwynedd Services. The Member was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and withdrew from the meeting during the discussion on the item.
- Councillor Rheinallt Puw in items 5 and 6 on the agenda as his daughter worked for the Adults Service. The Member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest and therefore he did not withdraw from the meeting.
- Councillor Gwynfor Owen in items 5 and 6 on the agenda as his son received out-of-county care. The Member was of the opinion that it was not a prejudicial interest, and he did not withdraw from the meeting.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this Committee held on 10 November, 2022, as a true record.

5. CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) INSPECTION REPORT - ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DEPARTMENT

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being highlighted that Care Inspectorate Wales had undertaken an inspection on the performance of the Council's Adults Services during September 2022. He reiterated that the Department was aware of the matters identified.

Myfanwy Moran and Huw ap Tegwyn (Care Inspectorate Wales) were welcomed to the meeting. Members were given a presentation which reported on the findings of the Evaluation Survey of Cyngor Gwynedd's Adults Services, September 2022. Reference was made to four fields the inspectorate had investigated and to the Council's strengths when responding to those requirements. It was highlighted that Cyngor Gwynedd was expected to consider the fields noted for improvement and take the appropriate actions to address those fields. The CIW would monitor progress through its ongoing performance review activity with the Local Authority.

Gratitude was expressed for the presentation

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by members:-

- The Department was congratulated for its work
- Nothing astounding had been found and this was encouraging

In response to observations and questions submitted by members, it was noted:-

- When consulting with users and carers, a sample of files had been reviewed and discussions and focus groups were held, which included workers in the field of care, Council users and users of private companies. It was reiterated that considerable work had been done in an attempt to include the voice of users.
- There was no reference to Support Services or Support Workers due to the nature and limits of the inspection. It was noted that the 'field' and 'specific location' element was irrelevant to this inspection as the work examined the service as a whole. In the context of the Support Services elements, this would have been gathered by reviewing the files. It was reiterated that Inspectors had discussed with focus groups, Support Services in the third sector and the Council. In response, if the Council's Support Services commissioned a Support Service it was highlighted that it should be incorporated as part of the report.
- With a lack of staff capacity and increased demand, it was noted that the inspection had identified the shortfall and had drawn attention to the matter as one that needed improving. It was added that additional funding had been identified for 2022/23 to support the work but it was difficult to attract qualified workers to work short-term contracts. However, it was accepted that there was a need to be more creative when addressing this in future.
- Whilst accepting that considerable recruitment work had been undertaken by publishing videos and advertisements, and that the recruitment problem was a

national issue, it was asked whether the Inspectorate had seen success in recruitment in other areas or whether it was money that drove the problem? A response was provided noting that some areas had different schemes. A suggestion was made to consider the modernisation of services and to consider examples of good practice from other Authorities - social enterprises were a good example.

- Although there was no certainty that the recruitment situation had improved, it was noted that reviews were undertaken on a regular basis.
- To improve and further develop systems to ensure quality and knowledge of performance, it was noted that bids had been submitted many times for an additional resource to strengthen the team but they had not been successful. Although the Service had done well with some bids in the past, perhaps it was not successful enough in response to the expectations of the Government, users and growth in demand. It was intended to either apply for grants or re-use current resources. A response would have to be provided if there was a statutory demand to ensure quality.
- The Service was open to consider structuring shifts so that carers could get stability in other employment to strengthen and improve the workforce. Reference was made to examples where students from Coleg Meirion Dwyfor had work experience in the field and went on to receive opportunities as casual employees. It was reiterated that, should anyone wish to work in the field of care, potential working hours could be discussed and that the department was open to any ideas in order to attract more staff.
- With the Health Board under considerable pressures and prioritising making people better, it could be argued that the partnership element was not given the same attention. However, with collaboration with Partners being part of the Improvement Plan, it was noted that there was good collaboration on a front-line level, but it was recognised that there was room for improvement on the strategic elements.

RESOLVED:

- a) To accept the report and the findings of the Care Inspectorate , noting the observations made during the meeting.
- b) To accept the work programme of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department to the response.

6. GWYNEDD ADULTS POPULATION NEEDS ASSESSMENT REPORT

The draft report was submitted by the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being. Members were reminded that the North Wales Population Needs Assessment had been approved by the Full Council at its meeting on 3 March 2022. It was noted that the assessment had been drawn up in accordance with the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. It was stated that the report and assessment enabled the Service to see the local perspective on the care and support needs of the Gwynedd adult population. As well as the statutory aspects included in the report on North Wales, it was reiterated that the assessment also included more detailed information about the needs of Gwynedd residents specifically, which would assist the Department to plan services locally, to make decisions on priorities, and to develop and transform services for the future.

The Committee was requested to submit observations on the assessment before its submission to the Cabinet and the Council for approval.

Gratitude was expressed for the report

In response to the observations and questions from members, it was noted:-

- Whilst accepting the need to recruit and increase the salaries of carers, it was noted that salaries were one part of the solution. A fair pattern of working must also be sought along with a means to develop a career in the field. It was acknowledged that a great gap needed to be addressed with some elements of the recruitment problem beyond the ability of Local Authorities and that guidance and decisions were needed on a national level.
- In response to an observation about plans for Nursing Homes in South Meirionnydd, it was noted that there was a shortage of nursing beds in South Meirionnydd and Penllyn but opportunities arose in some areas to improve the situation. It was highlighted that South Meirionnydd was looking to continue with the service of adapting residential beds for intensive care and consider the possibility of providing nursing care in some units in future - Bryn Blodau was being considered as one location. Although there was no specific timetable for the work, it was noted that there was a need to ensure that the ability to provide a service had been established in principle but the relationship needed to be strengthened with the Health Board and complete the associated legal work. The proposal had been identified as a viable opportunity, a priority field and was included in the Council Plan - and, therefore, there were expectations to deliver.
- When consulting with carers, current information was used from the assessment work gathered by social workers and third sector workers as well as information from the Carers' Matters Officer. Although it was accepted that the definition of a 'carer' was extensive and it had not been possible to consult with everyone, after receiving the observations, the conclusions of the assessment were submitted to the users for further observations.
- In the context of autism, disappointment was highlighted that a Coordinator / Project Officer had not been appointed to develop Autism Services although there was an intention to advertise the post in the next few weeks.
- The intention to ensure that every member of staff who worked directly with children, young people or adults undertook ASA awareness training was welcomed, although this would be on a general level. It was emphasised that intense training must be ensured for those dealing with autism directly. In response, it was noted that mandatory training was being presented to all Council staff, which was included as one part of three ASA training levels. Those who dealt with autism directly would receive training on two higher levels.
- In response to the Assembly refusing to approve an Autism Act, it was noted that there was a need to ensure that Cyngor Gwynedd's Autism Unit would be incorporated within the Council's correct structures. It was highlighted that the Autism Plan 2021 - 23 had been programmed for the April meeting and it would be possible to discuss the matter at that meeting.
- That the waiting list for an occupational therapist in Arfon was high as many were waiting for specialist assessments. It was noted that cases would be prioritised based on how urgent the need was, but although there was no long-term solution for the concern, it was accepted that the waiting list needed to be reduced.
- In response to the condition of the Fron Deg Home, which was a building from the 70s, and potential opportunities to build independent living units on adjacent land, it was noted that plans were in the pipeline to assess the current suitability of the building as well as Housing schemes that would provide an opportunity to consider

a larger development. It was accepted that the Home was not ideal for the current need or for what the users deserved. Although there were no specific plans in place, it was noted that discussions about modernising and increasing use were being held. It was an exciting opportunity that needed input from Members, the public, users and families.

- A substantial increase was anticipated in Gwynedd in people aged 65+ between 2020 and 2040 - the results of the census reported differently to the projection, the figures would have to be reviewed on a regular basis. The Department would collaborate with the Research and Analytics Unit to investigate this.
- In terms of using the assessment in future, it was noted that the assessment provided a five-year picture that would be used as a tool to plan and change services. It was intended to adapt and review it on a regular basis after its publication.

During the discussion, the following observations were submitted by members:-

- That the content of the report was excellent
- Providing training was one of the Council's strengths
- There was a need to adapt the table with the number of residential and nursing homes per area in Gwynedd to highlight one site in Dolgellau and one in the Barmouth area rather than two in Dolgellau.
 - 'Number of sheltered housing per Gwynedd Well-being Areas' table - needed to include information about the Llŷn Well-being Area
- Welcomed an invitation from the Cabinet Member for Local Councillors to attend site visits to discuss schemes for Fron Deg, Penrhos and Dolfeurig
- The team were thanked for their work.

RESOLVED

To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting.

7. CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2022/23

A short report was provided to the Members showing the Committee's latest work programme over the next months. It was explained that the work programme would need to be adapted as a result of items slipping. With three items already programmed for the April meeting, it was suggested that 'Recruiting and retaining staff in the care field (Children and Families Department)' and 'Action Plan' were re-programmed for June 2023.

RESOLVED

To adapt the work programme in order to prioritise items for the April 2023 meeting of the Care Scrutiny Committee and to adapt a revised work programme.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 1.00pm

CHAIR