

GWYNEDD COUNCIL



Report to Gwynedd Council's Scrutiny Committee

Meeting date:	20 April 2023
Member:	Councillor Dilwyn Morgan, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Wellbeing
Liaison Officer:	Mari Wynne Jones, Senior Adults Manager
Item Title:	Support for individuals with dementia in Gwynedd

1 Purpose of the report

- 1.1 This report is submitted to provide the committee with an update on a report submitted in July 2021. That report raised awareness of the dementia condition and provided an overview of our work to support individuals living with dementia in Gwynedd.
- 1.2 This report will focus primarily on new developments in Gwynedd to support individuals with dementia.

2 A reminder of what dementia is

- 2.1 The word 'dementia' describes a group of symptoms which may include memory loss and language, problem solving or mental difficulties. These changes usually start out small, but for someone with dementia they have become severe enough to affect daily life.
- 2.2 Due to its nature (symptoms that become more pronounced over time as the condition worsens, and a low diagnosis rate) it is difficult to know exactly how many people are living with the condition. There are national studies that estimate the proportion of the population of different age groups with the condition, and based on that it can be estimated that there are 2,049 individuals with dementia in Gwynedd, representing 1.67% of the population (122,864). Daffodil Cymru research predicts that the number of people over 65 in Gwynedd with dementia will increase from 2,018 in 2020 to 3,085 in 2040; a 35% increase in twenty years.

3 National context - All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards

- 3.1 The standards aim to improve dementia care for individuals and their carers by providing a clear pathway towards implementing effective standards within dementia care within the next two years.

- 3.2 Improvement Cymru is leading the work as part of the Dementia Care Programme and is overseen by the Welsh Government's Dementia Oversight of Implementation and Impact Group (DOIIG).
- 3.3 The pathway consists of 20 standards under 4 themes, all complemented by Kindness and Understanding:
- Accessible
 - Responsive
 - The person's journey
 - Partnerships and Relationships
- 3.4 The North Wales Regional Partnership Board has set up 5 task groups to respond to the above programme of work. There is representation from Gwynedd Council on each task group.

1. Community Commitment
2. Memory Assessment Service
3. Dementia Connector
4. Hospital Charter
- 5a. Workforce Development
- 5b. Measures

4 Gwynedd support and services

- 4.1 Our vision is to support individuals living with dementia to enable them to live at home as independently as possible for as long as possible. The right provision of care and support needs to be made available at the right time and in the right place to meet a range of needs.
- 4.2 The position of Gwynedd Dementia Coordinator has recently been created to lead on the field within the Council through collaboration with individuals affected by dementia, the Health Board and the third sector. The coordinator will be responsible for creating a Dementia Gwynedd vision and strategy that responds to the standards of care pathway. This is a temporary position funded out of Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) money. With the increase in demand and expectations on the service, it is very likely that this role will be needed on a permanent basis.
- 4.3 The coordinator leads on ensuring a clear overview of the voices of people living with dementia and their carers, ensuring that their views influence action plans, policies and new developments from the initial stages of pre-diagnosis through to residential care needs and all the stages in between.
- 4.4 The ambition of the North Wales Regional Partnership Board is to establish Specialist Dementia Centres in the East, West and Central. The Dementia Coordinator is supporting this development for Gwynedd but third sector organisations are leading on the support within the dementia pathway. The Alzheimers Foundation supports individuals before and after diagnosis; the Carers Trust provide support at Dementia Centres; and Carers Outreach support individuals who are patients at the hospital. The third sector organisations support people in the community with low and

medium level needs, as well as offering a support programme which includes hearing, dental, equipment and training assessments. A dementia centre has opened in Cricieth for one day a week and work continues to identify suitable space to expand the service to the Arfon and Meirionnydd areas.

- 4.5 Another new development since the last report is the trial of a regional scheme where an Ageing Positively Specialist works with a small number of individuals living with dementia and their carers to offer assessment and expert intervention to support challenging behaviours.
- 4.6 The Gwynedd Dementia Actif service is expanding and establishing more services to support individuals and their carers to live well with dementia. The number of sessions have expanded to 17 in an effort to ensure coverage throughout the county and prevent gaps.
- 4.7 Dementia Actif officers are providing Friends of Dementia sessions to try to raise awareness about dementia and reduce stigma and barriers. They hope to create 2,023 new Friends of Dementia within a 12-month period in collaboration with the Age Friendly Gwynedd agenda. The 'Dementia Live Experience' VR gadgets will also be part of those sessions. It is also organised that all elected members receive a Friends of Dementia session along with an introduction to the work of the Gwynedd Dementia Coordinator and Dementia Actif team.
- 4.8 Dementia Actif is an integral part of the effort to make Gwynedd an Age Friendly county by 2025, and therefore ensuring collaboration with the Age Friendly Co-ordinator on aspects such as older people's forums, intergenerational sessions and engagement is key.
- 4.9 We rely on interim funding to enable us to continue with the dementia support workers scheme. These workers are part of the Community Resource Teams and support individuals with dementia and their carers to continue to live independently in their communities.
- 4.10 As set out in the previous report, it is recognised that it will not always be possible for people to continue to stay in their own home as a result of the need for more specialist care. We are keen to ensure that people with dementia receive suitable, local care in order to maintain links with family and friends and to be looked after in a familiar atmosphere and culture and through the medium of a familiar language.
- 4.11 Demand for dementia provision continues to increase, and while we have invested in increasing the supply of specialist dementia beds waiting lists for the provision are frequently as high, if not higher, than waiting lists for standard residential beds. As things stand, and keeping in mind that demand is constantly changing, we have 50 individuals on our waiting lists waiting for a dementia specialist bed.
- 4.12 We see the increase in demand across our communities, and in relation to our care homes this change is reflected in the higher number of our

residents who, although receiving standard residential care, are now living with dementia. While many do not currently require specialist dementia care, it is likely that a high proportion will need the specialist support at some point in the future. We have around a further 50 individuals living with dementia receiving standard residential care in our care homes.

4.13 The main use of our specialist dementia beds is to provide permanent accommodation and a home for residents living with profound dementia, but they're also used flexibly to provide carers with regular respite. The activities and support given in these specialist units are responsive to the needs of our residents and considerate of their interests – e.g. the tasks of day-to-day life, gardening, cooking, pictures, music.

4.14 The Council's care homes all support and care for residents living with dementia, but the table below highlights which homes offer specialist dementia care.

Internal Care Home	Number of beds*	Number of specialist dementia beds*
Plas Hedd, Bangor	27	14
Plas Ogwen, Bethesda	27	0
Plas Penwaith, Llanberis	31	0
Plas Maesincla, Caernarfon	23	23
Plas Gwilym, Penygroes	27	0
Plas Hafan, Nefyn	30	8
Plas y Don, Pwllheli	28	0
Bryn Blodau, Llan Ffestiniog	41	17
Cefn Rodyn, Dolgellau	22	0
Hafod Mawddach, Barmouth	30	7
Llys Cadfan, Tywyn	33	15
Total	319	84

*Please note that the number of beds have been identified on the basis that construction has been completed at Hafod Mawddach and Plas Hedd.

4.15 Whilst our supply of specialist dementia beds does not meet the demand now on our services, it should be recognised that there has been an

increase over the last five years where we have seen the number of beds more than double – from 39 beds across three homes to the situation reflected above.

- 4.16 Across six of our care homes we will have 84 specialist dementia beds, which is 26% of the total number of beds we have across the county. Please note that not all of these beds are in use yet. Understaffing has meant that we have been unable to open 9 specialist dementia beds in Bryn Blodau, Llan Ffestiniog. In addition, in relation to a total of 14 beds, the units at Hafod Mawddach and Plas Hedd are yet to be completed.
- 4.17 When considering national data and local information, the possibilities to further increase the number of units in the future or to adjust household registration to increase provision will probably have to be considered. Care Inspectorate Wales regulations will have to be considered to ensure appropriate staffing levels in the units to meet the need. In addition, we will need to consider the implications of funding any modifications necessary to ensure the home environment is suitable as well as funding the care in the long term.
- 4.18 Another absolutely core factor that will require full consideration is the impact of the ongoing challenge in recruiting and retaining staff in the care field. In the first instance it will be necessary to assess our ability as an employer to employ adequate levels of staff so that the units that have not yet opened in Llan Ffestiniog, Barmouth and Bangor can be opened.
- 4.19 Looking ahead it is anticipated that our Population Assessment, and the Local Housing Market Assessment, will support us in identifying which care homes should be prioritised for increasing our supply of specialist dementia beds. The clear opportunities to further develop provision through the innovative proposed schemes in Penyberth and Penygroes should also be noted.
- 4.20 There are independent homes within Gwynedd that provide specialist residential and nursing care for dementia. Unfortunately, there is no specialist nursing provision available for individuals living in the Llŷn and Meirionnydd areas which means that individuals have to move out of their communities in order to receive suitable care. The demand for dementia nursing care exceeds the provision available locally. There are currently five dementia nursing homes within the county. This increases pressure on carers, families, hospitals and the many individuals who have to move out of the county to receive care.
- 4.21 Hand in hand with the need to further increase our supply of specialist dementia beds, consideration must be given to what could be done differently or additionally across our communities to enable people to continue to live in their own homes safely and provide the best possible quality of life.
- 4.22 We currently have a telecare project underway to revisit the provision of equipment and technology available, with a view to expanding the use of

specialist equipment among Gwynedd residents, including individuals living with dementia. The Department for Adults, Health and Wellbeing will be investing in specialist technology and equipment over the coming months, and evaluating the various options in conjunction with the Dementia Coordinator. This work will include trialling equipment in collaboration with Gwynedd residents and their carers to consider where to prioritise investment in future.

5 Next steps

- 5.1 We will commit to fulfilling the requirements of the Wales Action Plan for the Dementia Care Pathway of Standards by working with individuals, their families and friends and our partners in the third sector and the Health Board.
- 5.2 The Dementia Coordinator will establish a stakeholder group with people affected by dementia in order to work together to create a Gwynedd Dementia Action Plan in line with the national standards.
- 5.3 The challenge will be to secure long-term funding to ensure the sustainability and further development of these services. We will undertake work to anticipate the impact of demand on our budgets over the coming years and difficult decisions will need to be made in terms of re-prioritising resources if an additional budget is not available.