



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 22ND JUNE, 2023

***A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10:00 AM**

Location

**Hybrid
(multi-location meeting)**

**Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon LL55 1SH
and
virtually via Zoom**

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

https://gwynedd.public-i.tv/core//en_GB/portal/home

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(DISTRIBUTED 14/06/23)

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (11)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Rheinallt Puw
Linda Ann Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Einir Wyn Williams
Jina Gwyrfai

R Medwyn Hughes
Dewi Jones
Linda Morgan
Meryl Roberts
Sasha Williams

Independent (6)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Eryl Jones-Williams
John Pughe

Anwen J. Davies
Beth Lawton
Angela Russell

Labour/Liberal (1)

Councillor Gareth Coj Parry

Ex-officio Members

Chair and Vice-Chair of the Council

Other Invited Members

Councillor Elin Walker Jones
Councillor Dilwyn Morgan

A G E N D A

1. ELECT CHAIR FOR 2023/2024

To elect Chair for 2023 / 2024

2. ELECT VICE CHAIR FOR 2023 / 2024

To elect Vice Chair for 2023 /2024

3. APOLOGIES

To receive any apologies for absence.

4. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

To receive any declarations of personal interest.

5. URGENT BUSINESS

To note any items that are a matter of urgency in the view of the Chairman for consideration.

6. MINUTES

5 - 10

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meetings of this committee held on the 20th of April 2023 be signed as a true record.

7. UPDATE ON THE GWYNEDD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

11 - 17

To consider the report

8. CHILDREN AND FAMILY SUPPORT WORKFORCE

18 - 22

- To consider and accept the report
- To support the intentions of the service
- To recognise the work of exploring these matters that has already began

9. FEEDBACK FROM SAFEGUARDING REVIEW BY CARE INSPECTORATE WALES

23 - 25

To consider the report

10. CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2023-24

26 - 28

To consider and adopt the Committee's work programme for 2023/24

Agenda Item 6

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE THURSDAY, 20 APRIL 2023

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

Councillors: Anwen J. Davies, Jina Gwyrfai, R. Medwyn Hughes, Dewi Jones, Elwyn Jones, Beth Lawton, Linda Morgan, Gwynfor Owen, John Pughe, Meryl Roberts, Angela Russell, Einir Wyn Williams and Sasha Williams.

Officers in attendance: 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)
Councillor Elin Walker Jones (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People)
Huw Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services)
Aled Davies (Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department)
Helen Fon Owen (Learning Disabilities Senior Manager)

Present for item 5:

Aled Gibbard (Senior Operational Manager, Children and Supporting Families Department)

Present for item 6:

Mari Wynne Jones (Senior Manager, Adults Services)

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Menna Baines, Rheinallt Puw and Gareth Coj Parry.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

The following member declared that he had an interest in relation to the item noted:

- Councillor Gwynfor Owen in items 5 and 6 on the agenda as his son was autistic. 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 16 February 2023, as a true record.

5. UPDATE ON THE GWYNEDD AUTISM PLAN

The Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being highlighted that the report was a joint report between the Adults Services and the Children's Services to ensure that the Autism plan was incorporated smoothly into both services. He noted, as Chair of the Regional Partnership Board (which is responsible for gathering information to improve and the quality of the services provided to autistic people and their families or carers), that the Plan received prominent attention.

Councillor Elin Walker Jones (Cabinet Member for Children and Young People) confirmed that significant progress had been made by Cyngor Gwynedd since the Code of Practice for the Delivery of Autism Services came into force in September 2021. There was reference to the successful bid that had been made which would mean that staffing resources could be increased for the development of Autism services across the County, development of E-learning modules to raise the awareness of Local Authority staff, the Health Board and the Police and reference to the National Autism Team which had a general role in the development of services throughout Wales and, by meeting every quarter, provided an opportunity to share relevant information and updates.

It was noted that the priorities for the next six months included

- An induction plan for the new team and the launch of the new service to raise awareness.
- Establishing clear processes and arrangements for the team to work across children's and adults' services. Contacting existing forums.
- Further strengthening the links with the Regional Integrated Autism Service, attending their local information events and looking for opportunities to work alongside their contact worker in Gwynedd.
- Engaging with autistic individuals and their families as well as partners locally in order to move towards the co-production of local services.
- Establishing a working relationship with the neurodevelopmental service and offering support during the early stages of assessment and diagnosis.
- Completing the implementation update as part of the baseline assessment for north Wales by the end of May.
- Reviewing Gwynedd's autism plan based on the information contained in the baseline assessment.

Gratitude was expressed for the presentation.

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

- Praise for the work that the service does.
- Welcoming the appointment of a Coordinator/Project Officer to develop Autism Services.
- That it was necessary to ensure Welsh language appointments so that children from Welsh households were not at a disadvantage.
- That there was a need to see change and ensure that this was not merely a paper exercise.
- That the Autism Bus was excellent (offering innovative and practical training developed to give people who are not autistic an experience of the difficulties faced by people on the autism spectrum) and that this touring bus should be promoted.
- That the spectrum was broad and that it was important to recognise who really needed support.
- That there was a need to ensure appropriate support for adults and children as they went through the assessment process.

- Concern that children were being rejected by the assessment service because they did not meet the criteria - where then would these children receive attention? It was noted that the service needed to be simplified.
- That there were comparisons between Autism and Dementia and that identifying opportunities for collaboration between the two teams should be encouraged. It was suggested that a scheme be established similar to Dementia Friendly.
- That the autism service required input from the Education Department and the Health Board. It was suggested to hold a discussion and/or set up a task and finish group to share information.

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

- According to regional data collection work completed by Conwy and Denbighshire (which included figures from Gwynedd and Anglesey and was based on the population), there were approximately 900 adults and between 300 and 350 children receiving help from the County. It was confirmed, although the information was not reliable, that there was an increase in referrals and the number on the waiting list to receive an assessment. The Cabinet Member pointed out that she shared the Councillors' concerns about the waiting lists and her intention to write to the Health Service highlighting the concerns, which would include the use of the Welsh language.
- In response to a comment that many paid privately for an assessment due to the waiting list with the current system (a suggestion was made that having a private assessment did not give earlier access to services) and how the waiting list could be resolved, it was noted that approximately 200 were on the current children's waiting list. It was added that the new service would not deal with this, but that the work plan was likely to create a working network to find information and create contacts. It was also noted that it would be necessary to establish a relationship with the neurodevelopmental service and offer support during the early stages of assessment and diagnosis.
- In response to a comment that it was necessary to ensure that events were held in rural areas, it was highlighted that additional resources were available to identify new opportunities to provide preventive support and raise awareness locally. It was noted that Derwen already offered information dates for families and collaborated with Byw'n lach to conduct training. The plan would focus on ensuring better communication with families and on holding regular sessions (ensuring events across the County).
- Following recent press reports that the number of older women being diagnosed with autism was increasing, it was noted that the National Autism Team had developed a Community of Practice which developed knowledge and focused specifically on this issue.
- That the leader's aim would be co-production with the integrated team to ensure good engagement and collaboration with parents and carers, involving them in discussions about developing the relationship and developing support for parents. It was added that Derwen conducted activities and information sessions, e.g. emotion management sessions, although accepting the need to do more.
- The intention to ensure that all members of staff who worked directly with children, young people or adults should undertake ASD awareness training, although at a general level, was welcomed. 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

(approximately 400 had completed it to date), which was included as one part of three ASD training levels. Those who dealt with autism directly would receive training on two higher levels.

- To ensure that there were no differences between the needs of children and adults, it was ensured that the individual was at the centre of the service and that the best provision would be offered - the aim of the service was to collaborate around the individual. It was noted that there was a significant improvement to the individual after receiving support.

RESOLVED:

- a) To accept the report, noting the observations made during the meeting**
- b) Establish a Task and Finish Group to discuss the implementation of the Plan with the new team and ensure representation from the Education Department and the Health Board**
- c) To receive a progress report in six months**

6. SUPPORT FOR INDIVIDUALS LIVING WITH DEMENTIA IN GWYNEDD

The report was submitted by Cllr Dilwyn Morgan, Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being. He highlighted that the main purpose of the report was to outline the new developments in Gwynedd to support individuals who had dementia.

The Senior Manager of Adults Services added that the County's vision was to support individuals living with dementia in order to enable them to live at home as independently as possible for as long as possible with the need to ensure the correct, timely care provision and support, in the right place to meet a range of needs. She explained that the role of Gwynedd Dementia Coordinator was recently created in order to lead in the field within the Council by working with individuals who had been affected by dementia, the Health Board and the Third Sector. The coordinator would be responsible for creating a vision and strategy for Dementia Gwynedd to respond to the care standards pathway. This was a temporary post funded from the Regional Integrated Fund (RIF).

Reference was made to the next steps, reporting that the Service was dependent on temporary funding to support a great number of the developments in care provision for individuals with dementia. The challenge would be to secure long-term funding to ensure the sustainability and continued development of these services. Work would be done to predict the impact of demand on budgets over the next few years and difficult decisions would need to be made in terms of reprioritising resources if no additional budget was available.

Gratitude was expressed for the report.

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

- The development of Penyberth Care Home, Penrhos, was welcomed, a direction the Council wished to follow and which steered the direction of care in the future and the transformation of the service.
- That the Gwynedd Dementia Actif Service was doing exceptional work that had been recognised across Wales - congratulations to the team.
- That involving the family in care assessments was essential to dementia support.
- That people must be kept in their communities.

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

- In response to a comment that there was no specialist nursing provision available for individuals living in the Llŷn and Meirionnydd areas and the suggestion that adequate provision should be demanded through influence, it was noted that it had not been possible for Local Authorities to provide nursing care but that the Council was now intervening more in the market as gaps in services appeared in the areas. It was noted that some elements of the provision could be resolved but that neither the Health Board nor independent companies were compelled to provide a dementia specialist nursing care service in all parts of the County - however, business decisions could be encouraged and influenced. Despite appreciating the work that was being done, the need must be responded to and therefore the Council was considering the efficiency of providing a service rather than buying in a service (in some situations). It was noted that there was a need to ensure equal provision across the County - possibilities would be considered for the Penyberth site in the future.
- That Llys Cadfan Tywyn offered 33 beds with 15 being specialist dementia beds - nevertheless, some individuals were seen being moved from their locality (as far as Pwllheli or Bangor) to receive suitable care. It was noted that staffing in the field of care was challenging and therefore staff were put to the best use to maintain a service in the most effective way. It was accepted that moving out of a locality created anxiety and that the aim was to remain in the community. It was explained that dementia residential care was being provided at Llys Cadfan. If the needs of individuals intensified and required specialist nursing care, then unfortunately there was no suitable provision available locally.
- Following the Health Board's decision to temporarily close Dyfi Ward at Tywyn Hospital due to a shortage of staff, and to use beds at Dolgellau Hospital to safeguard patients, it was stated that the situation was not acceptable. Concern was expressed that Llys Cadfan would lose the support and expertise of the Hospital, but it was confirmed that the residents of Llys Cadfan were supported and cared for by community nurses, in accordance with the need. The service's effective response, within a very short time, to the decision to close Dyfi ward was appreciated.
- That the service was aware of the shortage of doctors in the Tywyn area and that discussions had been held with the Health Board. It was noted that a doctor from Dolgellau took care of Tywyn hospital patients but that no arrangement existed for doctors from Dolgellau to support residents in the homes. It was added that further discussions needed to be held with the Health Board regarding the development and provision of services in the area in the future.
- That money for the dementia support workers scheme was delivered through specific funding programmes - some of which were regional allocations where bids would be submitted for a proportion of the money. It was explained that many elements of the service were now dependent on these financial sources and although dementia was a core service, there was no permanent fixed budget for it. This was dependent on the national system.

In response to a comment that temporary funding leads to temporary appointments and that this was a reason for some choosing not to apply for jobs as they were not permanent, it was accepted that this was a problem but that there was enthusiasm among those who wanted to work in this specific field (although not true for all fields of work). It was added that there had to be strategic working, bearing in mind that the number of young people was decreasing while the number of people over the age of 85 was increasing significantly. We must therefore respond by considering

preventive work, using effective technology and promoting direct payments in our Communities.

- In terms of the recruitment and retention of staff in the care field and the need for the development at Penyberth to be successful, it was noted that workforce planning was an elementary part of the development.

RESOLVED

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

The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and concluded at 1.00 p.m.

CHAIR

REPORT TO	GWYNEDD COUNCIL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	JUNE 2023
REPORT BY	COUNCILLOR DILWYN MORGAN (SUPPORT OFFICER - MANNON EMYR TRAPPE)
SUBJECT	UPDATE ON THE GWYNEDD MENTAL HEALTH SERVICE

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. In March 2022, we reported to the Scrutiny Committee that the Adults, Health and Well-being Department had commissioned a consultant to lead on a project that will scrutinise the resources within the Mental Health Service in Gwynedd. Our intention was to review the Council's contribution to the service, consider how we were delivering within the context of our statutory responsibilities and see if we can allocate resources to focus on preventative work and support key well-being. A request was made at the Committee to report back on the findings of this work and on any recommendations to provide services in the future.

OVERVIEW OF THE SERVICE

2. The Mental Health Service has been an integrated multidisciplinary team since 1996, with the Health Board leading the Service. The service works in the context of the Mental Health Measure 2010, which places a duty on local health boards and local authorities to ensure that appropriate care that focuses on the mental health needs of individuals is in place.
3. The work is being guided by the Together for Mental Health Strategy, which is the Welsh Government's strategy for improving mental health and the provision available to support individuals across the country. The service is divided to offer support within primary services for low-level cases and within secondary services for more intensive cases.
4. Referrals are received from GPs and all referrals will be scrutinised daily (Monday to Friday) to see if there is sufficient information to decide as to whether it is suitable for assessment (i.e., there is evidence of mental illness or impact on mental well-being). Referrals not suitable for the service will be sent back to the GP with an explanation and/or referred on to a suitable service for their needs.

5. The measure states that standardised assessments are completed within 28 days, urgent assessments are completed within 48 hours and crisis visits receive a response within 4 hours.
6. Workers are the service's main resource and they offer therapy and support to individuals to overcome or cope with their illness.
7. As the Health Board leads the service, there is a strong focus on the medical model - which includes diagnosis and medication. Our role as a local authority is to focus on the social elements and also to lead on the work under the Mental Health Act 1983. The service provides appropriate social and health care that focuses on rehabilitation for adults with mental health needs within the community. Primarily, if the level of need allows, the intention is to provide community-based support within the primary service, with additional, secondary and specialist care provision to meet severe and/or complex needs when needed.
8. The service's budget is relatively small at £3.6 million.

THE TEAM

9. Paid employment by Gwynedd Council:
 - 2 Area Leaders
 - 12.5 Social Workers
 - 7 of the above social workers are also AMHPs under the Mental Health Act 1983. An additional 2 AMHPs work in other teams within the adults field).
 - The Authority also employs 9 Support Workers (with a financial contribution from Health to employ them) to work more intensively with individuals on care and treatment plans.

The teams are split into the Arfon and south Gwynedd areas. The Arfon team is based within the Hergest Unit, Bangor and the south Gwynedd team is based at Ysbyty Alltwn, Tremadog with a satellite office in Dolgellau.

Background and Context

10. The social policy framework in Wales outlines a long-term strategic vision that focuses on a system-wide approach to Health and Social Care services. Following Sustainable Social Services: An Action Framework (2011), the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 focused on creating a service which responds to current and future needs of the population and community, through an ethos of prevention, well-being and multi-agency practice based on the individual's strength.

To align with the social policy ethos of Wales, Gwynedd Adults Services aims to review the current Social Work aspect of the existing Mental Health Service.

11. The current data demonstrates the scope and nature of the need across a number of mental health disorders, as shown in the table below:

Estimated number of adults in north Wales affected by mental health problems (2020)

	Common mental disorder	Anti social personality disorder	Bipolar disorder	Borderline personality disorder	Psychotic disorders	Total
Gwynedd	17,000	2,600	1,900	1,900	500	23,900
North Wales	93,800	13,200	9,800	9,100	2,800	128,700

The numbers have been rounded so they may not totalise:

Source: Daffodil

REPORT STEMMING FROM THE PROJECT

12. There has been consultation with the Head of Adults, Health and Well-being Department, Mental Health Senior Manager and the two Area Leaders for Mental Health Services (Gwynedd North and South areas).

13. The key finding from the project is the agreement that the current mental health multi-agency model with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BIPBC) needs to be remodelled. This finding suggests that any future developments around improving the social aspect of mental health services should be driven by the development of a new service model. The work also highlighted the need to review the role of the Support Worker within the service and the need to review out-of-county placements in order to ensure that we understand individuals' aspirations to return to the area or not.

MAIN CONSIDERATIONS

14. Wales' key policy principles are to promote positive well-being by giving citizens a voice, choice and control, by developing preventive services and by co-producing service developments. Although current policies focus on promoting the integration of Health and Social Care, the information reviewed leads us to the conclusion that it may not be the most productive way to proceed to effectively

meet the social care needs of the people who use the services. This finding is not unique to Gwynedd as research examining Mental Health Trusts in England has shown that there are common 'risks' to this 'partnership' between health and social care, including:

- not being clear about outcomes;
- calling something a 'partnership' to make it sound better;
- not being clear about organisational drivers;
- not being clear about unstated motivators;
- being unrealistic and over-ambitious; failure to pay attention to practical details

15. As part of the information gathering process, consultation meetings were held with the Mental Health Leaders in the local authority, with the common 'risks' being identified as core barriers to deliver our statutory duties.
16. The feedback suggested that the level of risk had increased. In addition to the barriers to delivering our statutory duties, there is a risk to the well-being of our staff. It was explained that the key driver in this increase was a feeling of '*acting in isolation*'. Being '*isolated*' has been described as being excluded from key meetings, a lack of consistent communication on key strategic and operational developments and a sense that partnership relationships are '*personality-driven*' rather than systematic. As a result, there is a sense that the social care workforce feels as if they are operating in a vacuum as '*additions*' rather than as a key partner in the service. Overall, it was also felt that the inclusion of individuals using services as part of the 'service users' inclusion agenda had worsened.
17. The research findings show that relationships with Senior Health Officials are '*personality-driven*' rather than systematic. This is felt at all levels, with requests for information from social care often receiving no response. Requests for information or support are often ignored, or receive what often feels like a tokenistic response. While Social Care Managers continue to be involved in the Single Point of Access (SPoAA) meetings, they are not included as part of the performance management meetings. As a result, it is felt that '*there is no real evidence to reflect a partnership*' including limited social care equity as part of the current partnership arrangement.
18. Gwynedd's Mental Health Services Senior Manager has only recently started receiving regular updates on performance data. However, social work representatives are not included or invited to attend Mental Health Board meetings led by Health. As a result, social work staff said they felt as if they were a '*stakeholder*', rather than an '*equal partner*'.
19. Another key risk identified is the continued use of paper systems within BIPBC. As a result, neither integrated electronic systems nor WCCIS (the social care information system) are used. This includes a lack of use of key assessment processes, for example, the *What Matters* assessment tool. This risk has been

discussed on a number of occasions and there has been no increase over a period of several years. Having paper-based systems to collect sensitive data is dangerous and acts as a barrier to information sharing and effective service planning. The risk raises a number of issues, including:

- Governance risk: regarding secure data management;
- Communication risk: regarding the recording and sharing of current information;
- Role risk: about fulfilling the statutory role outlined in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, e.g. completing social care assessments.

20. There is a strong feeling that maintaining the current model is not the preferred approach for the social work workforce or to enable and support the needs of the people using the services.

21. The preferred option is to review the service provision with a view to creating a separate mental health social care well-being service. In light of the current communication and risk issues, it is felt that co-producing a new model with the social work workforce would be a positive step forward as part of a service improvement strategy.

GOVERNANCE PROCEDURE

23. Overall, reviewing mental health service governance arrangements, performance data and grant spending has been a challenge. The key challenge has been identifying governance pathways, including how the local authority is involved in these processes. In essence, it appears that, at a strategic level, local authority communication and inclusion in key governance arrangements is a core barrier to effective multi-agency work. For example, the local authority is unclear about ICAN plans, Together for Mental Health spending arrangements and future development plans. This is also a risk identified by other local authorities across north Wales.

SUMMARY

24. As part of the Phase 1 consultation process with Social Work Managers, the options discussed focused on the possibilities of:

- a. no change, continue in the form of the existing service.
- b. review a new partnership arrangement for a period of one year, with quarterly meetings to review the arrangement/progress.
- c. transfer to a separate social care/well-being team/service which coincides with establishing a well-being preventive social pathway for people who use the services.

25. As mentioned, although recent social policy promotes the integration of health and social care, current evidence identified risks associated with deep problems with the current arrangements with the BIPBC Mental Health Directorate. The local authority's Social Work Managers voiced a strong commitment to working in partnership, there was also a strong sense of the need to move forward with developing a new well-being model focusing on social care for the social care element of Mental Health Services across Gwynedd. A bespoke well-being model would promote key objectives focused on:

- mitigating the current risk due to the poor communication regarding progress and change by BIPBC;
- providing greater ownership of well-being, social prescription and the social model of mental health recovery. Overall, this model would enable the Council and the social care workforce to better fulfil their statutory duties under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014;
- providing the opportunity to review services to promote a focus on prevention through greater ownership of primary care;
- providing greater ownership across the care and support journey by adopting a systems-centred approach based on social care. As a result, the social work workforce can be given greater power and control by developing Community Well-being hubs focused on social care;
- allowing ownership of performance data, including work-flow information;
- providing the potential to achieve a broad spectrum and greater access to well-being interventions (rather than focusing on medication and clinical support);
- improve the ownership, screening and allocation of referrals to ensure that the social care/well-being element of mental health support is addressed by Social Workers;
- reducing delays in case allocation and waiting times for social care support;
- reviewing funding and resource allocation across existing provision, from funding allocation for staffing, SLA and out-of-county locations;
- providing more voice, choice and control for people that use the services and their families.

26. A strong view was expressed that the current arrangement was unsustainable. In addition, there was a feeling that establishing yet another partnership agreement would not resolve the key issues or indeed mitigate the significant risks identified. The current model offers limited assurances of an effective and secure partnership.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

27. In conclusion, step 1 of this review suggests that a separate social care model would be the safest and most productive path forward for all involved. The potential use of a revised model would include a focus on developing a new well-being social care model, with clear roles, systems and professional governance. This would allow health to focus on the medical/clinical model, while the local authority can promote services across the continuum of care. This would improve

the service's compatibility with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the use of the Integrated Assessment process and WCCIS to record client information. The recommendations focus on suggesting:

- Use this information to develop a business case to inform the establishment of a separate social care mental health well-being service.
- Produce a further Phase 2 report/review, focusing on examining in detail the project management process for establishing a separate Social Care Mental Health Well-being service.
- Co-produce the development of the new model with key internal and external stakeholders, including service users.
- Undertake a review of the role of support workers across the county.
- Consult with the Social Workers and Support Workers within the service and get their input into the development (scheduled date 14 June 2023)
- There have been several attempts to consult with the Health Board's Director of Mental Health to share our intentions and plan and agree on how we will work together.
- Provide workforce training on the Social Services and Well-being Act (scheduled for 28 June 2023)

VISION

28. It is essential that the focus should be on improving outcomes that are important to the individuals being supported. Evidence reflects that the mental health 'service users' who were most satisfied with the support they received, received holistic support. This new model could potentially provide the opportunity to develop a well-being and more holistic approach to service delivery in Gwynedd, compatible with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. This revised approach will reduce the potential risk to the local authority and local authority staff who are currently working as part of the current model for the Mental Health Service.

Agenda Item 8

NAME OF COMMITTEE	Care Scrutiny Committee
DATE OF MEETING	June 22nd, 2023
TITLE	Children and Family Support Workforce
PURPOSE	To share information about the current situation and operational plans in relation to recruitment and retention of the professional workforce within children's services
AUTHOR	Marian Parry Hughes, Head of Children and Family Support Services
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Elin Walker-Jones

Background

1. The purpose of this report is to inform the Care Scrutiny Committee on the findings and recommendations of a report commissioned to review the issues affecting Children's Services in relation to recruiting and retaining professional workers, and to update on the recommendations agreed by the Cabinet in November 2022 in order to ensure sufficiency for the future.
2. Towards the end of 2020 and the beginning of 2021, the service began to experience a staff turnover which had the potential to have a negative impact on the Council's ability to fulfil statutory responsibilities in relation to children and families services, including safeguarding and services for children who are looked after. Following the COVID period, workers began to leave the service to work in services and teams where there was a perception that those service areas were easier in relation to work pressures; to neighbouring authorities where they would receive a pay increase for doing the same work or with less of a workload; to other agencies such as CAFCASS who were paying a substantially higher salary to social workers, or some left the profession altogether as they felt that the workload during COVID had been unprecedented and enormous and had affected their wellbeing.
3. In response, the Head of Service escalated the issue to the Chief Executive, the cabinet member and to the Statutory Director of Social Services. A waiting list and delay in responding to safeguarding matters were avoided at the time by relocating staff within the teams and allocating child protection and court work to staff within teams other than the front line teams. This was totally dependent on the good will of our workforce who were eager to ensure that we were able to respond within a timely manner. This wasn't without risk but due to the staff's commitment, the need to approach social work agencies to employ workers was avoided.
4. It was identified that further work was needed to look closely at the issues that were influencing the professional workforce to leave the service area, and with corporate support, the Management Team commissioned Chris Edwards, independent consultant to work with the service in October 2021. His brief was to work with the service to bring recommendations in relation to any strategies that needed to be implemented to ensure the

sustainability of the workforce. The report was published during the Summer of 2022 and an executive summary is available for members if needed.

5. The independent consultant recognised that the staff group were very eager to be a part of the resolution for the service, and he identified that staff commitment to the service was a very clear strength in Gwynedd. The Management Team are however aware that some of the good will that has been present over many years has somewhat eroded recently due to many factors, and there is a clear commitment to regain what is at risk of being completely lost.
6. The report suggests that the challenge of working through COVID had added to several of the recent problems, but at the same time, some of the problems were evident prior to COVID. In other words, if COVID hadn't brought this to our attention it is likely that these issues would have come to light sooner. It is fair to state that the service experienced trauma during COVID and following the initial COVID period. It has been a time of surviving the challenges of the period and it has had a significant impact on the determination and energy to build for the future.
7. The report focuses on several factors that have contributed to the recent problems of recruiting staff to posts and keeping staff, especially experienced, registered staff. As well as identifying these factors the report also presents a series of ideas in relation to what could help to respond to the deficits. There are a number of ideas that will depend on developing a series of strategies and plans and this is welcomed, but the priority is to focus early on the issues that are pressing.

8. 2. Management team priorities

- 2.1 Children's Services Management Team are of the view that there are 4 main approaches needed to respond to the challenges. The author of the report describes these as 'levers' to create momentum and we are of the view that these need urgent attention.

They are:

- Resolving the **salary** issue which has been a longstanding issue.
- Developing a **Recruitment and Retention Strategy** recognising the solutions that are important to staff and listening to their voices and their concerns
- Investing in **new workers** via a professional trainee programme
- Developing staff wellbeing through mentoring, reflective practice and reflective supervision

2.2 A: Salaries.

- 2.2.1 This is the main issue that affects staff morale. There is a need to respond to the perception that Cyngor Gwynedd underestimates the value of the posts compared to other authorities by paying less than neighbouring authorities. The issue has been known to the Council for many years, but there is a need to understand whether the perception is true or false and as a result find a way of bridging the gap in relation to salaries and/or conditions of employment. The result of inconsistency in relation to pay scales is that the service have entered into temporary arrangements such as agreeing a market supplement to some posts rather than truly recognising the disparity with comparable posts. This has clearly enabled the service to recruit to critical posts and to stop some individuals from leaving the service,

but it has also caused tension in the service between workers who deem the internal inequality as being unfair. There is a constant call on Welsh Government to set a national pay scale for social workers in order for local authorities to be able to recruit staff on a level playing field and to avoid paying an extortionate amount of money to agency staff to cover vacant posts. However there is a view that waiting for a resolution from Welsh Government shouldn't be a reason for the Council to delay a response to the main issue affecting professional staff on the front line as failing to fulfil statutory duties is of high risk.

2.2.2 In response to the above there was an agreement to set up a task and finish working group specifically in relation to salaries. The group meets regularly and has representation from the front line teams in adults and children's services alongside HR personnel, members of both services' management teams, the Heads of Service and it is chaired by the Statutory Director of Social Services. The work of comparing with other authorities is underway and there have been discussions with the workforce in relation what they see as improvements to work conditions. Work is also being undertaken in relation to developing a career pathway connected to pay scale and experience levels, and this is welcomed.

2.3 B: Recruitment and Retention Strategy.

2.3.1 There is recognition that we are able to attract students from training and qualifying programmes and that this has been successful for decades. However we have recently seen a trend of the loss of experienced staff and of being in an impossible situation of finding experienced staff to fill posts even though there are career pathways, better life work balance and flexibility in working patterns. Although people's reasons for leaving are often personal and unique, there are also clear patterns. In order to address these patterns the support of the team managers and workers is critical in order to identify the best 'levers' to change the situation.

2.3.2 As we celebrate our ability to attract new workers, there is also a challenge in supporting and developing their experience. We need to understand that they cannot do the same tasks as experienced workers as they need to complete their first years in practice and be protected and supported. Newly qualified workers cannot take the place of an experienced worker and due to being able to offer posts to newly qualified workers, it is a systemic loss for a number of years. Added to this is the additional pressure of managing, supporting and developing these individuals and needing to be aware of the resilience of these arrangements and finding ways of supporting our managers to deal with the additionality that this brings to their workload.

2.3.5 The work to create a Recruitment and Retention Strategy should be a collaborative approach between Children's Services and other departments within the Council for example Human Resources.

2.4 C: investing in new workers.

2.4.1 Social Services' programme to create qualified bilingual workers has been in place for decades. It has been one of our most successful achievements, being innovative and providing pathways into the profession for the workforce.

2.4.2 Experience tells us that we cannot afford to miss a single year in this chain of investing and creating a stream of qualified workers into the service.

- 2.4.3 A few years ago there were discussions about recruiting agency staff as a 'Plan B' or a 'back up plan'. Currently most local authorities use agency staff as their core workforce and this comes with extortionate costs that erodes the reasonable argument with the authority's own staff for parity of pay. We know that if we had to recruit agency staff now that we would struggle as the market is so strong. However, if this was the back up plan in Gwynedd it would remove our ability to provide a bilingual service overnight and would completely disregard our language policy. There is no doubt that the strategy has been successful, and we need to focus on developing a sustainable trainee plan over a period of a number of years. This is at a cost to the Council, but it is a cost that has to be balanced with a failing service or one that is dependent on agency staff at a 40% to 70% increase on the current payroll.
- 2.4.4 Our managers and experienced staff sponsor and accommodate students on placements regularly and this is key to welcoming and attracting new staff to the service. But, this is an additional pressure and we need to ensure that we can sustain this in the future.
- 2.4.5 We need to identify pathways and opportunities with the Workforce Development Department to bring in new staff and to support staff who are qualifying. Innovation over a number of years has created new pathways and has given the service flexibility to grow from our own resources. We are of the view that we should continue with this ambition by focusing on the short term and investing in the trainee programme. This programme recognises the barriers, especially financial barriers that impact on an individual's ability to follow their career pathway, but it also creates capacity whilst staff are training which is of benefit to the service.
- 2.4.6 In response to the above a bid for 3 trainees was presented in the last financial year with a condition that if supported the individual worker would commit to working in Gwynedd for a period of time in order to pay back the investment through their service e.g for 5 years. Unfortunately the bid was not successful against competing bids and the recommendation was for the service to look at prioritising resources in order to invest. These discussions are ongoing..

2.5 D: Innovating in mentoring, reflective practice and training for staff.

- 2.5.1 A reflective establishment protects services from the effects of trauma by working in children's services. The report refers to the investment in staff wellbeing. The service is known to be innovative and ambitious in mentoring staff, developing reflective practice and reflective supervision. Experimenting with practice mentors is an example of the developmental support that is different and adds value to the manager's role. As part of these developments, we are keen for some elements to be mainstreamed and to strengthen our ability to underline their importance. We are eager to look at the most important issues that need to be resolved whilst at the same time being able to continue to show leadership and inspire others.

3 Strategic options

- 3.1 There are three strategic options to follow:
- 1 continue with the 'status quo'
 - 2 choose a transformative, ambitious approach
 - 3 choose a proactive approach to achieve continuous improvement

- 3.2 **Strategic option 1 – continue with the ‘status quo’:** What is happening at the moment is not working therefore doing nothing is not an option.
- 3.3 **Strategic option 2 – Transformative:** This option is a response to the author of the report’s response to the restrictions that he sees due to the Council’s language policy. He sees us as unique and due to this we place restrictions on ourselves which causes difficulties in a challenging labour market. In his opinion; rather than being an informal ‘college’ to raise bilingual social workers and then lose the investment to other agencies, his transformative model celebrates this and creates a business opportunity. In our view, there would need to be good will from Welsh Government, other local authorities and other agencies to recognise the need for a ‘college’ and an ‘innovation centre’. In our experience there is very little evidence of these factors outside of Gwynedd. We believe that the timescale to win this argument in order to create a strategy is too far in the future to prevent the slippage in the service and is therefore unachievable even though it’s an interesting idea.
- 3.4 **Strategic Option 3 – Proactive and continuous improvement:**
- In the service’s view this option is achievable and calls on the Management Team with the support of the whole service to be more proactive in planning solutions for problems that we can’t foresee.
 - To coincide with being proactive we need to be enterprising, confident and clear
 - The report provided a menu of options that we should select and work on. Some of them are unachievable for the Management Team to progress on their own. Our vision therefore is to focus on 4 things that we want to achieve with the service. These are :
 - Resolve the long awaited comparable salary issue.
 - Develop a Recruitment and Retention Strategy
 - Invest in new workers through a professional trainee programme
 - Develop staff wellbeing through mentoring, reflective practice and reflective supervision

4. Recommendation

- 4.1 The Scrutiny Committee are requested to accept the report and support the intentions of the service to focus on the 4 main themes identified above as the urgent response to the concerning staffing issues and to recognise that the work of exploring these matters has already begun as stated in this report.

Marian Hughes,

Pennaeth Gwasanaeth Plant a Chefnogi Teuluoedd

Mehefin 12fed, 2023

Committee	Care Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	June 22nd 2023
Item title	Feedback from safeguarding review by Care Inspectorate Wales
Purpose	To present the feedback from Care Inspectorate Wales following a safeguarding review in children and families' services
Author	Marian Parry Hughes, Head of Children and Family Support Department
Cabinet member	Councillor Elin Walker-Jones

1. Background

- 1.1 Following the publication of a Child Practice Review in November 2022, the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan MS, requested that Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) led a rapid review of decision making in relation to child protection.
- 1.2 The overarching objective was to determine to what extent the current structures and processes in Wales ensures that children are appropriately placed on, and removed from the Child Protection Register when sufficient evidence indicates that it is safe to do so.
- 1.3 The review focused on the requirements of the *Wales Safeguarding Procedures*; with the legislation Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 and the statutory safeguarding guidance '*Working Together to Safeguard People*'.
- 1.4 It was stressed that this was an opportunity for shared learning and was not an inspection. There was an opportunity for a collaborative approach focused on reflection and shared learning about what works and where there is room for improvement in current approaches to ensure positive outcomes for children at risk of harm.
- 1.5 We were informed in February 2023 that we were one of five local authorities who had been selected to be subject of the review.
- 1.6 The review took place between March 26th and March 29th, 2023. Verbal feedback was shared with the Head of Service and Statutory Director of Social

Services on March 29th. There will not be a published individual authority report, but a national report will be published once the review period comes to an end.

2. The findings

2.1 Children in Gwynedd benefit from agencies sharing information effectively, and this is supported by a clear and understood model of practice. It was considered that children in Gwynedd are safeguarded effectively. However, two examples were seen where external agencies had not shared information with children's services in a timely manner.

2.2 There is a clear focus on assessing risk and specific attention is given to the threshold of a child having suffered or being likely to suffer significant harm, and of that threshold having been met.

2.3 Clear decisions were consistently made based on evidence when making the decision to place the child's name on the Child Protection Register and when deciding to remove the child's name from the Child Protection Register. At times professional optimism could be seen and it was noted that the recording of changes and developments could be improved.

2.4 It was reported that the level of compliance with the practice model could vary, but at the same time it was accepted that ensuring and creating change across the workforce is challenging. The view was that staff turnover had impacted on this along with the fact that the service had just begun to operate the new model shortly prior to the pandemic. Even so, the view was that there is a clear vision and a stable leadership within the service to ensure that practice expectations are consistent.

2.5 A comment was made that the level of understanding from external agencies of the model varies especially in relation to the threshold of significant harm and the definition of eligible needs for support under the arrangements for care and support for example. There is an enthusiasm for multi-agency training and it was recommended that the local authority considers a programme for training for this purpose.

2.6 It was recognised that there are national challenges in relation to recruitment and retention of social care staff in general, and within children's services in particular. There was recognition that children's services in Gwynedd had faced challenges in ensuring sufficiency within the workforce at times and that this challenge was present during the course of the review. The lack of sufficiency within the workforce inevitably affects practice. There was a possibility that a delay in one case in relation to timely meetings and visits in relation to the expectations of the Wales Safeguarding Procedures had been directly impacted by this situation. The inspectors made a comment that the pay scales in Gwynedd are a cause of concerns for practitioners in Gwynedd children's services and this was raised as a risk that could have an impact on the authority's ability to recruit and retain workers. It was suggested that the Council should review the terms and conditions of the service within the context of the national landscape and understand the risks posed.

2.7 Some examples were seen where the standard of care and support plans could be improved and some could benefit from being updated. As mentioned above, some meetings and visits were outside of expectations. However, it was recognised that the staffing issues and work pressures affected practitioners' ability to complete all of the tasks within timeframe.

2.8 It was noted that North Wales Police's policy is not to attend review child protection conferences. It was recognised that they provide a report to the meetings, but it was felt that this was a failure to participate in the discussion in relation to whether the child remained at risk of significant harm.

2.9 Overall, good practice was seen in the context of considering the voice and lived experiences of children, and that this was considered when making safeguarding decisions. Children were seen on their own during S47 investigations and this led to robust decisions being reached in relation to their protection. It was noted that further work was needed to ensure how the participation of children in their conferences could be developed and improved.

2.10 A comment was made that the social care worker role was invaluable within teams. In one case evidence was seen as to how this role ensured that the child had ample opportunity to share their views and to be listened to which in turn contributed to the overall picture of the daily life of the child. This provided assurance in relation to the safety of the child and that the threshold of significant harm had diminished.

2.11 Examples of clear communication with parents to explain why their child/ren were at risk of significant harm was seen. The support services available to parents are central in sharing these messages when it is deemed to be appropriate.

2.12 The role of the chairs of child protection conferences are critically important to remind attendees of the purpose of the meetings that are held in line with the Wales Safeguarding Procedures. This was evidenced as effective practice when the inspectors attended a conference to observe the discussion with the consent of the family. A comment was made that the consistency and stability of the chairs in Gwynedd was a clear strength. As a result, they, along with the extended workforce know families well, are committed and work hard to ensure that children are safeguarded.

Marian Hughes,
June 12th, 2023



MEETING	CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	22 June 2023
TITLE	Care Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme 2023/24
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	Present the Committee's draft work programme for 2023/24 for adoption
AUTHOR	Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor

1. During the Committee's annual workshop on 9 May 2023 possible items to scrutinise during 2023/24 were considered. Items were prioritised bearing in mind the purpose of scrutiny in Gwynedd, namely:

CONTRIBUTE TO DRIVING IMPROVEMENT IN SERVICES FOR THE PEOPLE OF GWYNEDD

This will be done constructively by:

- Investigating concerns regarding the quality of our services
- Acting as a Critical Friend, and ensuring that appropriate attention is given to the citizen's voice
- Identifying good practice and weaknesses
- Holding the Cabinet and its members to account
- Reviewing or scrutinising decisions or actions that are not the responsibility of the Cabinet

2. Members were asked to respond to an online question regarding their top five priorities from the list of possible items provided in advance prior to the workshop. Six main priorities emerged from the responses to the question, namely:
 - Housing Allocation Policy and Housing Waiting List
 - Domiciliary Care Service
 - Housing Action Plan
 - Gwynedd Mental Health Service (Adults, Health and Well-being Department)
 - Arrangements for Managing and Maintaining Care Homes
 - Day Care Service

3. Members discussed in smaller groups the top priorities as well as what else from the list should be scrutinised during 2023/24. When identifying their priorities members were asked to consider:
 - ❖ *Does the matter affect a vast proportion of the population?*
 - ❖ *Can scrutiny make a difference / have an influence? (People / service / performance)*
 - ❖ *Is it timely to scrutinise the matter?*
 - ❖ *Is the matter a priority for the Council?*
 - ❖ *Are we clear about what we are trying to improve?*
4. Following reporting back from the groups, items to scrutinise were prioritised and the relevant Heads of Department and Cabinet Members were invited to note any additional matters that needed consideration in terms of the items prioritised by Members of the Committee as well as provide observations on the timing of the scrutiny.
5. The Committee's draft work programme is attached as an appendix to the report. An effort was made to prioritise a maximum of three items per meeting in order to ensure that due attention was given to matters and that scrutiny would add value. All members are expected to ensure their attendance for the morning and afternoon session.
6. The scrutiny forward programme is a live programme which will be reviewed regularly during the year to ensure that the correct matters are addressed. Consideration will be given to prioritise matters that will arise during the year e.g., matters from performance challenge meetings and items on the Cabinet's forward programme.
7. **The Care Scrutiny Committee is asked to adopt the work programme for 2023/24.**

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT FORWARD PROGRAMME 2023/24

22/06/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynedd Mental Health Service (Adults, Health and Well-being Department) • Recruitment and retention of social workers (Children and Supporting Families Department) • Findings of the Care Inspectorate Wales Review: Safeguarding Children Service
21/09/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Allocation Policy and Housing Waiting List • Housing One Stop Shop • Supported accommodation including learning disabilities services, mental health and support for women
23/11/2023
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Day Care Service • Arrangements for managing and maintaining care homes • Support for unpaid carers
01/02/2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Action Plan • Preventative work that is commissioned to the third sector (adults & children)
11/04/2024
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domiciliary Care Service • Short Breaks Service (Derwen Integrated Team)

Items to be programmed:

Autism Plan Task and Finish Group Brief

Report by the Autism Plan Task and Finish Group