



Complete Agenda

Democratic Services
Swyddfa'r Cyngor
CAERNARFON
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Meeting

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date and Time

10.30 am, THURSDAY, 13TH JUNE, 2024

NOTE: A BRIEFING SESSION WILL BE HELD FOR MEMBERS AT 10.00AM

Location

Hybrid Meeting - Siambr Hywel Dda, Council Offices, Caernarfon, Gwynedd, LL55 1SH and virtually through Zoom

*** NOTE**

This meeting will be webcast

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

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(DISTRIBUTED 05/06/24)

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

MEMBERSHIP (18)

Plaid Cymru (12)

Councillors

Menna Baines
Rheinallt Puw
Linda Ann Jones
Gwynfor Owen
Einir Wyn Williams
Empty Seat

R Medwyn Hughes
Dewi Jones
Linda Morgan
Meryl Roberts
Jina Gwyrfai
John Pughe

Independent (5)

Councillors

Elwyn Jones
Eryl Jones-Williams
Angela Russell

Anwen J. Davies
Beth Lawton

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

AGENDA

1. ELECT CHAIR

To elect a Chair for 2024/25.

2. ELECT VICE-CHAIR

To elect a Vice-chair for 2024/25.

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 - 15

The Chairman shall propose that the minutes of the meetings of this committee held on the 11th of April, 2024 be signed as a true record.

7. DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS (DOLS)

16 - 23

To discuss the Council's ability to implement the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

8. ANNUAL STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL REPORT 2023/24

24 - 43

To give members the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel for 2023/24.

9. DEVELOPING A RESIDENTIAL PROVISION IN A SMALL GROUP FOR LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN

44 - 49

Developing a residential provision for looked-after children in small group homes needs to be scrutinised as the project is part of the Council's Plan.

10. MID WALES JOINT COMMITTEE FOR HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY GROUP

50 - 51

To elect a member to represent the Scrutiny Committee on the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care Scrutiny Group.

11. CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FORWARD PROGRAMME 2024/25

52 - 54

To present the Committee's draft work programme for 2024/25 for adoption.

12. ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING & CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES PERFORMANCE CHALLENGE MEETINGS 55

To nominate representatives to attend the Adults, Health and Well-being Department & Children and Supporting Families Department performance challenge meetings.

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 11/04/24

Present:

Councillors:- Beth Lawton (Chair), Menna Baines, Jina Gwyrfai, R. Medwyn Hughes, Dewi Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams, Linda Morgan, Gwynfor Owen, Gareth Coj Parry, Rheinallt Puw, Meryl Roberts, Angela Russell and Einir Wyn Williams.

Officers present:- Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor) and Eirian Roberts (Democracy Services Officer).

Others present:- Councillor Elin Walker Jones (Cabinet Member for Children and Families), Huw Dylan Owen (Statutory Director of Social Services), Marian Parry Hughes (Head of Children and Supporting Families Department) and Aled Gibbard (Assistant Head of Resources - Children and Supporting Families).

Present for item 5:- Councillor Dilwyn Morgan (Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being), Rhion Glyn (Assistant Head - Adults, Health and Well-being) and Geraint Wyn Jones (Customer Care Officer - Adults, Health and Well-being).

Present for item 7:- Councillor Beca Brown (Cabinet Member for Education), Vera Jones (Democracy Services Manager), Delyth Gibbard (Senior Specialist Communication and Interaction Teacher), Lucy Hemmings (Autism Practice Lead) and Einir Wyn Peters (Senior Educational Psychologist).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillors Anwen Davies, Elwyn Jones and Linda Ann Jones.

A speedy recovery was wished to members who were currently poorly.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

Councillor Gwynfor Owen declared a personal interest in item 7 as his son was autistic.

He was of the opinion that it was a prejudicial interest, and he left the meeting during the discussion on the item.

3. URGENT ITEMS

None to note.

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 1 February 2024 as a true record.

5. COMPLAINTS, ENQUIRIES AND EXPRESSIONS OF GRATITUDE PROCEDURE FOR 2022-23 - CHILDREN AND SUPPORTING FAMILIES DEPARTMENT AND THE ADULTS, HEALTH AND WELL-BEING DEPARTMENT

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families, the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being and the officers were welcomed to the meeting.

Submitted - Annual Report on the Children and Supporting Families Department and the Adults, Health and Well-being Department's Complaints, Enquiries and Expressions of Gratitude Procedure for 2022-23. The committee was invited to scrutinise the arrangements for dealing effectively with complaints received from service users and their representatives.

The two Cabinet Members set out the context, thanking staff from both departments for their commitment when responding to complaints and expressions of gratitude from the public and service users. The Customer Care Officer - Adults, Health and Well-being then gave an overview of the report's content.

Members were then given the opportunity to ask questions and submit observations.

It was requested to inform members whether there was a trend of something going wrong, instead of the members hearing about those complaints on the media or from members of the public. In response, it was noted that:-

- It was wished to avoid such situations and it was attempted to ensure that contact with the Council's Press Team worked as conveniently as possible in terms of informing them of anything that was likely to raise.
- It was clear that examples sometimes arose where that had not happened, and there was always room for improvement.

It was noted that it was comforting to see that there was a clear procedure to submit complaints and deal with complaints, but it was suggested that telling people that their complaint could not be received at the time because another investigation was underway caused more concern to those people, who had already reached the end of their tether. Enquiries were made about the arrangements for re-submitting such a complaint once the other investigation had come to an end. In response, it was noted that:-

- It was not legally possible to respond to a complaint if an investigation, e.g. a Police investigation, was underway as this could be prejudicial to any other investigation.
- The person who submitted the complaint received a leaflet explaining that it was not possible to look into the complaint straight away in some cases and welcomed them to re-submit the complaint once any other investigation had concluded.
- In some cases, e.g. investigation under the Safeguarding procedures, it was possible to discover that the process had concluded and offer the complainant to re-submit their complaint. Also, a process that had already started could sometimes be sufficient to solve the matter so as to ensure that there was no need to raise the complaint again.

It was noted that the two findings that derived from the report this year was that the expectations of families of the service was extremely high and there was a need for clear and regular communication. It was enquired whether it was possible to manage the expectations by informing families from the outset that it was not possible for the Council to offer everything to them. In response, it was noted that:-

- It was believed that this was relevant to the Children Department because of the Service's intervention in the families' lives on safeguarding matters, as well as the complexity of the processes.
- In terms of safeguarding matters, complaints were received that children's guardianship was back with the families etc., but if the Department had gone through all the procedures and possibilities, it was a matter of communicating that to the family.
- It was impossible to say at the beginning of a safeguarding investigation how the arrangements proceeded and what was the potential outcome. Therefore, it was a matter of communicating to families in a way that was more sensitive to their needs, knowing that they would be disappointed at times, and would obviously wish to complain about that.
- It was attempted to solve such complaints at the first stage by meeting with the families to explain what was happening and the reasons for that.

It was noted that it was good to see that no cases had been referred to the Ombudsman, and that all complaints had been solved in the first stage.

It was noted that the number of complaints were very low considering the number of cases that the Social Services dealt with, but some concern was expressed regarding the definition of a complaint, bearing in mind that members also received complaints from their electors (although not formal complaints) and referred them to the departments. The officers were thanked for providing answers to those complaints and it was noted that this was a big step forward to prevent complaints or informal enquiries from becoming a formal complaint. It was also noted that people's expectations were definitely high, considering that they were worried about their families or themselves as individuals. In response to the observation regarding the definition of a complaint, it was noted that:-

- There was a definition of an official complaint in the regulations provided by the Welsh Government.
- Many enquiries were received regarding the status of the service provided to individuals etc., from members of parliament and councillors and a response was provided to them straight away.
- It was possible for families to raise a formal complaint through their local councillor.

A member noted that he had received permission from the Monitoring Officer to refer to his personal experience of going through the complaints process as an individual in the past. He noted:-

- As he was not happy with the response to his complaint, he requested to go to stage 2, which was to have an independent investigator.

- That the only Welsh investigator that he managed to find was someone who used to work for the Social Services in Gwynedd, and possibly had a close relationship with some members of the Team.
- As the response that he received to the investigation was not very different to the answer he had in stage 1, he referred his complaint to the Ombudsman.
- He understood that the Ombudsman was only willing to look into the complaint if the Social Services had said that they had offered the service in the first place, but once again, did not do that. If the Social Services did not say that they offered the service, there were no grounds to take the complaint further.
- He was very disappointed that it was not possible to take the complaint further and he was eager to share his personal experience as it was likely that this was also the experience of others.
- Although he had nothing but praise for the way that the Customer Care Officer dealt with him at the time, he felt that the main response to the complaint was to try and defend the Service, instead of looking at how the public could be served better in the future.

In response, it was noted that:-

- It was wished to give assurance to the member that the Children's Service took every complaint seriously and the Head of Department was aware of every complaint within the service and had an input in the response to complainants.
- The Head of Department was also interviewed as part of stage 2 complaints by independent investigators, and in terms of the availability of Welsh speakers to investigate complaints, she was aware of about 5 Welsh investigators who had dealt with the Service's complaints during the previous year. However, it was accepted that the situation could be different during the Covid period when the member was going through the process.
- The Children's Service tried to solve every complaint in the first stages and felt that they had failed if the complaint reached the Ombudsman.
- It was not believed that the Children's Services behaved defensively and that everyone was always ready to learn from the lessons and improve services.
- Not many trends highlighted themselves in the Children's Services because all the cases were so individual and unique, and the complaints related to quite detailed things regarding people's lives.
- There was an attempt to improve communication continually through the social work teams and the social workers involved with the families.
- The arrangements of the Adults Service were similar to the arrangements of the Children's Service.

It was noted that many of the complaints related to lack of clear or consistent communication and it was enquired what the two departments intended to do to prevent this from always arising. In response, it was noted that:-

- The Adults Service did not receive many complaints regarding lack of communication.
- In terms of the Children's Service, it was believed that this related to the fact that families could be disappointed that the messages conveyed to them were not communicated to them from the start, but as had been noted in response to a

previous question, it was impossible to say at the beginning of an investigation what the outcome would be.

- If there was genuine concern that there were communication errors, the Children's Service Management Team would discuss those matters. A meeting would also be held with the individual social worker and their manager to see whether the worker needed any further training opportunities or further awareness raised, whilst also considering whether there were any disciplinary matters that needed to be addressed deriving from any complaints that had been confirmed.
- As the nature of Children's Service's complaints related to individual workers instead of specific teams, there was a need to look at each individual and try to address the matters that related to the complaints on this specific case.

It was enquired why the number of complaints had increased so much in the last year. In response, it was noted that:-

- The number of complaints about the Adults Service was lower in 2020/21 during the lockdown periods and had increased back to its normal levels since then. Table 2 of the report noted that the number of formal complaints had reduced from 33 during 2021/22 to 24 during 2022/23, and although the 2023/24 report had not been prepared yet, it was not anticipated that the figures would be much different to that.
- The table in the report showed that the Children's Service had also received fewer complaints during the last year. Despite that, it was felt that complaints were welcomed because there was always room to improve and develop.
- It was possible that the number of stage 2 complaints about the Children's Service was higher this year. Three were currently underway and one had been completed slightly outside of the current reporting window.
- It was felt that the number of enquiries from members of parliament and councillors on behalf of their electors was increasing and it was emphasised that a full response could be provided at this stage to prevent enquiries from developing into a formal complaint.
- The Service also related to a number of matters that did not reach stage 1, because it was possible to solve them to the individual's satisfaction outside the formal complaints arrangement.

It was suggested that staff shortages in the Adults Service was at the root of the majority of the complaints. In response, it was noted that:-

- It was believed that the nature of the complaints derived from shortcomings in front-line services as a result of the challenges in staff recruitment and retention, whether in the residential care field or the adults care field, and also more generally in terms of residential homes.
- The number of complaints regarding the domiciliary care provision had been higher during the last quarter of 2022/23 and that went hand in hand with care providers moving from the area during that period.
- The situation remained to be challenging in terms of waiting lists for domiciliary care, especially in some parts of the county, but the Service did everything within its ability to put arrangements in place to try and retain the current staff and recruit new staff, including holding successful recruiting campaigns.

It was noted that it was encouraging to understand that recruiting campaigns had been successful and the importance of continuing to host them was emphasised.

It was enquired what right did carers have to present a complaint on behalf of a service user, remembering that those individuals often had capacity but did not like to complain.

In response, it was noted that:-

- Generally, the personal data of the individual who received the service had to be protected and the services that the user received could not be discussed with anyone else without permission.
- If an individual had the capacity to decide to make a complaint, they would be asked to do so themselves or give clear permission for someone else to complain on their behalf.

It was noted that the response proved how difficult it was to make a complaint against the service. In response, it was noted that:-

- Everyone who worked in the field had a responsibility to report any safeguarding matter that they were concerned about and that situations had arisen where the individual who raised the safeguarding case had to share that with the individual who possibly received the service, explaining why the matter had been raised.
- The communication was clearly integral and the situation could also be sensitive.
- The situation in terms of receiving complaints and making the most of complaints and learning from them was extremely important to the Social Services, but at the same time, it was very difficult to strike the right balance in a sensitive situation with people who were very vulnerable, and how to promote people to make complaints and how to offer that without over-offering.
- It was important that we had an effective and qualified workforce to do the work in a sensitive way.
- People were often afraid of complaining, but it was believed that receiving complaints benefited the Service, not only in terms of humility, but also in terms of learning and allowing the team to provide the best possible service.

The fact that the number of complaints had reduced last year was welcomed and it was noted that the number was rather low considering the number of cases the departments dealt with. It was noted that it came as no surprise when hearing that a theme started to emerge in terms of complaints regarding domiciliary care, considering the recruitment problems in the field, and it was suggested that this was something to keep an eye on. Appreciation was expressed of the examples of gratitude and praise that were in the report and it was noted that this showed that there was a human face to the services that were being offered. In response, it was noted that:-

- They wished to thank for the appreciation of these expressions of gratitude in the report as it was extremely important that the hard work of workforces in difficult situations was acknowledged.
- In terms of the reduction in the number of complaints, not receiving complaints was not the goal, but to allow people to complain as much as was appropriate.

Reference was made to an observation in the report that three complaints had been received regarding the quality of work of one of the external providers commissioned to provide Direct Payments services to service users, and it was enquired what the Business Unit had done to ensure that the quality had improved. In response, it was noted that the contract with the company had come to an end and the service was now provided internally.

At the end of the discussion, it was explained that this item was usually presented to the scrutiny committee in September each year. Apologies were expressed that the 2022-23 report arrived late and it was noted that the 2023-24 report would be available soon for consideration in the next few months.

RESOLVED to accept the report, noting that it was nice to see the expressions of gratitude, and for the committee to scrutinise the Annual Report on the Complaints, Enquiries and Expressions of Gratitude Procedure for 2023-24 when it will be ready in the coming months.

6. SHORT BREAKS SERVICE (DERWEN INTERGRATED TEAM)

Submitted - the report of the Cabinet Member for Children and Families on the Short Breaks service (Derwen Integrated Team). The committee was invited to scrutinise the content of the report to have assurance that suitable provision was available for everyone who needed the service.

The Cabinet Member set out the context and thanked the staff for their tireless work and their enthusiasm and love whilst working with the most vulnerable children in Gwynedd. The Assistant Head of Resources - Children and Supporting Families expanded on the content of the report and members were given the opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

It was noted that the report and the presentation highlighted the huge demand for the short breaks service, and it was clear that excellent and vital work was being done.

Attention was given to the demand for a short breaks service for adults too, but it was explained that this item only discussed the provision for children.

Concern was expressed from understanding that the number of volunteers had reduced from 20 before the Covid period to 3 by now. It was enquired what was being done to try and recruit more volunteers, and it was requested whether it was possible to use the current volunteers in an effort to try and attract more. In response, it was noted that:-

- As it was not possible to continue with the short breaks plan over the lockdown periods, many volunteers were lost as people moved on.
- The Short Breaks Officer met regularly with Bangor University, which was the main contact in terms of recruitment campaigns.
- They agreed with the observation regarding using current volunteers, but all they could do was highlight that the opportunities existed and be as proactive as possible in terms of responding to any enquiries.
- Five prospective volunteers were currently going through the DBS process and it was hoped that these individuals would soon be available for the service in order to make a difference.

- It was possible that the cost-of-living crisis impacted people's desire to put themselves forward to volunteer, but the Service would definitely persevere to try and increase the number.

It was enquired what service was offered to families of children with less intense needs as well as what were the projections for the future, considering that the demand increased year on year. It was also requested whether they could be confident that we could meet the intense needs, without mentioning the other needs, in the face of the Council's financial situation for the next few years. In response, it was noted that:-

- The questions reflected the challenges that the Service faced and clearly discussed them in terms of development etc., and how to adapt the service to meet the needs that arose.
- The current provision addressed a variety of needs, not only the higher needs, with the higher needs tended to be short breaks in Hafan y Sêr and perhaps more supportive hours than the lower needs.
- A range of needs were provided in the supportive hours and that trying to analyse some of them was a part of work that they might not have managed to undertake for this report, but it was possible to do it with some effort.
- The volunteer service's activities were specifically for the lower needs levels, with less dependency, perhaps, on a social worker assessment to provide that, whilst the care and support assessment from social workers was an integral part of the need in connection with the overnight services and the more intense support services.
- Addressing the needs for the future would be challenging, especially considering the Council's financial situation, and if there were assessments that showed the demand, then there would be a responsibility on the Service to somehow provide that. This was the challenge faced in terms of planning services and it was not possible to answer with any assurance in terms of how the increase in the demand would change again.

It was asked whether there was a waiting list to go to Hafan y Sêr, and if there was, how long were individuals on that waiting list. It was also enquired if Hafan y Sêr was now full following Covid. In response, it was noted that:-

- Although the Hafan y Sêr manager tried to maximise the numbers that could stay in the unit every night, it was challenging to always fill the six beds in the unit, but that was not because of staffing reasons. The unit's staffing had always been fairly stable, and in addition to the staff on fixed contracts, there was also a bank of reserve staff for individual situations.
- There was a need to vary staff to correspond with the children's needs, e.g. some children did not sleep throughout the night and some children needed two staff members, and this was all a part of the planning work when accepting a child into the unit.
- This was the factor that sometimes led to the fact that a child had to wait for room in the unit, because there was a need to consider what other children would be staying in the unit at the same time as that child, and what were the needs of all children and whether those needs blended together.
- It was possible that some children had rather challenging needs that could destabilise other children, and that was all in the hands of the manager in terms of the preparation work.
- The waiting list for room overnight at the unit could take approximately three months, but that included introducing the children gradually to the unit during the period.

- In terms of the children's ages that were generally open to Derwen, more young children currently came in than older children leaving. It was believed that the same was true about Hafan y Sêr, and this would have an impact on the capacity and the turnover and waiting lists in the end. This was also a daily challenge in terms of planning adjustments, that were planned months in advance.
- The Service was very happy with the provision in Hafan y Sêr, but more of this type of provision was needed to meet the need.
- The benefit that families had from their child spending a night or two in the unit was huge, and kept families together.
- In terms of general capacity and the waiting lists, families could go through a period of crisis where changes happened and the child's behaviour was possibly more challenging than usual, and the unit tried their best to respond to such situations by offering and adapting the stays.

In her closing comments, the Cabinet Member noted that:-

- She had a conversation with Bangor University's Volunteer Officer regarding this matter and there had been discussions to support the fantastic work of the Short Breaks Officer who tried to recruit more volunteers.
- The Cabinet had protected the funding of this type of provision for the most vulnerable children until now, but the Council faced completely unprecedented challenges over the coming years. Therefore, she would appreciate the committee's support to ensure that these children would not lose a penny of this provision and she would do everything in her ability to ensure that the provision did not face cuts, considering the context.

RESOLVED to accept the report and to thank everyone who worked in the Short Breaks Service, and expressed hope that the funding would be available to continue to offer the service for everyone who needed it as time went on.

7. AUTISM PLAN TASK AND FINISH GROUP

Submitted - the report of the Chair of the Autism Plan Task and Finish Group, Councillor Elwyn Jones, which invited the committee to scrutinise findings and recommendations of the Task and Finish Group.

In the absence of Councillor Elwyn Jones from the meeting, the report was presented by the Democracy and Language Services Manager. It was noted that the Chair of the Task and Finish Group wished to:-

- Thank all the officers, not only for their work in preparing before the task group meeting, but also for their contribution during the meeting and their clear and honest answers.
- Thank his fellow councillors for the preparation work before the meeting and for presenting such good questions during the meeting, and that he was of the opinion that ensuring clear understanding came as a result of robust questioning and responses.
- Emphasise that every member also had an integral role to participate in the training available in the autism field.

Members were given an opportunity to ask questions and offer observations.

A member of the Task and Finish Group noted that:-

- The personal experience and professional insight of Councillors Dawn Jones and Gwynfor Owen had steered the Group's discussions, and he thanked them for their valuable contributions.
- It was a pleasure to collaborate and see the work that went into the autism field and clear transparency and honest discussion was had with the officers.
- He wished to give specific attention to recommendation 3, which related to ensuring that the development of any new school or adjustments to any school in the future was suitable for individuals with autism, and recommendation 4, which asked for an update for the committee after a further 12 months of operating to ensure that progress continued.

The Statutory Director of Social Services noted that:-

- This was an excellent report and that he was happy that the Group had addressed this extremely important subject.
- The autism field was a field that was increasing in terms of the number of people who needed support and was a field that increased in terms of complexity too.
- One of the most challenging factors was that a grant paid for a substantial percentage of the new Autism Team, and because there was no assurance that the Welsh Government would protect this money in the future, there was a need to safeguard the Council and the people who received the services by looking at that.
- There was definitely a need to take advice when planning any new building or adaptation to any of the Council's buildings or schools to ensure that they were suitable for individuals with autism, but it would suggest amending the wording of recommendation 3 as follows in order to reflect the fact that the Education Department had their own team who had specific expertise in terms of building schools, and also to clearly highlight the responsibilities:-

Recommend that the Scrutiny Committee, jointly with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, contacted the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to ensure input from the *Additional Learning Needs Service* for the development of any new school or adaptations to any school in the future in order to make it suitable for individuals with autism, e.g. quiet space, the ability to dim lighting etc. It would be beneficial to establish the principle of ensuring input from the Autism Team (*Children and Adults Department*) for any new development or adaptation to any other building.

The work of the Task and Finish Group was welcomed and it was noted that this was one example of what the Care Scrutiny Committee had done to ensure that appropriate attention was given to people with autism. Everyone was thanked for their work, especially those councillors who had insisted that appropriate attention was given to the autism field following receiving a complaint about the service some years ago.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that:-

- The recommendations of the Task and Finish Group would be very beneficial and that she agreed with the Social Services Statutory Director's observations and was happy to support in any way that she could.
- She would encourage the members to go on the Autism Bus and discussions had been held regarding hosting training beyond the Autism Bus on how to support staff in order to support families where a child was waiting for diagnosis or had been diagnosed.

The Cabinet Member for Education noted that:-

- She also felt very strongly about this important field and was happy to see the report and the recommendations and the genuine and clear effort to promote collaboration across teams and organisations, which was extremely important.
- She agreed with the observation in terms of referring an element of the work to the ALN Service.
- She welcomed the referral to avoid only allowing individuals with autism (i.e. without learning difficulties) to fall through the net because ensuring support to people who did not always highlight their autism was extremely important.
- She completely agreed with the need to consider the needs of children and young people with autism when planning schools and the need for quiet areas to ensure that individuals had space to retreat into in the middle of the hustle and bustle of a school.
- She was concerned about the waiting lists for diagnosis and concern for those young people where the school environment was too much for them and the lack of consistent support to their specific needs.
- She took advantage of every opportunity to convey the message to the Welsh Government regarding the staffing challenges and capacity challenges, especially in the educational psychologists field.
- She welcomed the report and the recommendations and was happy to collaborate in terms of the elements relevant to the education field.

It was enquired whether there was an intention to extend the autism training to all school staff, including catering and cleaning staff etc. In response, it was noted that the Cabinet Member for Education would ask the Department regarding that and expressed how important it was to extend the training to everyone because of sensitivity surrounding different foods and textures etc.

The Cabinet Member for Children and Families noted that:-

- There was a reference in the Council's Equality Plan to the needs of neurodivergent people and that there was an intention to look at employment and equality matters in the neurodiversity context and as a result of the Buckland Review on Autism Employment.
- She agreed with the observation regarding the lack of professional people, especially educational psychologists, to work in the field, and that letters had been sent to the Minister for Education asking to establish an Educational Psychology course in Bangor University as this would be very beneficial to the people of North Wales.

RESOLVED

- 1) To accept the findings of the Task and Finish Group.**
- 2) To ask the service:-**
 - **to undertake an audit of the situation regarding the professional training of staff who work in the field as a first step.**
 - **Then to consider setting a target for completing training with the aim to include it on the core training programme as follows:-**
 - a) staff who work or who come into contact with people with autism (by department and including schools) and**
 - b) raising awareness training amongst all Council staff.**
 - **to build on the training for staff in schools and surgeries regarding referring to the Neuro-Developmental Team in cases where they are not qualified.**

- to encourage all the Councillors to follow the Autism Awareness training e-module and attend open days across the County which enables everyone to experience the autism bus.
- 3) Recommend that the Scrutiny Committee, jointly with the Cabinet Member for Children and Families, would contact the Cabinet Member for Housing and Property to ensure input from the Additional Learning Needs Service for the development of any new school or adaptations to any school in the future to make it suitable for individuals with autism e.g. quiet space, the ability to dim lighting etc. It would be beneficial to establish the principle of ensuring input from the Autism Team (Children and Adults Department) for any new development or adaptation to any other building from the Council.
 - 4) Following concern that the plan is currently funded through a grant, the Care Scrutiny Committee asked for an update after a further 12 months of operating to ensure that progress continues, requesting the input of Education and Health once again.

The meeting commenced at 10.30am and concluded at 12.25pm.

Chair

MEETING	SCRUTINY PANEL
DATE	13.06.24
TITLE	DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS (DoLS)
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	COUNCIL'S ABILITY TO IMPLEMENT THE DEPRIVATION OF LIBERTY SAFEGUARDS
AUTHOR	MANNON EMYR TRAPPE
CABINET MEMBER	CYNG. DILWYN MORGAN

1. Why does it need to be scrutinised?

The ongoing challenge to comply with statutory duties relating to DoLS puts the Council in a position of risk of being financially penalised. There are some examples of local authorities having to pay compensation of between £3000-4000 for every month in which the individuals have been deprived of their liberty without authorisation.

2. What needs to be scrutinised?

There is a high risk that the Council will be penalised due to non-compliance with the DoLS arrangements with the number of days to complete a standard authorisation assessment exceeding statutory requirements. Although the waiting list has reduced through the efforts made to date, a large number of applications continue to be made.

Due to the lack of existing resources within the DoLS 'team', there does not appear to be any viable options to mitigate the risk and therefore there is a likelihood that the Council will inevitably accept the risk of being penalised due to non-compliance with Acts relating to DoLS.

3. Summary and Key Issues

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards is an amendment to the Mental Capacity Act 2005. Article 5 of the Human Rights Act states that everyone has the right to freedom and security. No one shall be deprived of his liberty [unless] in accordance with a procedure prescribed in law. " The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) is the procedure prescribed in law when it is necessary to deprive a resident or patient of their liberty when they do not have the ability (capacity) to agree to their care and treatment in order to keep them safe from harm. Conditions such as dementia or brain injury can lead to lack of capacity.

In March 2014, a Supreme Court ruling referred to the 'acid test' to see if a person is deprived of their liberty. This included two questions to ascertain that an individual does not have the capacity to agree to their care arrangements:

1. Is the person subject to ongoing control and supervision? and
2. Is the person free to leave? (permanently)

If an individual receives a high level of supervision, and is not free to leave the building permanently, then they are almost certainly deprived of their liberty. It is important to consider each case on its own merits, but in addition to the two 'acid test' questions, if one of the following features is present, an application for assessment is required for a deprivation of liberty authorisation:

- Regular use of a tranquilizer/medication to control behaviour
- Regular use of physical restraint to control behaviour
- The person concerned verbally or physically objected to the restriction and/or restraint
- Opposition from family and/or friends to the restriction or restraint
- The individual is confined to a specific part of the building in which they are cared for
- The location is unstable or unsustainable
- A potential challenge to the restriction and restraint being offered to the Court of Protection or the Ombudsman, or a letter of complaint or solicitor's letter
- The individual is already subject to an impending deprivation of liberty authorisation.

DoLS arrangements ensure that people who cannot agree to their care arrangements in a care home or hospital are protected if those arrangements deprive them of their freedom. Those arrangements are checked to ensure they are necessary and in the best interests of the individual.

The Mental Capacity Act allows some restrictions and restraint to be applied – but only if they are in the best interests of the individual and are necessary and proportionate.

Additional safeguards are needed if the restrictions and restraints used deprive a person of their liberty. These are known as Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards need to be used if the individual is deprived of their liberty in a care home or hospital. The Court of Protection may authorise deprivation of liberty in other locations.

The Local Authority has a duty to authorise applications to deprive an individual of their liberty in care and nursing homes but the duty sits with the Health Board for individuals receiving care in hospitals. Under the DoLS procedures, the authorising bodies are known as the Supervisory Body.

Care and nursing homes have a duty to apply for standard or emergency authorisation that gives them the authority to deprive an individual of their liberty.

As part of the process to protect individuals, it is imperative that the person has someone with legal powers to represent them. This is known as the representative of the relevant person and usually a family member or friend will take the role but it is possible to commission an advocate to do this role.

A request for authority will be sent to the supervisory body which must decide within 21 days for a standard authorisation and 7 days for an emergency authorisation if the person can be deprived of their liberty.

The supervisory body shall appoint a best interest assessor to assess whether the conditions are being met to allow the person to be deprived of their liberty under the safeguards. They include:

- the person is over the age of 18
- the individual suffers from a mental disorder (recognised by the Mental Health Act).
- The individual does not have the ability to decide for themselves about the restrictions offered to enable them to receive the necessary care and treatment.
- The restrictions would deprive a person of their liberty
- That the proposed restrictions are in the best interests of the individual.
- Consideration needs to be given to whether detention under the Mental Health Act is more suitable.
- No advance decision has been made by the individual to refuse treatment or support that would be overridden by any DoLS process.
- Does the individual have a Lasting Power of Attorney (LPA) for Health and Welfare and agree with a DoLS authorisation.

If none of the above conditions are met, an individual cannot be authorised to be deprived of his liberty. This may mean that the care home or hospital has to change their care and support plan to enable them to care for the person in a less restrictive way.

If all conditions are met, the supervisory body must authorise the DoLS and notify the person and the managing authority in writing. It may be authorised for a period of up to one year. If an individual needs to continue to be deprived of their liberty at the end of the period, it is necessary to apply for another authorisation.

The person does not have to be deprived of their liberty for the duration of the authorisation. The restrictions should end once they are no longer needed.

The Liberty Protections Safeguards (LPS) were introduced in the amended Mental Capacity Act 2019. The LPS were being introduced to replace DoLS and the new procedures were much more proportionate as they simplified the legal framework and the assessment process would take place as part of an individual's care planning.

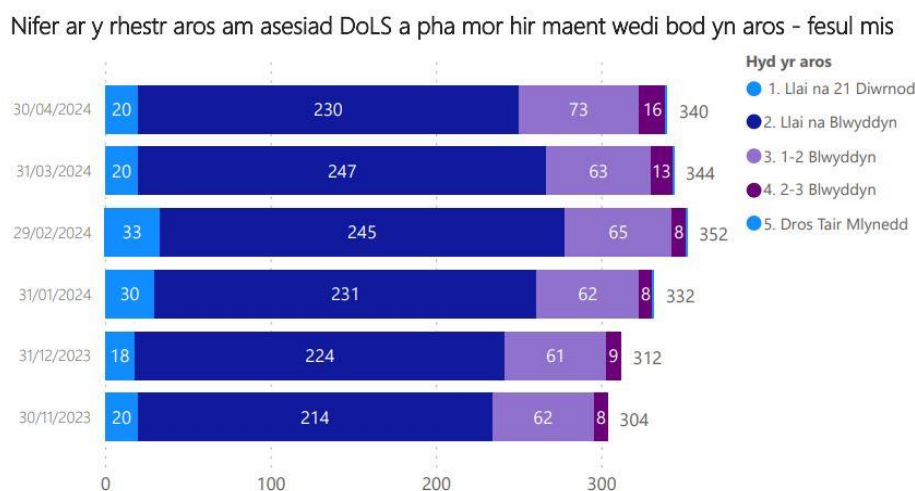
The LPS was due to become operational in October 2020. This was delayed due to the pressures arising from the Covid-19 situation, however, there was an announcement in June 2023 that the current Westminster Government would not introduce the changes. Welsh Government did not have the money to continue with

the plans independently of Westminster. This meant that we continued with the DoLS procedures.

4. Gwynedd's position

There is an expectation that all standard authorisation requests are completed within 21 days and emergency requests are completed within 7 days.

There is a waiting list in Gwynedd of 340 individuals who have been deprived of their liberty without authority. See the graph below which shows the wait time for an assessment. Note that 20 individuals have been waiting over 3 years for an assessment:



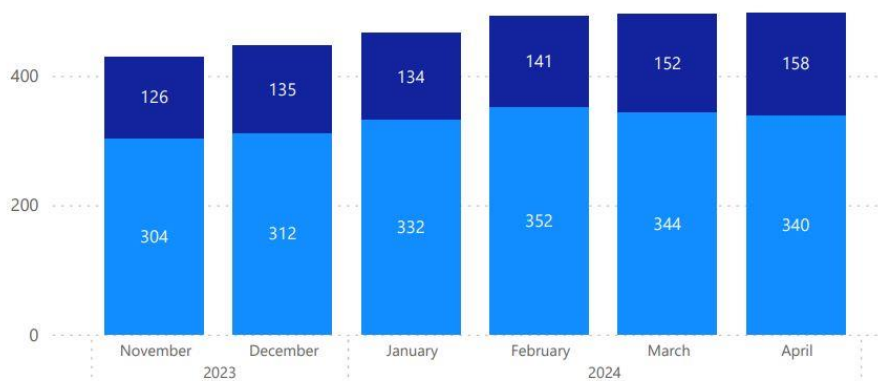
The Gwynedd Adult Department DOLS 'team' consists of one BIA who works two days a week and one Coordinator who works 4 days a week, we also receive administrative support. It is not possible for an administrator to manage all processes and therefore the vast majority of the Coordinator's time is spent managing the waiting list and prioritising and allocating cases. The time she has to complete assessments herself is limited.

A Best Interest Assessor (BIA) and a s.12 Approved Doctor are required to complete a DoLS assessment. 18 staff within the Adult Department are qualified as BIA's. Several attempts have been made to try to introduce an effective arrangement whereby each BIA would commit to making a number of DoLS assessments on an annual basis. But, because each assessment takes approximately 10 hours to complete, the BIA work that could contribute somewhat to dealing with the DoLS waiting list reduces the capacity of the services to carry out their day-to-day work and therefore creates waiting lists within the Services.

On average, 67 DoLS applications come to our attention on a monthly basis and 16 cases are authorised and the others are placed on the waiting list.

Nifer ar y rhestr aros o'i gymharu â'r nifer sydd ag awdurdodiad DoLS cyfredol - fesul mis

● Nifer Ar Rhestr Aros ● Wedi Awdurdodi



Over the past three years, the Department has received an annual grant of £114,00 from Welsh Government to try to meet the DoLS waiting list and to provide training. This money is used to commission an agency to supplement capacity to complete the best interest assessments and to pay the doctors for completing their capacity assessments. It is our intention to submit an annual bid for this grant.

DoLS is authorised for a period up to one year. There will be a further application at the end of the period for re-authorisation.

The table below sets out the position of DoLS other authorities across the region:

LOCAL AUTHORITY	POPULATION	DoLS WAITING LIST	NUMBER OF BEST INTEREST ASSESSORS
MÔN	68,900	91	2 + Co-ordinator
DINBYCH	96,000	236	2.5 + Co-ordinator
CONWY	114,800	248	3.8 + Co-ordinator
FFLINT	155,100	314	3 + Co-ordinator
WRECSAM	135,100	-----	-----
GWYNEDD	117,100	340	0.4 + Co-ordinator

6. Consultation

An Internal Audit was undertaken as part of the 2022/23 audit plan, to ensure that the Council's existing DoLS arrangements are fit for purpose. As part of the original audit we checked that adequate arrangements were in place for the new Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) as well as checking the existing arrangements for DoLS assessments. The audit was given a limited level of certainty, that is, although controls were in place, compliance with the controls needed to be improved and/or new controls introduced to reduce the risks posed to the Council.

In March 2024, there was a follow-up to the audit to ensure that the service had acted on the agreed actions to mitigate the associated risks.

The report concluded stating –

'To date there are no changes to the current regime. As it stands, there remains a high risk that the Council is being penalised due to non-compliance with the DoLS arrangements i.e. the number of days to complete a standard authorisation assessment is higher than is expected. Although the waiting list has reduced a large number of applications continue to be received on top of those awaiting assessment. The Assistant Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance, Mental Health and Community Safety expressed that there is an intention to bring this to the attention of the Care Scrutiny Committee (date to be confirmed) to confirm if the risk can be mitigated, as with the current resources, there appear to be no viable options and therefore a likelihood it will be inevitable to accept the risk of the Council being penalised due to non-compliance with legal Acts relating to DoLS'.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Have you included residents / service users? If not, when and how do you plan to consult them?

The DoLS process sets firm guidelines for the inclusion of individuals, families etc. This report relates specifically to the Council's arrangements to implement the DoLS process. There are no plans to consult about the efforts to try to improve the process.

Have you considered working together?

Each local authority as an Oversight Body has a specific duty to act within the DoLS statutory legislation and guidance. Good collaboration takes place with other authorities in sharing good practice and knowledge and with the Health Board at a local level.

What has been done or will be done to prevent problems arising or worsening in the future?

It is believed that the Department has made efforts to meet the challenges and continues to seek practical solutions. It cannot be predicted with any certainty what the situation of the future will be, however, with an ageing population, it would be logical to conclude that the pressure on the DoLS process and therefore the level of risk could increase further over the next few years.

How have you considered the long term and what will people's needs be in years to come?

This report is intended to weigh risks and therefore enable the Council to plan effectively for the future.

To ensure integration, have you considered the potential impact on other public bodies?

This is a specific issue for Gwynedd Council.

8. Impact on Equality, Welsh and Socio-Economic Duty Characteristics

As far as possible, the Coordinator will strive to ensure that the active offer is made when assessing individuals and when engaging with their families. There are several doctors who can also assess in the Welsh language but this often depends on the location of the person.

Due to the need to use an external specialist agency to complete the best interest assessments, the vast majority of assessors are conducted in the English language. Linguistic factors are considered when allocating the assessments.

9. Next steps

Around 100 of the individuals on the waiting list are individuals living in the community, in care and support accommodation. These cases are classed as community DoLS and require an application to the Court of Protection to deprive them of their liberty. The assessor does not need to be a BIA to make an application. These individuals receive support from the Learning Disabilities service. Discussions are underway within the Department to change arrangements to ensure that these assessments are being completed by the service as part of the annual review. This will help reduce the waiting list but we also recognise that it can have some impact on the capacity of the service as annual reviews will take longer to complete. The magnitude of the effect cannot be predicted here until the procedures have been implemented for a while.

Background Information

See the links below which provide more information about the Mental Capacity Act, 2005 and the DOLS process –

[Mental Capacity Act 2005 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk)

[Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards \(DoLS\) at a glance - SCIE](#)

[Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards \(ageuk.org.uk\)](https://www.ageuk.org.uk)

MEETING	Care Scrutiny Committee
DATE	13 June 2024
TITLE	Annual Strategic Safeguarding Panel Report 2023/24
REASON FOR SCRUTINY	This gives Members the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel for 2023/24
AUTHOR	Dylan Owen, Statutory Director of Social Services
CABINET MEMBER	Cllr. Menna Trenholme

Cyngor Gwynedd's main priority is to ensure that children and adults at risk are protected from abuse, neglect, radicalisation, slavery, domestic abuse, and exploitation. The Safeguarding Strategic Panel has been established to look at Safeguarding as a corporate, cross-departmental issue.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on what has been achieved by the Safeguarding Strategic Panel during the period April 2023 to March 2024.

1. Why does it need scrutiny?

This gives Members the opportunity to scrutinise the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel over the period. It is believed that the report summarises the work of the Panel accurately and fairly, also including references to reports or comments from external auditors on this work.

2. What exactly needs to be scrutinized?

- *Do Members have any comments on the content of the report?*
- *Are there any gaps in relation to safeguarding at a corporate level?*
- *Do the Members agree with the priorities for 2024/25?*

3. Summary and Key Issues

This is a factual document that reports on the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel over the year.

4. Background / Context

See the attached Report.

5. Consultation

Members of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel were consulted in order to draw up this report.

6. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

Ensuring that vulnerable people and children are safe is an essential and core part of enabling prosperity for future generations.

7. Impact on the Characteristics of Equality, the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Duty

The safeguarding work with adults looks specifically at the needs of individuals who have a disability or are vulnerable in some way.

8. Next Steps

It is intended to present the Report before the Full Council in July.

9. Background Information

The Report was presented to Cabinet on 11 June 2024.

Appendices

- Strategic Safeguarding Panel Annual Report 2023/24

STRATEGIC SAFEGUARDING PANEL REPORT

2023/24

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. The report gives an overview of the work of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel over the period April 2023 until March 2024 outlining the work undertaken by the Council themselves, and by the Council in partnership with others.

2. RESPONSIBILITIES AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 2.1. The aim of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel is to ensure that appropriate arrangements and procedures are in place at a corporate level across the Council to ensure the safety of children, young people and adults. Since 2017/18 the Panel is also responsible for overview of wider safeguarding issues across Gwynedd, such as Community Safety.
- 2.2. The Panel in turn is accountable to the Statutory Director of Social Services, who has the final accountability for safeguarding issues.
- 2.3. The Chair of the Panel is Councillor Menna Trenholme, Cabinet Member for Corporate Support. The new Terms of Reference is seen in **Appendix 1**, which includes a list of the Panel's current members. The Terms of Reference was updated during 2023/24.
- 2.4. A Safeguarding Operational Group supports the Strategic Panel to implement its priorities and to deal with practical issues in its remit. This is an internal group of officers, with the safeguarding champion of each department serving on it, to ensure whole-Council ownership of safeguarding issues. The new Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Operational Group is seen in **Appendix 2**. The Terms of Reference was updated during 2023/24.
- 2.5. Parts of the Council's performance in the safeguarding field are assessed in performance challenge meetings with the relevant Cabinet Members and by independent external inspectors as part of their work in assessing wider performance.

3. NEW SAFEGUARDING POLICY

- 3.1. During 2023, a review of the Council's Safeguarding Policy was undertaken, which states how we intend to fulfil our statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children and adults who are at risk in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act (2014). As the previous version was an adaptation of a Policy created in

2013, it was decided that it was timely to prepare a new policy instead of updating the document in accordance with the usual procedure.

3.2. There was a workshop in October 2023 led by the Statutory Director of Social Services. Representation of officers from across the Council attended, including the Assistant Head of Children, Safeguarding and Quality and the Senior Manager of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health.

3.3. Several changes were agreed in the workshop:

- The amended Safeguarding Policy reiterates that everyone has a safeguarding responsibility, but it also notes that each Councillor and staff member has specific responsibilities, as well as detailing how safeguarding should be reflected in contracting and commissioning arrangements.
- The expectations for Cyngor Gwynedd staff and Councillors to always act according to the principles noted in the policy was highlighted, whether during work hours or otherwise.
- There was ambiguity in the old version between safeguarding and protection, which has now been addressed. The Policy makes it clear that safeguarding is what is being discussed, and there are other procedures to follow for "protection".
- The amended Policy highlights the role of the Strategic Safeguarding Panel. It was decided to revise the Panel's Terms of Reference, and further attention was given to the membership to ensure that senior officers across the Council, as well as experts in the field of safeguarding Children and Adults, receive an invitation.
- As a result of this, the need for a Terms of Reference for the Safeguarding Operational Group was also reviewed, including a description of the role of the Designated Safeguarding Persons.
- Strengthen the reporting and monitoring arrangements. An Annual Report will be presented to the Cabinet annually. That Report will also be submitted to the Full Council annually.
- In terms of the Safeguarding Policies of individual departments, it was noted that the Council has one corporate Policy. However, the department could present their own specific policy if deemed necessary.

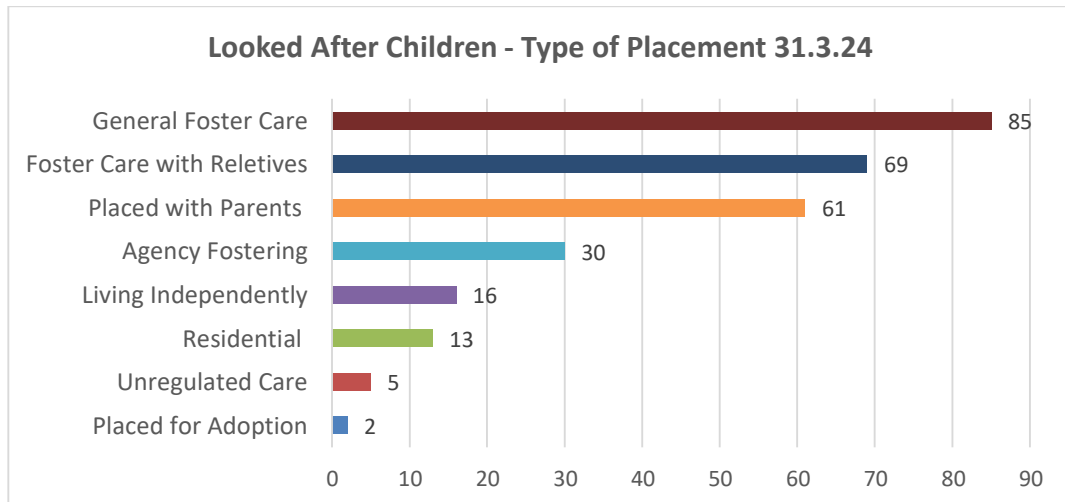
3.4. On [20 February 2024](#), the Cabinet approved the amended Policy, and it was presented to the Council in [March 2024](#), therefore the above changes have now been adopted. During 2024/25, further work will need to be done to promote the amended Policy amongst all Council staff.

4. PROGRESS AGAINST SAFEGUARDING ISSUES

4.1. Safeguarding Children

- 4.1.1. The number of referrals to children's services remained fairly consistent, with **7,230** referrals in 2023/24 compared with **7,175** last year. It is therefore suggested that the significant increase in the number of referrals seen during the COVID-19 period is stabilising, however, it is not returning to the pre-pandemic level of approximately 5,000 referrals a year.
- 4.1.2. The work pressure on the service was tremendous and the workforce was extremely busy supporting our children and families. It is noted that the cases seen were much more intensive and complex, and during 2024/25 further work is needed to understand the trends affecting the children's services.
- 4.1.3. There were also cases during the year of crime against children. Whilst legal proceedings and the courts are doing their work, it is important that, as social services, we consistently learn from these incidents through reviews and improve our services to ensure the safety of those who are most vulnerable in our community.
- 4.1.4. An increase of **248%** was seen in the work relating to Part 5 in 2023/24 compared to 2022/23. Part 5 relates to safeguarding concerns about practitioners and those in posts of trust, and these procedures identify arrangements for responding to safeguarding concerns about those whose work, whether employed or voluntary, brings them into contact with children or adults at risk.
- 4.1.5. **79%** (↓**5%**) of child protection reviews were held within the statutory timetable during the year. The percentage of risk assessments submitted to Case Conferences which were considered as exhibiting quality in decision making remained high at **99%** (↑**1%**).
- 4.1.6. At the end of March there were **281** children in care, the same number as last year. **37%** of the children who came into care during the year were under 5 years old, with most having been on the Child Protection Register as part of safeguarding processes before coming into care. Unaccompanied Asylum-Seeking Children represent **18%** of the children who came into care this year.
- 4.1.7. Of the total number of children in care, **65%** are in foster placements, **13** (5%) are in residential placements and **61** (**21%**) are placed with their parents. **2**

children were in adopted placements at the end of the period, with 16 young people living independently with support (**10** of them Asylum Seekers).



4.1.8. During 2023/24, unregistered placements arrangements (OWR) were used for **5** looked after young people.

4.1.9. Historically, our use of unregistered placements arrangements has been very rare, and for short periods of a few days or weeks at most, until a placement identified for the young person was ready. However, the situation nationally is much more serious by now, with the majority, if not all authorities having to ensure that such an arrangement is available due to the lack of registered placements across the United Kingdom. This is especially true for teenagers with intense and complex needs or who have experienced a placement breakdown because of challenging behaviour.

4.1.10. We strive to respond to the challenge by developing our own residential provision through the Small Group Homes Scheme, which is a priority in the Council Plan 2023-28. The first property was bought in March 2024, with the intention to open before the end of the year.

4.2. Safeguarding Adults

4.2.1. **719** Adults reports were received during 2023/24, which was similar to the figure in 2022/23 of **714**. However, on average, **94% (↓1%)** of the initial s.126 enquiries from safeguarding referrals have been completed within the statutory period of 7 days.

4.2.2. From the reports of Adults at Risk received, the risk was managed in **100% (↑2%)** of the cases.

- 4.2.3. Regular visits were held to monitor the county's care homes, with a small number of homes being considered under the 'Escalating Concerns' procedure regarding various reasons, most including lack of management, documentation problems and lack of overview. The Quality Assurance team is small, and therefore their ability to visit every service is restricted, especially domiciliary care services, therefore the work needs to be prioritised based on timely and appropriate information. Specific reports in that field regarding the quality of care and its provision are relied upon.
- 4.2.4. Concern remained about the DoLS (Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards) service during the year as some individuals were on the waiting list for up to 3 years. At the end of March 2023, **350** were waiting for a DoLS assessment. Whilst this type of experience and situation is shared with other counties, it is not good practice, and the service has to prioritise individuals according to their risk.
- 4.2.5. An additional grant was received from the Senedd to support the work and the money will be used to commission an agency to undertake many assessments. An internal audit report will be presented on the DoLS situation to the Scrutiny Committee in June 2024.

4.3. Education

- 4.3.1. Since April 2023, the Designated Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Education has visited **41** schools to check safeguarding arrangements, policies and procedures. Every school receives a quality check visit in a two-year cycle. Every school visited complies with the appropriate safeguarding arrangements, and this opinion was confirmed by Estyn visits. Some minor adjustments were suggested in a small number of schools to improve arrangements, but no school needed a follow-up visit.
- 4.3.2. An Annual Safeguarding Survey was held by the Designated Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Education in March 2024. It was noted that:
- **92% (↑5%)** of the "Main Safeguarding Persons" in schools had received specific safeguarding training during the past two years;
 - **84% (↑14%)** of Designated Governors in Gwynedd's schools had also received the relevant training for their role in the last two years;
 - **95% (↓2%)** of Gwynedd Schools had introduced Basic Safeguarding Training to all staff before the end of the Winter term;

- **100% (to remain the same)** of Gwynedd Schools noted that they were confident that all school staff and volunteers know what to do if a child should disclose information on abuse.
- 4.3.3. During the 2023/24 academic year, **10** level 2 training sessions and **9** standard training sessions have been offered to Gwynedd schools' staff. In addition, the Designated Lead officer has held training sessions for Governors, supply teachers, early years staff, the education modernisation team and Additional Learning Needs (ALN) staff. By now, the Designated Lead for safeguarding is qualified to train instructors in the Safeguarding field.
 - 4.3.4. Following a regional effort to review the reasonable Force Policy for schools, the example policy has been shared with schools for the Governors to adopt it.
 - 4.3.5. Following changes to the Looked After Children grants funding method by the Welsh Government, the Authority will now receive the funding directly. This therefore means that we can ensure that the money reaches the pupils in a timely manner and it will be possible to manage and evaluate the use of the money.
 - 4.3.6. At the end of March 2024, there was a total of **208** children receiving their education at home, through parents' choice. The main reasons for educating from home was the parent and pupil's anxiety and mental health problems. We managed to keep consistent contact with the majority of these families, with a small number refusing any contact (in accordance with their rights).

4.4. **Domestic Abuse**

- 4.4.1. There is good co-operation between the Council and the relevant organisations and efforts continue to promote the importance of reporting and identifying domestic abuse signs. Following an application prepared by officers from the Corporate Support Department, the Council received a 'White Ribbon' accreditation in May 2022. The accreditation ensures that organisations use a strategic approach to put an end to violence against women, by changing the culture and raising awareness. There is close co-operation between Community Safety and Corporate Support to monitor and report on the action plan.
- 4.4.2. There has been focus recently on sharing information regarding the 'Live Fear Free' Helpline and 'Clare's Law', which gives people the right to know whether their current partner or previous partner has any previous history of violence or abuse. Various messages have been published internally and externally, and

recent sessions have been arranged with the manager of the helpline to explain the support available to victims, but also to staff.

- 4.4.3. By now, the Domestic Abuse e-module is mandatory for all members of staff. It is vital that the workforce receives the training to ensure that the Council is doing everything within its ability to support individuals and to raise awareness. 'Ask and Act' training is also promoted to give staff confidence to help individuals experiencing violence, domestic abuse, or sexual violence. **55%** of the Council's staff (including Permanent, Casual and Fixed Term staff) have completed the training.
- 4.4.4. We must remember that not all Council staff members have easy access to the Council's IT systems, and this creates a barrier. The Corporate Support Department is looking at the induction programme to try and ensure that everyone completes the e-modules in their first days of starting their job.
- 4.4.5. The Community Safety Partnership works closely with the Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Regional Advisor (North Wales). This co-operation is vital for implementing the recommendations following Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR). The Partnership is responsible for commissioning, presenting and monitoring the action plan for DHRs in our area.
- 4.4.6. Over the last year, **1** DHR case has been commissioned and is now with the Home Office for a quality assurance process. Following approval from the Home Office, another report has been published in March and we are now in the process of implementing the recommendations.
- 4.4.7. A new arrangement is expected by the Welsh Government for Reports in September, by establishing a Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) system. This process would simplify the current arrangement by combining the current Adults Practice Review, Children's Practice Review, Mental Health Homicide Review, Domestic Homicide Review and Offensive Weapons Homicide Review processes.

4.5. Crime

- 4.5.1. There was a clear increase in the number of Thefts and Handling crimes in Gwynedd and across North Wales, compared with last year. This is mainly driven by an increase in Retail Offences (Shoplifting), which falls into the Thefts and Handling category. Stealing from shops in Gwynedd is **43.2%** higher this year compared with last year, with the Police seeing a general increase in North

Wales of over **35%**. The cost-of-living crisis is widely acknowledged as one of the biggest factors in the increased number of incidents. Retail Offences are now a priority for the police and substantial work is being done to get to grips with the increase experienced.

4.5.2. The Serious Violence Duty came into force in January 2023. The duty makes it a requirement for specified authorities to work together to prepare and implement a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence in the area. The final Strategy was published in January 2024. As part of this work, the Partnership has received funding for preventative and early intervention projects to reduce serious violence by children and young people. The Partnership remains a part of the Regional Steering Group to implement the Duty.

4.6. **Modern Slavery and Ethical Employment in Supply Chains Declaration**

4.6.1. The cases of Modern Slavery in the area relate mainly to drug misuse. Regionally, this matter is a priority within the new Serious Violence Strategy. The Police is raising awareness of Modern Slavery amongst authorities and businesses across the region.

4.6.2. During the year, a "pop-up" brothel was reported in the Bangor area, which included three women from Romania, each of them having entered the country through Ireland claiming that they were on holiday. There is suspicion that "pop-up" brothels are more common than the few reports suggest, and officers have received additional awareness training to identify the signs. North Wales Police also hold regular visits with hotels and holiday sites and provide literature in sexual health clinics and surgeries.

4.7. **Counter Terrorism**

4.7.1. Cyngor Gwynedd holds a Public Places Group: Preparedness to Protect and Safeguard, and is also a member of the equivalent regional groups. The purpose of the Group is to:

- Collaborate with organisations to provide effective and efficient protective security arrangements in Gwynedd;
- Provide an integrated security approach, that corresponds with the national standards and guidelines, to identify and provide proportionate actions to keep communities safe in Gwynedd;
- Improve and support the preparedness to safeguard and protect in accessible public locations in Gwynedd.

4.8. Prevent

4.8.1. The Home Office has created a new training for Prevent, and the e-module is mandatory for the whole workforce by now. In Gwynedd, the e-learning portal is used to track the numbers that complete the training, which means that it is possible to give specific attention to encourage staff in some Departments or fields. The other North Wales authorities have reported that gathering data was an obstacle for them as they, differently to Gwynedd, use the external link.

4.8.2. Following the success of the three benchmarks last year, during 2023/24 the Community Safety Partnership will concentrate on:

- 1) Create a Training Plan to increase the number that take up the Prevent training
- 2) Work with regional partners to develop a Prevent Communication and Engagement Plan
- 3) Develop a Venue Hire Policy for the Council and its partners

4.9. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS)

4.9.1. The Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is responsible for processing criminal checks. The purpose of DBS checks is to help employers make safer recruiting and licensing decisions, although the check is only one part of the recruitment process. When the check has been processed and completed by the DBS, the applicant will receive a DBS certificate.

4.9.2. The Operational Group has undertaken some significant work to check, challenge and revisit the corporate procedure in respect of the DBS. As a result, Departments now have more ownership of the DBS arrangements, and this has transformed how the Operational Group reports on its compliance with departmental disclosures.

5. PRACTICE REVIEWS

5.1. Wales has developed a Child Practice Review (CPR) framework to improve the culture of learning lessons from child protection cases. 'Brief' or 'extended' reviews exist depending on the circumstances of the child in question. They are undertaken by the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Children Board with the aim of learning lessons to be shared to try and avoid such cases in the future.

5.2. The North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board also conduct Adults Practice Reviews, in accordance with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The purpose of these Reviews is to identify the lessons to be learnt from complex and difficult Adult Safeguarding cases, and to implement changes to improve services as a result of these lessons.

6. WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

6.1. Although the Strategic Safeguarding Panel focuses on corporate responsibilities regarding safeguarding issues within Gwynedd, it also receives information and guidance via Regional Safeguarding Boards for Safeguarding Vulnerable Children and Adults working across north Wales. These are Statutory Boards with cross-agency membership and specific statutory and legal responsibilities. The Council is a member of these Boards and contributes to implementing their plans. Further information regarding the work of the Boards can be seen here - <https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/>

6.2. The Gwynedd and Anglesey Community Safety Partnership has also shown that working in partnership across county borders is proving to be a success. The Partnership's work in areas such as Atal/Prevent is essential if the Panel is to ensure the quality of safeguarding arrangements in Gwynedd.

6.3. Several organisations have a statutory duty to be part of the partnership, including Local Authorities, Police, Probation Services, Fire and Rescue Service and the Health Board. Information on all aspects of community safety that the Council deal with is available on our [website](#).

7. THE FUTURE

7.1. In terms of the Panel's priorities for the coming year, it is intended to concentrate on the following priorities:

- Further work will be needed to promote the amended Safeguarding Policy amongst all Council staff.
- Ensure that the Designated Persons understand their role and take it seriously.
- Consider introducing a data dashboard to reflect the work in the safeguarding field.
- Following a very public court case regarding a secondary school headteacher in Gwynedd, it is likely that a Child Practice Review will be needed according to statutory guidelines led by the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board. The Gwynedd Strategic Safeguarding Panel will keep a close eye on this and consider the lessons to be learned from the case.

APPENDICE

Safeguarding Children and Adults Strategic Panel Terms of Reference

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN AND ADULTS STRATEGIC PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Safeguarding children and adults is a priority for Cyngor Gwynedd. To ensure that suitable and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in force, the Statutory Director of Social Services convenes a Strategic Panel for Safeguarding Children and Adults, which represents Members and senior managers from all the Council's departments.
- 1.2. The Safeguarding Children and Adults Strategic Panel is expected to lead and advise on the safeguarding requirements contained in paragraphs 64-69 of Part 8 of the Social Services and Well-being Wales Act (2014).
- 1.3. All agencies also need to establish internal arrangements for ensuring that the counter-terrorism agenda, prevention of radicalisation, and community safety issues, receive the appropriate attention.
- 1.4. For the purpose of this Panel, the term 'safeguarding' applies to adults, children and young people and means preventing them from being abused or neglected and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers. Safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of individuals, is a broader term than 'protecting' individuals from being abused. It is about individuals and services recognising the risk factors and taking steps to prevent vulnerable individuals from being abused. Protection is part of the safeguarding and promoting well-being work. It refers to the activity of protecting children, young people and adults who suffer or are at risk of suffering significant harm because of abuse or neglect.

2. SAFEGUARDING STRATEGIC PANEL TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1. The aim of the Panel is to give assurance to Members and to the Statutory Director of Social Services, as the senior officer within the Council who has full final responsibility for safeguarding children, young people, and adults, that suitable arrangements and procedures are in place at a corporate level to ensure the safeguarding of children, young people and adults. The Panel will fulfil 3 statutory duties, namely:
 - 2.1.1. general corporate duty to safeguard,
 - 2.1.2. Social Services statutory duty
 - 2.1.3. And the Community safety duty.
- 2.2. To meet these duties, the Panel is expected to:
 - 2.2.1. Identify any gaps in relation to safeguarding at corporate level and approve work programs to respond to these. Collaborate with the Safeguarding Operational Group to respond to any identified gaps.
 - 2.2.2. Identify lessons to be learned, at a corporate level, from reviews of serious cases and from other relevant reviews and ensure action on these. (Adult Practice Review, Child Practice Review and Domestic Homicide Review).

- 2.2.3. Identify lessons to be learned from external and internal audits and ensure action on these.
- 2.2.4. Inform relevant lead members of key issues/developments in the field of safeguarding children, young people, and vulnerable adults.
- 2.2.5. Be a vehicle to raise the awareness of all members of the Council's staff and all elected members of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.
- 2.2.6. Be a vehicle to ensure that staff members and elected members receive suitable training (for example the two mandatory VAWDASV and Prevention) in a timely manner, and monitor attendance at this training.
- 2.2.7. Ensure inter-departmental work correlation and effective communication within the Council in the field of safeguarding.
- 2.2.8. Ensure inter-departmental work correlation and effective communication within the Council in the field of safeguarding.
- 2.2.9. Ensure an overview of wider Safeguarding issues including counter-terrorism procedures, modern slavery, domestic violence, and community safety.

3. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

- 3.1. The Safeguarding Strategic Panel will have a responsibility to monitor and challenge performance relating to the Safeguarding field.

4. CHAIRSHIP

- 4.1. The Panel shall appoint a Chair and a Vice-Chair every two years.

5. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

- 5.1. The Panel will meet three times per year.

6. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

- 6.1. The Safeguarding Strategic Panel is accountable to Cabinet. An Annual Report will be submitted to Cabinet on an annual basis. The Annual Report will also be submitted to the Full Council on an annual basis.
- 6.2. Business management [i.e. formulating a work programme, meetings programme, 'secretariat', central communication point, organising additional professional advice (if necessary)] is the responsibility of the Corporate Support Department.

7. MEMBERSHIP

Title
Children and Supporting Families Cabinet Member
Adult, Health, and Wellbeing Cabinet Member
Education Cabinet Member
Cabinet Member with responsibility for Community Safety
Corporate Support Cabinet Member
Chief Executive
Corporate Director
Statutory Director of Social Services
Head of Department for Children and Family Support
Head of Education
Head of Adults, Health, and Wellbeing
Head of Corporate Support
Chair of the Operational Safeguarding Group
Head of Legal Service
Anglesey and Gwynedd Safety Partnership Manager
Senior Child Protection and Quality and Family Support Manager
Senior Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Mental Health Manager

APPENDICE

Safeguarding Adults and Children Operational Group Terms of Reference

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Safeguarding children and adults is a priority for Cyngor Gwynedd. To ensure that suitable and appropriate safeguarding procedures are in force, the Statutory Director of Social Services convenes a Strategic Panel for Safeguarding Children and Adults, which represents Members and senior managers from all the Council's departments.
- 1.2. The Safeguarding Operational Group reports to, and works for, the Safeguarding Strategic Panel.
- 1.3. For the purpose of this Panel, the term 'safeguarding' applies to adults, children and young people and means preventing them from being abused or neglected and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers. Safeguarding, and promoting the welfare of individuals, is a broader term than 'protecting' individuals from being abused. It is about individuals and services recognising the risk factors and taking steps to prevent vulnerable individuals from being abused. Protection is part of the safeguarding and promoting well-being work. It refers to the activity of protecting children, young people and adults who suffer or are at risk of suffering significant harm because of abuse or neglect.

2. OPERATIONAL SAFEGUARDING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

- 2.1. The Operational Safeguarding Group operates in accordance with the guidance and requirements of the Safeguarding Strategic Panel.
- 2.2. The Operational Safeguarding Group will monitor the performance across the services from a child and adult safeguarding perspective. The Group will report to the Safeguarding Strategic Panel at each meeting, clearly outlining any concerns or obstacles. The Panel will work together with the Group to respond to any identified gaps.
- 2.3. The Operational Safeguarding Group will ensure:
 - A clear understanding in the Council's workplace, and those who work on behalf of the Council, of the policies and guidelines for protecting children and adults at risk of harm and/or abuse.
 - That each department in the Council has its own safeguarding procedures documented and used appropriately, and compatible with the Council's Safeguarding Policy.
 - Staff and volunteers receive appropriate and timely safeguarding information and training.
 - Safer recruitment takes place and that the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) is used consistently and effectively.
- 2.4. The Designated Safeguarding Officers will undertake the role of raising awareness within their departments.

3. CHAIRSHIP

- 3.1. The Group shall appoint a Chair and a Vice-Chair every two years

4. FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

4.1. The Group will meet four times per year.

5. GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

5.1. The Operational Safeguarding Group reports to the Safeguarding Strategic Panel.

5.2. Business management [i.e. drawing up a work programme, meeting agenda, 'secretariat', central communication point, organising additional professional advice if necessary]] is the responsibility of the Corporate Support Department.

6. MEMBERSHIP

6.1. The membership of the Operational Group is Designated Officers for the field of safeguarding children and adults within each Council Department.

6.2. A list of Designated Safeguarding Officer for each Department can be found on the staff self-service (Hunanwasanaeth).

MEETING	Care Scrutiny Committee
DATE	13 June, 2024
TITLE	Developing a residential provision in a small group for looked after children
REASON TO SCRUTINISE	The Council has earmarked this as a priority project in the Council Plan
AUTHOR	Aled Gibbard
CABINET MEMBER	Councillor Elin Walker Jones

1. Why does it need scrutiny?

1.1 Developing a residential provision for looked-after children in small group homes needs to be scrutinised as the project is part of the Council's Plan (A Caring Gwynedd). By scrutinising the development of the project it looks at where the project is in terms of planned pledges for the 23/24 and 24/25 financial years.

2. What exactly needs scrutiny?

2.1 There are three questions that need to be scrutinised with the Small Group Homes Scheme which are:-

1. What exactly will the provision be and how many children will benefit from the scheme?
2. Is the project adhering to the timetable and is it within budget?
3. Does it mean that it will be possible to use fewer out-of-county care providers in the future?

3. Summary of the Key Matters

3.1 This report looks at the background of the scheme to answer the three questions above that need to be scrutinised with the Small Group Homes Scheme. The report will look at the risks for completing the scheme, the fiscal situation will answer the third question about using fewer out-of-county providers via this scheme. It will provide information on what has already been achieved in year 1 of the scheme and what we have planned for the future as well as similar developments taking place regionally and nationally. Although no public consultation for the scheme was necessary, we as a department have been involved in the area's public meeting to answer questions that arose from individuals living in Morfa Bychan. The placement of two looked-after children in each house will respond to questions raised in the report with the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, as well as equality, the Welsh language and the Socio-Economic Duty as Gwynedd children are allowed to stay as close to their community as possible. Also receiving a service and accommodation through the medium of Welsh, the first language of many looked-after children in Gwynedd. To finish we will look at the next steps and what has been planned with the house that has already been purchased in Morfa

Bychan. We hope that soon we can open our doors to two more houses in areas across the County. This scheme improves the experiences of the children in the Council's care that have intensive and complex needs who currently have to leave the county or Wales in order to receive suitable provision.

4. Background / Context

- 4.1.1 Developing a residential provision in a small group for looked-after children is part of the Council's plan and is by now in its second year. The overview for the project is to improve the experiences of Council looked-after children who have intensive and complex needs, who currently must leave the county or Wales to obtain suitable provision. We will develop registered residential homes for small groups of up to two children in one home, which will allow them to receive care in Gwynedd, attend local schools, and fully participate in the life of their communities. All milestones for year 1 of the scheme have been delivered with one milestone continuing into the second year, namely developing a Statement of Purpose and policies for the development as the unit will need to register with Care Inspectorate Wales. This is because during Quarter 4 the first house for the Scheme was purchased in Morfa Bychan and it is now that the process of registration is taking place.
- 4.1.2 The reason why the Council has put in place a scheme to provide a residential home for small groups is to make sure that the children of Gwynedd can live in Gwynedd, stay in their community and receive a Welsh-medium education. It is also in line with what the Welsh Government is trying to implement which is the removal of profits from the care of looked-after children. This will bring the Department's out-of-county overspend, due to unregulated locations, down significantly and make sure that we provide care through Cyngor Gwynedd.

4.2 Risks

- 4.2.1 We have until the end of 2027 to complete the project for three registered residential homes. Although this seems a long way off there are still risks as part of the scheme. A risk has been identified namely a failure to identify a suitable second building that complies with the requirements of Care Inspectorate Wales, or with the potential to comply following modifications. There is also a risk that the time-schedule of having the first child in the first house by September 2024 will fail due to other factors e.g. Care Inspectorate Wales registration takes longer than expected. The other risk identified is the appointment of staff and if it is not possible to appoint the first time then a timetable to train staff will take longer than expected.

4.3 The Financial Situation

- 4.3.1 The scheme is being funded through RIF/HCF grant monies and 2 million has been earmarked for the scheme. It is hoped that this will fund at least three houses for small group home provision in different areas within the County namely Meirionnydd, Arfon and Dwyfor. But it will be dependent on the housing market in the Meirionnydd and Arfon area to complete the scheme.
- 4.3.2 With the first house in Morfa Bychan, a report has gone to Cabinet to fund the jobs at this house and there is also a means to staff the second house. For the 24-25

financial year, HCF funding can fund jobs but to make the jobs permanent the money needs to be transferred from an out-county pot for the project. It will work because they will bring looked-after children from Gwynedd back to the County by placing them in one of the residential homes. For us to be able to register the house with Care Inspectorate Wales we will need work to be done on the house such as fire doors and a sprinkler system. We are currently working with the Housing and Property Department to do this with a timetable to open the doors of the residential home in September 2024.

4.4 Regional and National Developments

4.4.1 The scheme of small group residential homes has also been identified in counties across North Wales and more widely. We have already been in discussions with Anglesey and Conwy Councils and have been sharing ideas that there is value in sharing training for staff, if possible.

4.5 What has been achieved - Year 1 of the scheme

4.5.1 When the scheme commenced goals had to be set for the first year and progress on these action points was reported at Performance Challenge meetings over the year. Below are the achievement goals for Year one of the scheme:-

- Appointment of Project Manager
- Complete a Business Case for establishing a SGH
- Submit a Capital Bid for buying / adapting properties
- Buy / adapt properties.
- Develop a Statement of Purpose and policies for the development as they will be required to register the unit with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

4.5.2 For year one, all of the above have been delivered with the first property purchased in March 2024. A registration application is also nearly complete to be sent to Care Inspectorate Wales.

4.6 Future Priorities

4.6.1 As a department we have also made future priorities for the plan by looking at what needs to be done in the second year and to set goals for the following years.

4.6.2 The priorities we have stated for the second year are:-

- Appoint a Manager for the first house at Morfa Bychan.
- Make adaptations to the first house for the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration
- Registration with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) for the first house - working towards June 2024 up to the start of September 2024
- Opening the doors of the first house in Morfa Bychan in September 2024 and have the first child placed there

- Quarter 1 24/25 – examination of the housing market in 3 specific areas namely Arfon (Bangor), Pwllheli and Meirionnydd
- End of quarter 2 24/25 – identify the second house
- End of quarter 3 24/25 – purchase the second house
- Identify a third house to buy or submit a planning application for a piece of land in the Arfon Area already owned by the Council.

4.6.3 Following a report that received attention by the Cabinet on 14 May, we are now going to move on to advertising a post for the first house in Morfa Bychan. We are also in discussions with the Property Department to make modifications to the house to bring it up to the registration requirements of Care Inspectorate Wales. We hope that the first child will be in the house by the end of September, if everything adheres to the recorded deadlines. We have also organised a children's residential home staff recruitment event on the 26 June from 3pm-7pm. at the Royal Sportsman's Hotel in Porthmadog to attract individuals to apply for the position of deputy manager and residential workers for the home in Morfa Bychan.

5. Consultation

- 5.1 When the house in Morfa Bychan was purchased as the first house as part of the small homes group scheme there was a public meeting in Morfa Bychan to discuss the issue. The Assistant Head of Resources Aled Gibbard and Councillor Elin Walker-Jones attended to consult with residents living in Morfa Bychan.
- 5.2 At the end of the meeting, everyone who attended felt content with the scheme and welcomed it and were pleased to see young people involved in the local community. Communication has continued following the public meeting with an individual who opposes the development and questions the wisdom of locating it in Morfa Bychan. However, it is important to look at the accessibility factors of the development from where the house is located as well as the condition of the building. As well as looking at the cost to renovate the building to meet Care Inspectorate Wales' registration requirements. The house is located close to several public facilities located in Morfa Bychan and Porthmadog and education can be accessed close by.
- 5.3 No developmental planning permission is required for the scheme. There was no need to arrange a public consultation meeting regarding the development, but Aled and Councillor Elin Walker-Jones felt it was important to attend the area's public meeting to let residents know what was going on in Morfa Bychan and to answer questions about the scheme.
- 5.4 As the scheme is part of the Council's Plan, updates on the development is being reported at the Children and Supporting Families Department Performance Challenge and Support meetings. A consultation with Morfa Bychan residents had also been undertaken before submitting the report to Cabinet.

6. The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015

6.1 Have you **included** residents / service users? If not, when and how do you plan to consult with them?

6.1.1 Morfa Bychan residents have already been consulted through a formal meeting in the area. When a decision is made regarding which individuals will be suitable for this type of provision then they will also consult with the young people.

6.2 Have you considered **working together**?

6.2.1 Although it is Cyngor Gwynedd that is leading the scheme because it owns the small residential houses, Health is involved in the discussions to make sure they are aware of the scheme. A Looked-after Child Nurse for the area has been invited to see the house and we are working with the Education Department and the local Secondary School to assist young people who want to live in the house to settle in their new area.

6.3 What has been done or will be done to **prevent** problems arising or worsening in the future?

6.3.1 We are seeking a second and third house around the County to prevent children and young people having to move out of Gwynedd for residential care or being placed in unregulated settings.

6.4 How have you considered the **long-term** and what will people's needs be in years to come?

6.4.1 Having looked on statistics within the Department in the last 5 years' service demand has increased from the Children's Department and although we as a Department try our best to keep families together in line with the strategy there are times when it is impossible due to safeguarding issues and therefore children come into care. By prioritising residential provision for young people this then reduces the pressure on the department to have to place children / young children away from their community and in unregulated settings and placement with for-profit providers.

6.5 To ensure **integration**, have you considered the potential impact on other public bodies?

6.5.1 Yes, we have discussed this with the relevant public bodies and the scheme if it applies to them.

7 Impact on the Equality Characteristics, Welsh Language and Socio-economic Impact

7.1 The main purpose of residential provision development is to keep looked-after children in Gwynedd as close to their home area as possible. In this way they get to live in a Welsh area and also get education and social opportunities through the Welsh language.

8. Next Steps

8.1 The next steps for the future are to appoint staff for the house in Morfa Bychan, obtain registration from Care Inspectorate Wales, train staff and be able to embark on looking at the second and third houses by the end of the financial year. If everything keeps within the time schedule it is hoped that our residential home will be opened as a small group home scheme development by the end of September 2024.

9. Background information

9.1 The development of residential provision for children in small group care has already been discussed at the following meetings:-

17.05.2023 - Corporate Parent Panel

20.06.2023 - Leadership Team

14.05.2024 – Cabinet - [Agenda for The Cabinet on Tuesday, 14 March, 2024, 1.00pm. \(gov.wales\)](#)



MEETING	CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	13 June 2024
TITLE	Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care Scrutiny Group
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To elect a member to represent the Scrutiny Committee on the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care Scrutiny Group
AUTHOR	Llywela Haf Owain, Senior Language & Scrutiny Advisor

1. In 2015, the Mid Wales Healthcare Collaborative Group was established in response to the Mid Wales Healthcare Study, which aimed to ensure the effective delivery of healthcare services to the population of Mid Wales. Following recognition by the Welsh Government that Mid Wales was a designated planning area, the Mid Wales Healthcare Collaborative Group was transformed to form the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care in March 2018.

2. The Strategic Aims of the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care align with the Welsh Government's long-term plan for the future of health and social care in Wales, 'A Healthier Wales: Our Plan for Health and Social Care'. The Joint Committee vision is that:

"The population of Mid Wales is provided with equitable access to safe, sustainable and high-quality integrated health and care services."

3. The Joint Committee's remit covers Powys, Ceredigion and Meirionnydd.

4. The membership of the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care includes the Chief Executives of partner healthcare organisations, namely:
 - Hywel Dda University Health Board
 - Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board
 - Powys Teaching Health Board
 - Welsh Ambulance Service NHS Trust

5. Along with representatives from Local Authorities. Gwynedd's representatives on the Joint Committee are the Cabinet Member for Adults, Health and Well-being and the Statutory Director of Social Services.

6. The role of the Scrutiny Group is to look at the provision of health and care services in Mid Wales and issues affecting people living in the relevant areas of the counties of Ceredigion, Gwynedd and Powys.

7. It is an opportunity for Councillors from the three counties to scrutinise the provision of health and care services, ask questions about how decisions are made, consider whether service improvements can be made and make recommendations to this effect.
8. Scrutiny plays a vital role in promoting accountability, efficiency and effectiveness in the decision-making process.
9. At the Care Scrutiny Committee meeting on 7 July 2022, Councillors Linda Ann Jones, Eryl Jones-Williams and John Pughe were nominated to represent the committee on the Scrutiny Group.
10. Councillor Eryl Jones-Williams has stated that he wishes to stand down from the Scrutiny Group.
11. Scrutiny Group members are invited to attend Joint Committee meetings. Joint Committee meetings are held twice a year:
 - Annual Meeting in April with its main purpose being a planning meeting for the Joint Committee's future workplan.
 - Annual Conference in November which is an opportunity to showcase the work of the Joint Committee and engage with partners and members of the public on its work.
12. The role of the members of the Scrutiny Group in the meetings of the Joint Committee is to observe and to ask questions under the item 'Listening to you'. If any Member wishes to receive more information in the form of a report or presentation following a meeting of the Joint Committee, a meeting of the Scrutiny Group will be arranged and held at that time.
13. **The Care Scrutiny Committee is asked to elect a member to represent the Committee on the Mid Wales Joint Committee for Health and Care Scrutiny Group.**



MEETING	CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	13 June 2024
TITLE	Care Scrutiny Committee Forward Programme 2024/25
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	Present the Committee's draft work programme for 2024/25 for adoption
AUTHOR	Llywela Haf Owain, Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor

1. During the Committee's annual workshop on 30 April 2024 possible items to scrutinise during 2024/25 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. The main priorities that emerged from the responses to the question, were:
 1. Gwynedd Mental Health Service
 - = Domiciliary Care Service
 - = Developing a small group residential provision for looked after children
 - = Housing Action Plan
 2. Additional scrutiny meeting or specific task group to scrutinise the social housing field only
3. Members discussed the top priorities as well as what else from the list should be scrutinised during 2024/25. 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. 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. 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 item 'Care Academy' was identified as a reserve item.
7. 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.
8. See attached as an appendix to the report the Committee's draft work programme.
9. **The Care Scrutiny Committee is asked to adopt the work programme for 2024/25.**

CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE DRAFT FORWARD PROGRAMME 2024/25

Date	Items	Reason for scrutiny
13/6/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Council's capacity to implement the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) Arrangements • Strategic Safeguarding Panel's Annual Report 2023/24 • Developing a small group residential provision for looked after children 	A matter on the risk register
		Assurance in terms of corporate safeguarding arrangements
		Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
26/9/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Domiciliary Care Service • Dementia provision and transport for those with dementia to attend day care • Annual Report 2023-24 - Complaints, Enquiries and Expressions of Gratitude - Children and Supporting Families and the Adults, Health and Well-being Departments 	Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
		Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
		Assurance in terms of the arrangements to deal with complaints in the care work field
21/11/24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A specific meeting to scrutinise the social housing field only 	Council Plan 2023-28 - A Homely Gwynedd
30/1/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Health – concern about GP's, mental health, collaborative relationship between health, care and ambulance service 	Concern in the community and the impact on residents
3/4/25	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gwynedd Mental Health Service • Progress Report on the Autism Team's Work Programme • Housing Action Plan 	Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
		Recommendation deriving from the work of a Task and Finish Group / Council Plan 2023-28 - A Caring Gwynedd
		Council Plan 2023-28 - A Homely Gwynedd

MEETING	CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	13 June 2024
TITLE	Adults, Health and Well-being & Children and Supporting Families Performance Challenge Meetings
PURPOSE OF THE REPORT	To nominate representatives to attend the Adults, Health and Well-being Department & Children and Supporting Families Department performance challenge meetings
AUTHOR	Llywela Haf Owain, Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor

1. The performance challenge meetings are held every other month (apart from April and August), per work field of the Council's departments. An update on the priority projects included in the Council Plan, the day-to-day performance measures as well as the risk register are considered.
2. An invitation is extended for representatives of the scrutiny committees to attend the meetings twice a year.
3. The Scrutiny Committees representatives are invited in order to:
 - Have a flavour of what grasp the individual departments have of performance matters.
 - Identify, if required, any performance matters which could merit the attention of a formal scrutiny committee in due course.
4. Representatives are expected to report back to the first informal meeting of the relevant scrutiny committee following these meetings.
5. Councillor Sasha Williams has stepped down from being a member of the committee. She represented the committee in meetings to challenge the performance of the Adults, Health and Well-being Department and the Children and Supporting Families Department. Therefore, it is necessary to nominate members to represent the committee in her place at these meetings.
6. The other members who represent the committee in these meetings are:
 - Councillor Meryl Roberts in Adults, Health and Well-being Department performance challenge meetings.
 - Councillor Gwynfor Owen in Children and Supporting Families Department performance challenge meetings.
7. **The Care Scrutiny Committee is asked to nominate members to represent the committee at the Adults, Health and Well-being Department & Children and Supporting Families Department performance challenge meetings.**