
CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 29/01/26

Present:

Councillors: Menna Baines, Anwen J. Davies, Eryl Jones-Williams, Beth Lawton, Gareth Coj Parry, Rheinallt Puw, Angela Russell, Gwynfor Owen, Meryl Roberts, Einir Wyn Williams, Jina Gwyrfai, Sian Williams, Berwyn Parry Jones, Elin Walker Jones and Geraint Wyn Parry

Officers present:

Llywela Haf Owain (Senior Language and Scrutiny Advisor) and Courtney Leigh Jones (Civic and Democracy Services Officer).

Present for item 5:

Councillor Menna Trenholme (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families), Aled Gibbard (Assistant Head of Children and Supporting Families), Sharron Williams Carter (Assistant Head of Children and Supporting Families), Gwenan Medi Hughes (Trobwynt Manager) Sue Layton, (Family Support Team Leader), Caren Brown (Around the Family Team Manager).

Present for item 6:

Councillor Menna Trenholme (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Family Support), Stephen Wood (Gwynedd and Anglesey Youth Justice Service Manager).

Present for item 7:

Councillor Menna Trenholme (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families), Aled Gibbard (Assistant Head of Children and Supporting Families).

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Councillor Linda Morgan.

2. DECLARATION OF PERSONAL INTEREST

No declarations of personal interest were received.

3. URGENT MATTERS

4. MINUTES

The Chair signed the minutes of the previous meeting of this committee held on 18 December 2025, as a true record.

5. KEEPING FAMILIES TOGETHER STRATEGY

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families. It was explained that this work focused on providing timely and specific support to assist families and keep them together and safe. It was noted that the Department's strategy was based on a clear principle, to keep families together before they reach a crisis and to prevent children and young people from entering care. It was noted that the main aim of the Department was to keep children and young people with their families if it was safe to do so and to reduce the need for statutory intervention. It was noted that the strategy brought together a range of preventive services within the Children and Supporting Families Department, including:

- Families first
- Team Around the Family
- Family Support Team
- Trobwynt
- Derwen
- Hafan y Sêr

It was emphasised that multi-agency collaboration was at the heart of this approach with partners such as health, education, housing and the third sector contributing to supporting families. The report highlighted the increasing demand for these services, the increasing complexity of family needs and the pressure on resources, including reliance on grant funding. Attention was drawn to the content which demonstrated that this preventative work was making a positive difference, in helping to establish families and reduce the need for children to enter care. It was noted that the community hubs also help promote information for the families.

The members gave thanks for the report and praised the work that was proceeding in the Department by protecting Gwynedd's most vulnerable families. It was recognised that the service was complex and multi-layered and the dedication of staff to supporting and safeguarding the county's children and young people was praised.

During the discussion, the following comments and questions arose;

In reference to section 4.16 of the report, it was asked whether the numbers of children and young people awaiting an ASD/ADHD assessment also included autism assessments. In response, it was confirmed that the number of children and young people referred to in the report included a wide range of children and young people who are neurodivergent, including those with autism, dyspraxia, dyslexia, etc.

Reference was made to a recent meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel attended by a representative of the Health Board, noting that waiting lists for these conditions were increasing. Disappointment was expressed about this, and it was noted that diagnosis for these conditions by a psychologist was of

paramount importance for the health and well-being of individuals. It was trusted that the Health Board was now investing in this work to ensure that waiting lists come down and meet the increased demand and ensure that no child waits more than 3 years for an assessment. It was hoped that 2 years will be more common soon regarding waiting time. It was reinforced that the work of the Autism Team in Gwynedd supports this work and strategy while offering vital and comprehensive expertise. It was noted that they worked very closely with the Neuro-developmental Team within the Health Board to support children and young people while they await diagnosis. It was noted that they supported individuals to try and reduce the pressure and strengthen the provision available from the Council for the benefit of the families.

When highlighting that there had been a significant increase in demand for services over the last two years, it was asked what the biggest cause of the increase in demand for family first services was.

In response, it was acknowledged that determining a specific reason for the increase was a challenging task due to the complex nature of the matter. It was acknowledged that various reasons contributed to the increase in demand, noting that the increase in the awareness of families also encouraged them to submit their children for referral and inquire about support. The increasing attention to child welfare was expressed as a factor, as well as the increase in press and media coverage of autism and various neurodivergent cases, which encourage families to get an accurate diagnosis for their children.

It was highlighted that there has been a definite change in children's behaviour and needs since COVID. Attention was drawn to the effects of poverty in Wales, and the need to support children and ensure that families stay together across the county was emphasised. Frustration was noted that the data was not available from the Health Board at the recent meeting of the Parenting Panel, and a commitment was made to address this data soon.

More information about the Trobwynt service was requested. In response, it was confirmed that many models and programmes were currently used to support parents, carers, children and young people. Examples were given, stating that the support was based on the wishes of the relevant family. It was explained that the Trobwynt service focused on a combination of four different elements, and that the models and strategies varied in intensity and were specially designed to suit individual needs. Intervention was detailed, noting that the level ranged from intensive interventions of 10 hours per week, up to a year with families. These interventions helped to strengthen relationships, improve emotional well-being and create safer and nourishing homes. The programmes available, such as therapeutic talking, supporting parents in playing with their children and learning various skills, were detailed. It was explained that different programmes were available for young men and women who had suffered abuse and there was regular support available to them. It was emphasised that the needs of families in Gwynedd were extremely diverse, so the need to be flexible and to tailor specific support was essential across the county.

Reference was made to the financial challenges involved in this work, noting that maternity leave within the workforce led to high staff turnover and difficulties in

terms of what specific support was available and when. In response to this, it was asked what the Council was doing to ensure that service provision does not contract or was negatively impacted due to maternity leave.

It was recognised that addressing the needs of this service was challenging for a variety of reasons, including the fact that it was challenging to recruit staff with specific and specialist qualifications on a temporary basis. It was ensured that the Council was in the process of trying to address this, offering fixed-term job terms to try and boost the post and make it more attractive. It was noted that the department also advertised and created jobs with a permanent contract for individuals and offered them training while focusing on the benefits of self-development.

In response to members' concerns about provision and support for the county's rural communities, it was confirmed that the team operated across Gwynedd, with offices throughout the county. It was highlighted that offices were located in Dolgellau, Blaenau Ffestiniog, Pwllheli as well as Caernarfon to be able to identify what was available in the communities and what are the needs of each area. It was noted that collaboration across the teams was at the heart of the strategies, noting that various support organisations were based in Deiniolen, Bethesda, and Talysarn.

A Member asked what kind of collaboration was taking place with the Education Department to support children and families. Reference was made to the fact that some children were unable to attend school due to a variety of different reasons, and what kind of collaboration and support was available for families' facing challenges. It was asked whether the Children Department gets input into specific cases and what kind of support is available, for example, in cases of exclusion. In response to the question, it was confirmed that there was close collaboration between the departments, at individual case levels and strategies. Efforts to improve attendance in schools were detailed, noting that a dedicated panel was looking at the 'right door' element to tackle challenges. It was noted that this included education, health and children departments. It was confirmed that discussions were proceeding by going through the lists of children who were not attending school, to see which cases were relevant and would be able to receive support from teams within the children's department. An attempt had been made to find out what specific support was needed, to be able to refer cases to the correct teams, who then work with further agencies, such as the Health Board.

It was asked whether specific work was underway to avoid children from being excluded from school. It was confirmed that intervention work was underway at different levels to tackle the specific challenges, but it was recognised that there was much work to be done to support children and young people to keep them in school. This was elaborated on, noting that the department was working very closely with the Education Department, by working together on a number of safeguarding panels and schools. It was noted that there were efforts to hold meetings between officers and some schools. It was ensured that there was a good cross-departmental relationship within the Council, which strengthened and improved at a good rate.

When discussing the ongoing collaboration between the departments, it was asked what kind of work was on-going and how the children's team was working together with the Council's mental health team. In response, reference was made to the wide range of challenges families faced with mental health, due to a variety of reasons across the county. It was acknowledged that many parents suffered with poor mental health. It was explained that the Adult and Community Team were working with the Children and Families Department in these cases, as well as collaborating with agencies such as the Health Board. It was elaborated that the Council's new Mental Health Team was co-ordinating and supporting this work.

Reference was made to the Families First Programme preventive service, which placed an emphasis on early intervention, prevention activity and offered support for whole families. It was noted that the programme promotes multi-agency work to ensure that families receive coordinated support when needed. Some examples of situations arising with deteriorating relationships within families, where the programme offered reconciliation services, were highlighted. It was explained that collaboration was taking place with the Post 16 Team to achieve this, and it was noted that this had been very successful.

It was asked what the impact of the Keeping Families Together Strategy on grant funding was, and how this was currently affecting the service. In response, it was recognised that this was one of the main risks of the program and the future uncertainty was acknowledged. The challenges arising through this, with planning, staffing and the workforce, were highlighted. However, it was confirmed that the plan was operating within the grant on a stable basis for a specific period. It was explained that the grants had been available for this work for several years, and therefore the department had evolved to maintain the provision within the confines of the grant funding. It was emphasised that the department was dependent on these grants to thrive, and that increasing pressure on demand strengthened the need for them. It was asked what Council members could possibly do to secure more funding for this work within the Council. It was acknowledged that there was a possibility that a new government would come into force for the new term, which will have an impact on the available budget. It was explained that the department was formulating plans for the next two years, therefore the plans continue for the duration of various agreements. It was explained that the provision available to Gwynedd families needed to be planned within the specific funding available each year.

Referring to the number of cases being successfully closed by Around the Family Team Coordinators, a member enquired about the reason for the reduction in cases closing over the past two years. It was explained that the nature of the referrals had intensified, so cases were likely to continue for much longer periods, due to the need and extra time spent with the families. It was also noted that a lack of resources was also a factor, as the team working on this was a very small team – which had an impact on the number of cases being efficiently delivered. It was noted that maternity leave also created challenges, as many staff found it difficult to cope with the workload, with some team members away for periods. It was noted that there was a live waiting list for support, which

emphasised the number of families in Gwynedd waiting for assistance.

It was asked what the department was doing to collaborate with agencies to promote health and well-being, especially mental health. In response, it was confirmed that collaboration was taking place on a regular basis through Council Departments and the third sector. It was noted that various fun sessions were available over the summer months for families across the county. It was noted that the main focus was to enjoy positive time with the family and the opportunity to attend nice places and meet new people and socialise as a family. It was explained that services and activities were promoted on the Council's social media pages and through the Family Information Service. It was noted that the events and sessions took place across the county, at various centres and Byw'n lach sites.

In response to an enquiry, the community hubs set up in Gwynedd, which were a means to share information with families for them to know what kind of support is available to them and to be able to refer individuals to the right services, were expanded upon. It was noted that this reinforced the multi-agency collaboration between statutory, preventive and third sector services. Reference was made to Hwb Dinas Bangor, which works closely with Children's Services, and it was noted that they are in the process of establishing a children and young people's hub for Bangor which would complement Hwb Dinas Bangor. It was noted that the department was working collaboratively to ensure that the families knew that there was a definite location for them to attend. It was highlighted that parenting courses and drop-in sessions were available there for parents and children to attend for any advice. They encouraged families to help themselves and choose and select from the support available independently, while educating families on how to raise children safely, and lawfully. It was noted that the Flying Start Family Support team had given parent and baby sessions at Hwb yr Orsaf, Penygroes and that collaboration with several children teams, autism and family support teams took place at Hwb Porthi Dre, Caernarfon. A further conversation with members about the proposed provision available to families in Gwynedd was welcomed.

It was asked how the increasing number of cases in Derwen and Hafan y Sêr were being managed in a sustainable way. In response, it was acknowledged that the demand on Hafan y Sêr and Derwen services was challenging. It was noted that they were trying to keep demand for the services down as little as possible, by offering various support to families through the early intervention process. It was noted that it was difficult to control the number of referrals received by Derwen, in particular, due to the complex nature of the referrals. It was noted that the range of needs that exist there was high, therefore the department strives to provide support through group activities through the provision of grant funding. It was noted that schools, youth services and Byw yn lach centres also provide a variety of activities, as part of the cross-departmental effort to be flexible and develop within practical and financial constraints. It was elaborated that 2 reviews were currently underway, which focus on the sustainability of the education department and child and social services provision. It was hoped that a report would be brought to the Cabinet in the Spring months. The report, which had been jointly commissioned with Ynys Môn to review Derwen's services, was expected to be

received by the end of February.

A request was made for more information about the Care Academy, and if the children and family support department can benefit from the programme when employing apprentices. It was noted that the department had employed apprentices on a number of occasions and had benefited from opportunities that arise when a situation was suitable within the service. It was noted that the Care Academy was an asset to the Council and thanks was given for the good work that was on-going.

During the discussion, officers were urged to highlight the fact that Welsh and English provision was available to children and families across Gwynedd in the reports. This was recognised and it was agreed to highlight this provision in the future. A member asked if it was possible for the reports to be more straightforward at times, including clear information when outlining the strengths and challenges of the department, so that members could scrutinise more effectively. There was a discussion about the limitations of the scrutiny system, and the need was highlighted to improve the content and structure of some reports to try and ensure a better scrutiny impact in the committees in future.

It was emphasised that children continue to belong to the family after they turned 16, and more details were asked how the teams that delivered the family retention strategy work together with the post-16 teams. In response, it was assured that the main goal of the post-16 teams was to keep families together. However, it was recognised that there were a range of different challenges for teenagers ranging in intensity and safety. Reference was made to homelessness issues and the many different factors, such as alcohol and drugs, that contributed to this issue. With reference to the safeguarding element, it was confirmed that ensuring that the child was able to live at home was always the goal. It was explained that circumstances often arise from the child/young person's background and that this can affect their situation in the future. It was noted that children often left care after they turned 16 and therefore the emphasis on continuing the support and keeping families together was very important.

DECISION

1. **To accept the report.**
2. **To note appreciation of the work being done by the officers of the Children and Families department.**
3. **To express concern about the way the service is being funded in the short term and the impact of that on the service and the workforce.**
4. **To request a report on the Derwen Service review when appropriate.**
5. **To request further details of the collaboration between teams implementing the Keeping Families Together Strategy and Education Department officers.**
6. **To ask the Council to ensure that all services remain available despite maternity leave periods and ask for an update on how this**

is being achieved. |

6. YOUTH JUSTICE SYSTEM

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Children and Supporting Families. It was noted that the Gwynedd and Anglesey Youth Justice Service (YJS) is a statutory, multi-agency service, which is run by Cyngor Gwynedd and operates across both counties. It was noted that the role of the service was core to the prevention of crime and re-offending by children and young people operating within the framework of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, through a 'Child First' approach which focuses on strengths, well-being and rehabilitation. It was highlighted that the report provided an overview of the service structure, governance and funding arrangements, and the way the service worked with children across a wide spectrum of interventions. From out-of-court prevention and diversion to statutory court orders and support in more complex contexts, including custody and rehabilitation. It was noted that the report provided detailed information on the performance of the service, including the results of the HMIP inspection in 2023/24. In the inspection, it was noted that the service was good overall and that there was a high standard of assessment within the service. However, it was recognised that significant challenges to the service remain, including youth violence, knife crime, poor educational outcomes, mental health and speech needs, and the financial pressures associated with the reliance on grants. It was explained that the purpose of this report was to provide assurance of the effectiveness of the service, to enable members to question and challenge existing arrangements and to offer input to support the continued development of the service in a context of increasing demand and complexity.

There was an opportunity for members to comment and ask questions. During the discussion, the following observations arose. |

It was asked what progress had been made as the service implements the improvement plan following the HMIP inspection. It was confirmed that the Improvement Plan was in place in March 2024. It was noted that the management board thoroughly reviewed the progress of the plan on a quarterly basis. It was confirmed that they had achieved around 80% of the implementation objectives in the current Plan, and a final inspection of the Plan would take place in March 2026. With reference to the progress analysis, it was recognised that there were some issues in question that needed to be completed, such as, providing a Safeguarding Report for the Local Safeguarding Delivery group, SLA Review and working practices with CAMHS. It was trusted that most of the recommendations had been completed. |

Concern was expressed that the service had been without the support of Speech, Language and Communication Needs for 6 years, due to a lack of resource provision. It was asked what was happening to try and overcome this problem. It was recognised that this was one of the main limitations of the service and that it was a problem across the Youth Justice sector in Wales. It was stated that Gwynedd was at the forefront in Wales with the language and speech provision in 2007/2008. It was noted that this was innovative at the time and was funded by grant funding. It was explained that this provision had ceased in 2012 due to a lack of funding and resources. It was explained that efforts to explore options for support and resources in this area were hampered by

the Welsh Government's failure to prioritise Youth Justice in their report '60% – Giving them a Voice' (2023) where they rejected the recommendations. It was noted that Betsi Cadwaladr Health Board was reluctant to provide resources as they were also operating within budgetary constraints. Serious disappointment was expressed about this, stressing that the statutory language of the justice service was often difficult to understand, which caused frustration and created injustice for young people attending court and contacting lawyers, etc. Attention was drawn to the fact that not much of the Welsh language was used in court, which added to the linguistic difficulties of young offenders in Wales. The importance of speech and language in this context was emphasised, and it was confirmed that the service was trying to cope with these challenges while offering as much support as possible. It was noted that justice service managers across Wales had worked as a group to submit a report to the Youth Justice Advisory Panel highlighting the serious situation and the level of inconsistency in the provision of speech and language resources in Wales.

Reference was made to the report which stated that there was very little evidence available of robust conversations about protected characteristics and diversity at Strategic Management Board meetings. In response to an enquiry, it was confirmed that the service had carried out various assessments of protected characteristics and diversity over the last 2 years, which had been submitted to the Strategic Management Board. It was confirmed that quarterly reports will be provided to the Management Board, on the protected characteristics and levels of diversity among the cohort of children known to the justice system. It was reported that this included:

- Gender
- Additional Learning Needs
- Mental Health and Neuro-developmental
- Ethnicity
- Speech and Language
- Care Experienced Children.

It was confirmed that the reports and responses from the Strategic Management Board and the Service will be included in the annual Youth Justice Plan. It was recognised that ethnicity reporting was challenging to achieve because there were very low levels of people of ethnic descent in north Wales. It was explained that this had a significant impact on the comparative data with areas such as Cardiff, Liverpool, Manchester, etc.

It was suggested that a letter could be written to the Welsh Government to emphasise the challenges of the service to try and secure additional funding and resources to deal with the number of young people in the justice system. It was recognised that many of the children and young people in the justice system come from being in the care system as young children. The link between children's educational levels and the justice system was highlighted. It was noted that children and families need to be given help and support at an early stage, to prevent problems from developing. Emphasis was placed on support and early intervention in the household and in schools, and the multi-agency collaboration to ensure that the preventative service leads to voluntary involvement and healthy relationships in the future. It was confirmed that collaborative work was underway with the Education Department, which focuses on support and

inclusion elements, to raise attendance levels and ensure pupils are safe and thriving in a school.

Concern was expressed that there was only one youth court in Gwynedd. It was noted that this created difficulties for children and young people across the county, particularly in south Meirionnydd, to reach the court in Caernarfon. It was asked whether there was provision available to ensure transport and support for young people attending the court. In response, it was confirmed that the court seeks to be as accessible as possible, by arranging cases in good time and at times convenient for the individual, having considered their personal situations and what will be possible for them. It was confirmed that 20% of cases were now reaching court case level, due to the work underway across the service for prevention and early intervention. It was reinforced that they constantly supported the individuals and families. It was confirmed that there was no waiting list for individuals to attend the juvenile justice court. It was noted that this reduced the trauma and impact on the family.

Referring to the recommendation of the Action Plan, which stated that ensuring the presence of senior education and health leaders on the management board, to achieve positive education and health outcomes for children, it was asked whether there were any issues arising with attendance at the board and whether this was having an impact on the output and timetable of the Plan. It was noted that the inspection had identified this as a problem, but that the board's attendance had improved significantly since the publication of the inspection report. It was trusted that attendance levels at board meetings were very high recently, and this would soon be reflected in the report's findings.

It was noted that 121 children were currently open to the service, it was asked how does this compare to previous years? It was explained that the numbers were down compared to statistics about 10 or 15 years ago, but they were noted to be higher now compared to previous recent years. It was explained that this was due to the development of new programmes that focus on prevention and early intervention. It was noted that cases were presented and dealt with much sooner, and individuals were not being criminalised as quickly. It was noted that the justice service worked very closely with the Families First and Post 16 teams, to ensure that they carry out assessments and offer support at the right time, through constant collaboration.

It was highlighted that 80% of the service's workload was now preventative work. The type of work that was part of the work programmes was detailed, particularly the increasing use of virtual reality. It was noted that the use of virtual reality was very successful and often led to successful intervention. It was explained that the device created the use of interactive games to show the possible situations and scenarios that may arise as a result of individuals' decisions and actions. It was noted that it focused on the element of storytelling to encourage young people to make the right moral choice. It was noted that this element had contributed to the building of good relationships between the children and young people and their supporters, whilst building trust, in line with the Child First strategy.

The developmental methods used with more complex criminal cases, such as

abuse, rape and knife crimes, were elaborated on, noting that the virtual reality devices were very effective. It was explained that the young people can play games while making different decisions to see which decision will lead to the best result. It was noted that they learnt a lot through this approach and that it was groundbreaking work in the field.

In response to a question, it was confirmed that violence and drug use was the biggest challenge currently facing the service. It was explained that the use of social media in promoting and aiding violence was also very challenging. It was noted that the department was working closely with the police and various different agencies in order to tackle this. It was noted that the number of cases were rising where groups film violent incidents and post these on-line on social media. This was highlighted as leading to an increase in bullying among children and young people. With this, it was explained that the service was doing work to ensure that children and young people were aware that they were accountable to the law if they were involved in a violent crime when filming events as part of a criminal group. It was emphasised that drugs were a major problem in the community which causes a large number of safeguarding cases.

It was asked if the service was going around the county's schools and colleges to teach young people about the implications of a life of crime, and the importance of staying safe. It was confirmed that the service was working very closely with the police to co-ordinate various incidents within schools. It was explained that officers work closely with School Liaison Officers and also attend hubs within schools to see a specific cohort of pupils. It was elaborated that the officer would then provide an introduction or curriculum to address the problem with the young people. It is hoped that there would soon be an opportunity to hold a full day of community safety activities in conjunction with other agencies. The importance of funding SLO officers in the schools was emphasised, especially in the areas that posed the greatest risk.

It was asked whether there were specific areas concerned with higher levels of anti-social behaviour, drugs and youth crime. It was confirmed that youth violence was linked to poverty and unemployment, and it was noted that a lack of opportunities also drove crime. Some of the most affected areas were outlined by the service, namely Holyhead, Llangefni, Caernarfon and Blaenau Ffestiniog. Concern was also expressed about the villages in Gwynedd, and a desire was expressed for more data on these cases.

The service was thanked for their work, and the department was praised for their dedication. It was acknowledged that the report was rather lengthy and complex to analyse, and committee members were invited to visit the offices to chat with staff and see the work going on for themselves.

DECISION

1. **To accept the report.**
2. **To express concern that there are no resources to provide speech and language support.**
3. **To ask the Cabinet Member for Children and Families to correspond with the government asking them to consider**

ensuring that the appropriate resources are available to provide speech and language support to young people in the justice system.

7. 16+ TEAM (LEAVING CARE)

The report was presented by the Cabinet Member for Children and Families. It was noted that the Post 16 Team had been set up as a dedicated team to focus on the cases open to the Children and Supporting Families Department, aged between 16 and 25. It was noted that the team supported young people who needed care and support, who were in care or had left care. It was stressed that the support was voluntary, but that most young people took advantage of the support available. It was confirmed that 249 cases had been open to the team at the beginning of January. An overview of the Team's budget was given, noting that £1,040 million was available to meet the needs of young people. It was noted that a large portion of the budget (£800,000) was for accommodation and support needs. It was asked if arranging accommodation for individuals was currently challenging. In response, it was explained that the first aim was to keep the young people at home with families if this was possible. However, several homelessness referrals had been received which added to the demand for accommodation.

Details were given of the work allocation and processes. It was explained that a specific employee was designated for each case, depending on the nature of the case. It was noted that a Social Worker also undertook the assessments for Care and Support cases. It was reported that the intervention offered was dependent on the individual case, as agencies worked together to plan and meet the needs of the individual. It was noted that they focus on well-being, stability, education, work, training and development of independent skills.

Reference was made to the number of Asylum Seekers currently in Gwynedd. It was noted that 32 of the total of 249 cases open to the Post 16 Team were Asylum Seekers, following the Gwynedd allocation. It was recognised that this was a high percentage, in line with the quota that had been received, under the Home Office's National Transfer Scheme. It was emphasised that it was Gwynedd's responsibility to ensure support and accommodation for them, as they were treated as children in care until they were 18 years old. At the age of 18 they were Care Leavers and were the responsibility of the local authority until they were 25 years old. Those challenges and implications were elaborated upon, by referring to the lack of background information, wishes, needs, trauma, and emotional well-being. It was noted that the information obtained through the referral was very basic. It was added that language was also a barrier, as well as the young peoples' uncertainty and lack of understanding about the process.

The Pathway Plan was detailed, stating that all young people leaving care were expected to have a Pathway Plan which was reviewed regularly, as required.

It was noted that the content of the Plan varied from individual to individual and depended on their personal situation. It was expressed that emphasis on stabilisation and obtaining stable and safe accommodation to live in was expressed as a priority, as well as organising further education, according to the

individual's ability. It was explained that nurturing better relationships with family members and parents was also an element, and that many aspects would be considered. It was confirmed that the Council will continue to be the 'Corporate Parent' for the individuals until they turned 25 years old.

More details were requested about the team and the means of operation and how the workload was allocated among team officers. In response, the arrangements were detailed with reference to the appendix showing the number of cases per officer. It was confirmed that the workload was shared fairly and that they did different types of work, including support, administrative and resource officers. It was highlighted that training was available for employees at all levels. It was confirmed that 4 social workers were part of the aftercare team, who are working closely with GISDA officers. It was confirmed that the work required rigorous multi-agency collaboration to achieve the service goal.

DECISION

- **To accept and note the report.**

The meeting commenced at 10.30 am and concluded at 1.10 pm

CHAIRMAN