

Meeting	Care Scrutiny Committee
Date	1st July, 2021
Title	Support to Individuals living with Dementia in Gwynedd
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Member	Dafydd Meurig, Cabinet Member, Adult, Health and Wellbeing

1. Purpose of the report

1.1 This report is submitted to the Care Scrutiny Committee to provide an update to a report submitted to the committee in January 2020, which raised awareness of dementia and provided an overview of what is in progress to support the individuals living with Dementia in Gwynedd.

2. To remind us, what is Dementia?

2.1 *The word 'dementia' describes a group of symptoms that could include memory loss, difficulties with memory, problem solving or language difficulties. These changes usually start small, but for someone living with dementia, they have become serious enough to affect daily life.*¹

2.2 Because of its nature (symptoms more prominent over time as the condition worsens, and low diagnosis rate), it is difficult to know exactly how many people are living with the condition. National studies estimate the proportion of the population of different age groups who have the condition, and based on this and the age profile of Gwynedd, it can be estimated that there are 2,049² individuals with dementia in Gwynedd, i.e. 1.67% of the population (122,864).³

3. Dementia Action Plan for Wales 2018-2022.

3.1 The vision contained in the plan is "for Wales to be a dementia friendly nation that recognises the rights of people with dementia to feel valued and to live as independently as possible in their communities."

1 www.alzheimers.org.uk

2 Alzheimer's Research UK Statistics 2015

3 2015 mid-year estimates - Office for National Statistics - are used in order to have a year that is consistent with the Alzheimer's Research UK Statistics figure

3.2 The Adults, Health and Well-being Department is committed to fulfilling the requirements of the plan and reports back to the Dementia Delivery Assurance and Implementation Group in regard to successes and barriers.

4 Support and Services in Gwynedd.

4.1 As the population ages, our vision is to continue to enable people to live at home as independent as possible, for as long as possible. There is a need to ensure that the correct care and support provision is available at the right time and in the right place in order to meet a range of needs.

4.2 The Covid-19 Pandemic and our experiences over the past year has highlighted the importance of practical support in the community and a regular break for informal carers to support individuals with dementia and their carers. We have seen a deterioration in the health of individuals with dementia and their carers over the year of shielding, which has led to urgent requests for long-term specialist care. Although we have adapted and provided services in an alternative way (one-to-one care provision and virtual advice and support) because it was not possible to provide traditional respite and day care support; there has been increasing pressure on informal carers to support individuals with dementia. We have seen a deterioration in the general health of individuals living with dementia and their carers during the year of shielding. This has led to crisis requests for specialist long term care.

4.3 The Department is in the process of reviewing risk assessments and remodelling day and respite services, in order to plan to re-open services gradually when the Government's guidelines allow. This is not an easy task and it cannot be done quickly due to the need to balance risks and practical barriers that arise whilst ensuring that buildings are suitable and can adhere to the rules regarding social distancing. Circumstances can change very quickly if there is a surge in local cases or a new strain of the virus spreading.

4.4 Dementia Actif has adapted to respond to the COVID-19 restrictions. Although it was not possible to meet face-to-face, the services kept in contact with individuals regularly via:

- phone calls, text messages, e-mails and video calls.
- supporting individuals to learn and use technology to keep in contact.
- keeping a record of the calls in order to understand the impact of the lockdown on the individual.
- producing a regular newsletter with information about support services
- holding Virtual 'Dementia Friends' sessions.
- holding a virtual support and well-being group for individual carers who live with dementia.

4.5 Dementia Actif has collaborated with Byw'n Iach to raise awareness about dementia and how to create dementia friendly facilities and has trained over 100 members of staff.

4.6 Dementia Actif have been holding virtual light exercise classes since September 2020, in response to the pandemic. From the outset, it was obvious how much the members enjoyed and benefitted from the classes. Some of the classes were recorded and shared on the Facebook page

4.7 In January 2021, the new Gwynedd Dementia Actif website was launched.

4.8 Funding from the Welsh Government ICF fund has been used to enhance the 'Dementia Connect' support provided by the Alzheimer's Society. This service provides a simple point of contact which puts service users and their carers in touch with practical support to empower them to cope with the condition and remain active within their communities. The Dementia Connect service has been providing virtual support over the period of the pandemic. Temporary funding pays for this service and a regional review of the service will be held during 2021.

4.9 Welsh Government ICF funding has also enabled us to appoint Dementia support workers as part of the Community Resource Teams, in order to support individuals with dementia and their carers to remain independent in their communities. The challenge for the Department will be to ensure a long-term budget for the services which are funded on a short term basis. It is likely that this will lead to presenting bids for permanent monies to the usual bidding cycle to fund these valuable services on a permanent basis.

4.10 It is acknowledged that it will not always be possible for people to remain in their own homes. Gwynedd is eager to ensure that people with dementia receive suitable care as locally as possible.

4.11 The demand for dementia provision continues to rise significantly and although we have invested to increase the supply of beds, waiting lists for specialist dementia care is more often the same, if not higher, than the waiting lists for standard residential beds.

4.12 In 2020, a new unit was opened at Plas Hedd residential home to provide care for 7 individuals, which adds to the existing specialist residential provision at Plas Maesincla, Bryn Blodau, Llys Cadfan and Plas Hafan Homes. We are currently preparing to open a new Unit at Bryn Blodau home for 8 individuals and it is expected for building work on Hafod Mawddach home to be completed by the end of the summer 2021, which will provide care for 8 individuals. By the end of 2021, we hope that we will have 69 dementia beds out of 315 beds across 11 of the Council's residential homes in Gwynedd. These beds are used flexibly to support individuals who require long term care and to provide regular respite care to carers.

4.13 However when considering the National data and local information, it is likely that we will need to consider the possibility of increasing the Units further in the future or to amend the registration of homes in order to increase the provision. Consideration will need to be given to the regulations of Care Inspectorate Wales in order to ensure that there are appropriate staffing requirements in the units to meet the need. There is also a need to consider the implications of funding the adaptation costs to the care homes to ensure that the environment is suitable as well as funding the care element in the long term.

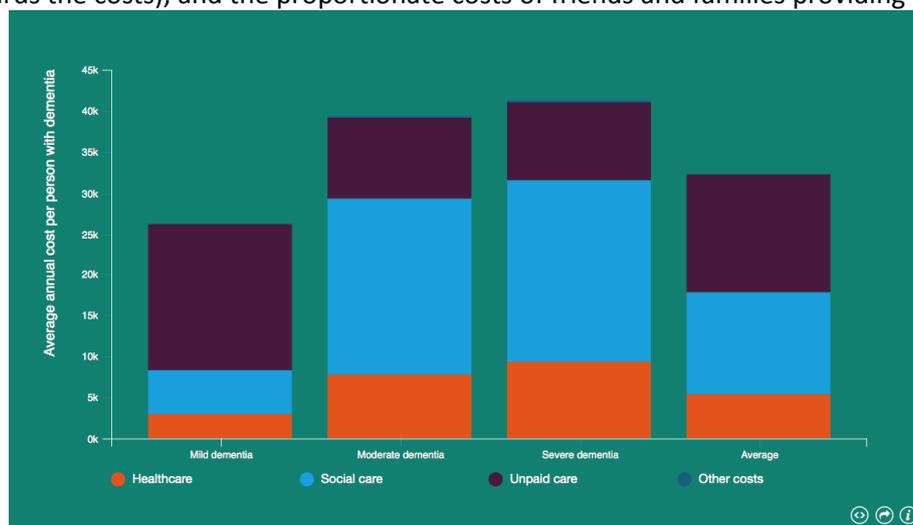
4.14 Plans are being developed to invest further in more of the Council's care homes. Gwynedd's Population Needs assessment will be updated over the coming months and will give direction regarding local needs and the wishes of the people of Gwynedd regarding Dementia services. We foresee that the emphasis will be on local services and practical support with regular respite care for carers to enable them to continue to care for individuals living with dementia.

5 Financial Implications

5.1 National studies estimate the cost of the condition per case. The chart below shows⁴ that costs vary according to the seriousness of the condition, from around £26,200 per annum for the less serious

4 Prince, M et al (2014) Dementia UK: Update Second Edition report produced by King's College London and the London School of Economics for the Alzheimer's Society

cases, to £39,300 for moderate cases, to £41,200 in the most serious cases. These costs include health care, social care (whether or not it falls on local authorities or a contribution from the individual / family towards the costs), and the proportionate costs of friends and families providing unpaid care.



5.2 If you then consider that the pattern of the seriousness of the condition in Gwynedd (i.e. the proportion of less serious / moderate / most serious cases), follows the pattern seen across the whole of Britain⁵, we can then estimate the total annual cost of dementia in Gwynedd, and how much of this cost is likely to fall on the Council, as follows:

5.3 The estimate cost of dementia in Gwynedd

Category of seriousness	Estimated total cost *		FROM THIS - AN ELEMENT THAT FALLS ON THE COUNCIL (ESTIMATE)	
	£ per year	Total £ per year	£ per year ⁶	Total £ per year
LESS SERIOUS 55.4% I.E. 1135 CASES	£26,212	£29.75m	£2,343	£2.66m
MODERATE 32.1% I.E. 658 CASES	£39,293	£25.85m	£9,376	£6.17m
Most serious 12.5% i.e. 256 cases	£41,187	£10.54m	£9,691	£2.48m
Total cost		£66.14m		£11.31m

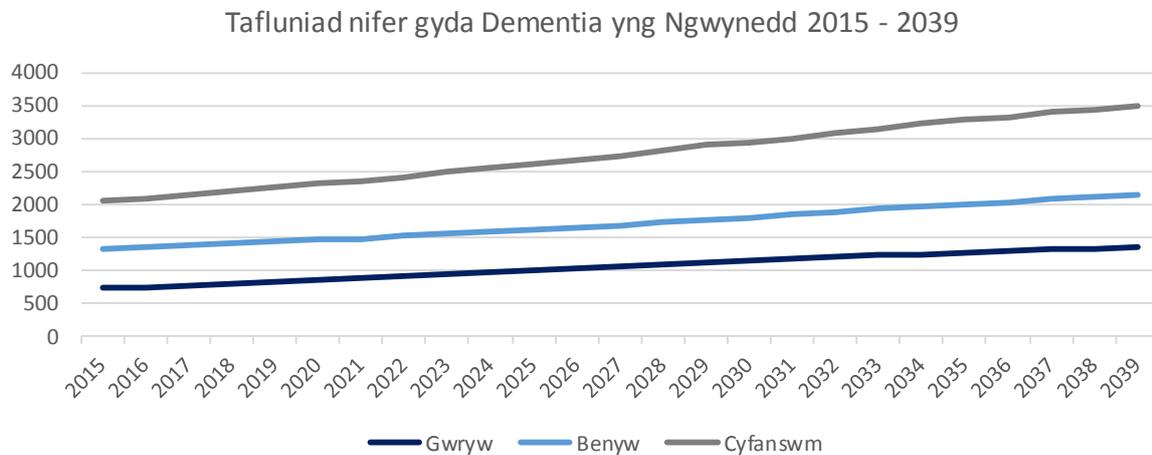
* Total cost = health, social care (funded by councils + privately), value of unpaid care

5.4 Therefore, it can be seen that it is estimated that the cost of the condition is around a total of £66 million in Gwynedd, and that approximately £11m of this cost falls on the Council in order to provide social care.

5 see https://www.alzheimers.org.uk/sites/default/files/migrate/downloads/dementia_uk_update.pdf (page 38)

6 Having estimated that 43.7% of social care costs falls on local authorities, and that this proportion is consistent across the categories of seriousness (in the absence of more detailed information per seriousness). And that based on the division on p. 104 of the above report

5.5 In the future, as the older population increases, the numbers who suffer from dementia will also increase. Dementia UK estimates that the current number with dementia in Britain will increase from 850,000 to 1,683,000 by 2039. Presuming that the prevalence of dementia (per age group) remains the same, we project that the number with dementia in Gwynedd will increase from 2,049 to 3,494 by 2039 - an increase of more than 70%. The projection given here is driven by demographic ageing.



5.6 This increase will increase pressure on health and community care services to support those living with dementia and their carers.

6 Next steps

6.1 We will maintain our commitment to fulfilling the requirements of the Dementia Action Plan for Wales by working together with individuals, their families and friends, and our partners in the third sector and the Health Board.

6.2 We will scrutinise the findings of the Population Needs Assessment to ensure an overview of the needs of each area in Gwynedd. These findings will be the basis to redesigning and recovering support services.

6.3 We rely on temporary funding to support many of the developments in care provision for individuals with dementia. We will revisit our investment programme to secure long term funding to ensure the sustainability and continued development of existing services and new developments.