

REPORT TO	GWYNEDD COUNCIL CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE	21 September, 2023
REPORT BY	COUNCILLOR DILWYN MORGAN OFFICER - HELEN FÔN OWEN
SUBJECT	LEARNING DISABILITY SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

1. PURPOSE

- Provide context and an update on the situation regarding Supported Accommodation for individuals with Learning Disabilities in Gwynedd.
- Share information on the current situation, new projects and the planning for the future work to provide supported accommodation of a high standard for individuals with learning disabilities in Gwynedd.

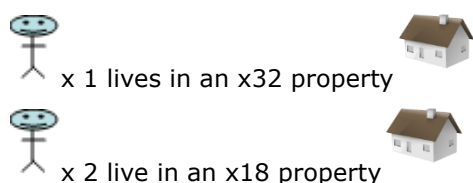
2. BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

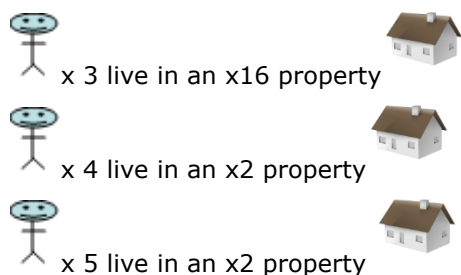
The Welsh Government's Learning Disability Strategic Action Plan 2022 to 2026 outlines the agenda for improving services for individuals with learning disabilities. This includes reducing health inequalities, promoting independence and access to advocacy and supporting access to education and work opportunities. Another priority area is developing and implementing an appropriate housing policy over the Plan period. Suitable accommodation is one of this plan's priorities. The Learning Disability Service in Gwynedd is committed to this priority by collaborating closely with the Regional Partnership Board to fulfil objections. We are collaborating with our partners and planning to develop supported accommodation models that are suitable to meet the needs and promote the well-being of individuals within our communities. An integral part of this is improving choice and empowering individuals. This includes where and with whom they live.

As individuals' needs vary, a range of accommodation and support is needed, this includes community housing, supported housing and specialist support to support individuals with complex and profound needs.

3. CURRENT SITUATION

During the last few years, the demand for accommodation and support has increased in Gwynedd. Currently, there are approximately 650 individuals on the learning disability register. There are 134 individuals with learning disabilities living in 70 supported accommodations across Gwynedd. They are divided as follows:





Currently, 32 individuals live in residential placements within the county and 21 individuals live in out-of-county residential placements.

INCREASE IN THE NEED FOR SUPPORTED ACCOMMODATION

The Learning Disabilities service works with individuals 18 years old and above. As part of the transition process from childrens services to adults services, there is close collaboration between the services, especially Derwen Specialist Team and After-care Team. This collaboration is essential to identify individuals that are transferring, plan strategically and ensure that this period is a positive experience and the support offered to individuals is as seamless as possible. A number of these individuals have complex and profound needs, and need supported accommodation after they turn eighteen years old. Some are already in residential locations/ specialist education, with some out-of-county.

In general, individuals choose to move out of their parents' home sooner than we have experienced in the past. This is mainly to achieve their personal desires and live independently.

A number of individuals receive care from older parents and the service supports the individuals and families to plan ahead for the future with some choosing to be introduced to accommodation and support to decrease the pressure on the carer and avoid an emergency situation in the future.

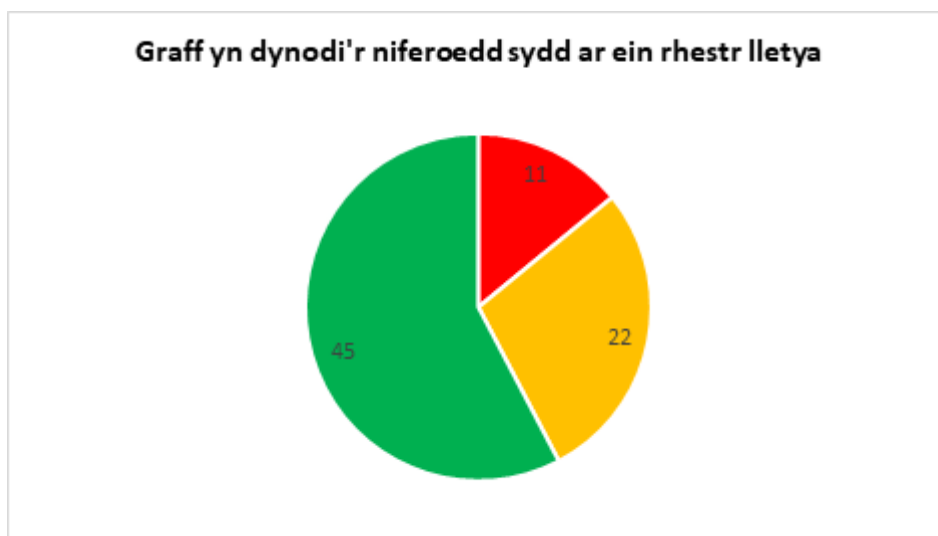
By improving the access of individuals with Learning Disabilities to Health services over the past few years, individuals live longer. By now, we have a number of individuals on the register who are over 65 years old. Research confirms that people with learning disabilities are more likely than the general population to suffer from Dementia and develop complex health conditions. The aim of the service is to support individuals to live within their homes as long as possible. However, this is not always possible and residential/nursing placements to meet complex health needs must be identified. Currently, there is not enough specialist provision of this kind for individuals with learning disabilities and it is challenging to discover suitable placements.

4. PLANNING FOR THE FUTURE

The Learning Disability Accommodation Project has been established to identify and map accommodation needs across the county. The progress of this project is reported on through the corporate performance challenging regime. Any application for accommodation identified will be referred to the Accommodation Priority Forum - a forum that meets monthly to discuss and prioritise applications.

We are planning strategically as needed e.g., needing a bungalow for an individual with physical disabilities. We will also consider applications against any empty spaces that we have in supported accommodation or residential placement. Any work made to introduce individuals to a new placement is made sensitively and over a period of time to monitor and observe that the environment meets the needs and compatibility with other tenants.

As young individuals move from living with parents to living independently, they often receive 24/7 care. This is extremely costly and affects the service's overspending. It is the service's duty to promote opportunities for individuals to live independently but this is not always easy because, in reality, the staffing support is high in some cases and the cost and recruitment is challenging. The service introduces annual bids to meet this demand but, because of the wider financial pressure, the complete bids have not been successful over the last few years and this has contributed to the Service's overspending.



Graph showing the number of individuals on our accommodation list. Red represents those individuals that need priority (i.e., within the next year), orange represents those that need accommodation within the next two years, and green represents the individuals that need to be planned for over the next year.

Adapt current property for individuals to remain living in their homes

As individuals' needs change, their current homes will sometimes need to be adapted to ensure that the home is accessible, to promote and ensure the continuity of independence and decrease risks. If barriers are identified, this will be referred to ensure the completion of an Occupational Therapist assessment and complete minor adjustments or provide equipment. It is possible for the Landlord/Housing communities to complete improvements on the property under a grant application if appropriate. This has happened successfully with a number of properties.

5. STRATEGIC COLLABORATION.

Over the last few years, the collaboration with the stakeholders and our partners within the housing communities and Property department has strengthened. As a result of this, a number of new projects are underway and this means that it will be possible to increase the provision of accommodation in Gwynedd to meet the needs within the learning disability population. The Welsh

Government's capital 'HCF' (Housing with Care Fund) grant funding is being used to fund some of these schemes. This source has almost fully funded a bungalow in Groeslon and three tenants are in the process of moving into this property. It also contributes substantially to a property that is currently being adapted in Pwllheli.

There are plans in the pipeline to develop two accessible bungalows in Gwynedd, one in the Penrhyndeudraeth area and the other in Harlech. This property will be shared housing for three individuals each with 24-hour staff.

We have also identified a property in Llanrug. Following redesign, it will be a home for four individuals.

Currently, there are arrangements underway to introduce two individuals to homes on the Penyberth site, Penrhos, Pwllheli. The multi-disciplinary team have identified two suitable properties, 24-hour support will be commissioned. As the proposed project on this site develops, there is potential for another supported accommodation for the Learning Disability Service. This could be beneficial as it would intertwine with the wider vision of providing and integrating care systems to the site.

In addition to these developments, there are plans to develop a brand-new accommodation model on a residential home site in Frondeg, Caernarfon. This will ensure that the current provision is suitable for the future, offering shared or individual properties for Frondeg's residents and creating capacity to ensure there is a possibility to re-introduce out-of-county individuals to Gwynedd. It is anticipated that this provision will enable us to support individuals with complex and profound needs, some that are currently in costly specialist placements. It will also offer flexibility from a 'step up/step down' service with the possibility to provide support in a less intrusive environment with the ability to ask for additional staff if needed. As a way of meeting the lack of provision to older individuals with complex health needs / dementia, that are referred to previously in the report, it is essential that this project plans property and a care and support model to meet the needs of this group of individuals.

REGIONAL SUPPORT SERVICE – GYDA'N GILYDD SERVICE

The service receives support on a number of levels from the Gyda'n Gilydd Service, which is a regional team working across the six counties to plan and develop services and opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities.

From an accommodation point of view, we have received resources and support to develop person-centred schemes for individuals. Funding is available to employ a Person-Centred Planning officer (Person-Centred Planning PCP) who will work across Gwynedd and Môn, and we have also received training for positive behaviour support [PBS] and materials e.g., handbooks that are very useful resources to ensure the inclusion of individuals fully in the planning process for their new home.

For 2023/24, support will be available to plan a business application for the Capital Accommodation scheme for the next four years. As part of this, they will collaborate to create a Business Justification Case with the application for a Learning Disability Accommodation Project Manager a part of this. The support and these resources are welcomed to reinforce the work of planning and developing a workforce.

STAFF RECRUITMENT, TRAINING AND DEVELOPMENT

It is good to state that there is good collaboration between the providers and the service in the learning disability field. This was seen during the Covid period, and the relationship and desire to co-produce, share resources and good practice, train staff to work within models such as Active Support and Positive Behaviour Support remains.

As is common across the care sector, recruitment is a challenge and this means that there are delays in moving forward with some supported housing projects as providers face the challenge of attracting and retaining staff within the field. Despite this, there is commitment to provide support of the highest standard to individuals with complex and profound needs to promote a home environment and opportunities that enable individuals to contribute and undertake the activities within their community.

Multidisciplinary teams, including social workers, specialist nurses and Speech and Language therapists, collaborate to support those individuals with complex and profound needs. To reinforce this, training and mentoring managers and staff in the PBS model, a specialist complex and profound needs team was established in 2021. This team is funded via RIF funding. Since the beginning of this project, the team has trained over sixty staff members and worked directly with over twenty individuals and the staff team to develop the least intrusive inductions and person-centred. In addition to this team, additional support is provided by the Health service to respond preventively to support where the home/accommodation situation is fragile and to promote transition periods seamlessly by introducing individuals to new homes or placements.

The service supports a high percentage of individuals with complex and profound needs; therefore it is essential to continue and enhance this work. The input of specialist teams will be essential moving forward with the work of returning out-of-county individuals and patients in hospitals back to placements in Gwynedd.

By now, this service and expertise is entirely integral to Gwynedd's services whilst supporting individuals with learning disabilities. Supporting and maintaining the service without a RIF fund would be extremely challenging.