

CYNGOR GWYNEDD CABINET



Report for a meeting of Cyngor Gwynedd Cabinet

Date of meeting:	21 January, 2025
Cabinet Members:	Cllr Dilwyn Morgan
Liaison Officers:	Sian Edith Jones, Assistant Head of Older People
Title of Item:	Day care arrangements in the Blaenau Ffestiniog and Cricieth areas

1 THE DECISION SOUGHT

Day care services have not been offered in Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog or at Encil y Coed, Cricieth, since the Covid period. A formal decision is sought to:-

Agree that the Adults, Health and Well-being Department should wind-up the use of Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Encil y Coed, Cricieth, to deliver their services.

Support the Department's proposal to continue to collaborate with community groups and the third sector to support individuals in these areas in their homes and by using and supporting the development of alternative services within the communities.

2 THE REASON FOR THE NEED FOR A DECISION

The Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 was introduced on 1 April 2016, and it provides a legislative framework for care and support in Wales. The Act changes the way that people are assessed and the way services are provided, promoting a diverse range of support available within the community to reduce the need for formal support. The traditional model of providing Day Care in Gwynedd has not been changed to address the requirements of the Act and ensure what matters to the residents of Gwynedd. The existing model has been focusing on the care provision for people in buildings rather than supporting people who have care and support needs to continue to attend community activities. Our day care services do not always manage to meet the individual and personal needs of individuals and there has been a tendency to 'fit' people into services.

The Welsh Government has been reviewing day and respite services mainly as a result of the Covid-19 crisis. Their conclusions note that the pandemic has led to essential modifications to the provision, and has identified many key issues, moving forward. The model was very unsuitable and posed many risks during the Covid period, and consequently, the centres had to be closed. Bringing a large number of people together to one site would have caused major concern, and there were problems with the standards of some of those buildings as well.

The Gwynedd review has been an opportunity to consider different, more suitable and flexible ways to provide support and quality day services, which also offer value for money.

A report was submitted on the proposal to review day care services to the Care Scrutiny Committee on 23 November 2023. In the context of the need to strive to ensure that quality services are offered

across the County, the committee supported the proposal to hold a full review of the current provision and consider an alternative model. The officers were asked to ensure that the new model provided consistent services across the county, including a service for those living in rural areas. It is proposed to submit a further report to the Committee on the models/provision in each area when timely to do so, in order to give the scrutineers an opportunity to provide further input.

3 INTRODUCTION

The current situation - the traditional model

Over the years, the Council used to provide a programme of traditional day care activities in specific locations in the county for adults who needed support from professional staff. These centres enabled older people to socialise and participate in specific activities and also give their day-to-day carers an opportunity to have some respite. The provision was limited to locations in the main centres, at specific times, with a fairly limited offer of activities. Individuals would have to travel in to these centres, and transport was arranged for them. The access guidance for traditional Council services noted that the individual needed to have personal care needs or needs relating to memory conditions, in order to attend Council services. If low level well-being needs was what was needed, such as companionship, socialising and a meal, it was then expected for community/third sector provision to meet the need.

These were the services provided by Cyngor Gwynedd before the pandemic:

1.	2.	3.	4.
Cyngor Gwynedd Day Centres	Commissioned day care	Short respite provision available	Specialist Dementia Day Care Provision
Bryn Dysynni Tywyn - three times a week. Plas Hedd Bangor x three times a week. Encil y Coed x three times a week. Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog x three times a week.	Day care services at the Council's residential homes. Day care service in private residential homes.	Dementia Support Workers - one-to-one support for individuals and their carers for a few hours a week. Council residential homes providing respite care for up to a fortnight.	Plas Hedd Bangor x twice a week (CG&BCUHB). Hafod Hedd, (Bryn Beryl) x 3 days a week (CG and BCUHB) and Blaenau Ffestiniog Health Centre.

There has been no significant change in the provision noted in columns 2, 3 and 4 of the above table.

It should also be noted that three 'traditional' Day Centres have closed in the pre-Covid years -

- Cysgod y Coleg, Bala, day centre with Age Cymru having developed well-being services in the area
- Noddfa Madog Day Centre, Porthmadog
- Maesincla Day Centre, Caernarfon

The day centres at Plas Hedd (Bangor) and Bryn Dysynni (Tywyn) have reopened since Covid, and day care is now available at Plas Y Don (Pwllheli). However, these services have now been reviewed and

the services offered are under the control of the residential homes, and they are not separate services. Although the provision is slightly more than the provision offered at the Council's other residential homes, the management and governance arrangements are now consistent. It should also be noted that the services across all residential homes are facing obstacles due to staffing problems.

It is important to bear in mind that the day services being provided by the Council are 'care' and 'supervision' services for individuals with intensive care and support needs. It is not an open door and informal provision that anyone can attend. There are specific eligibility criteria, subject to an assessment of needs carried out by a social worker, and this is a statutory arrangement through the Council specifically.

4 THE RATIONALE AND JUSTIFICATION FOR RECOMMENDING THE DECISION

The Encil y Coed and Canolfan Blaenau Ffestiniog provision have not reopened since Covid times.

The response to the challenges that have landed on our front door as a result of Covid-19 has given us an opportunity to reconsider the way that day care is being provided here in Gwynedd. This period has shown how important it is to ensure social opportunities for individuals, and to ensure that unpaid carers have some periods of respite. It is an opportunity to learn from our experiences and the experiences of others, and to move away from services that are based on disability and age, and to look at opportunities for individuals to regain community connections that will also realise our purpose:-

'To help me live my life as I wish.'

The developments of the community hubs across the county have led to opportunities for everyone to work together at a much more local level.

There are many examples of groups/activities that have been developed by the Hubs to address the locally-identified needs. Over the past year/18 months, a pattern of provision development for older people can certainly be seen bearing fruit on a local level in our communities. Many Hubs are offering 'Panad a Sgwrs' (*A Cuppa and Chat*) sessions, lunch clubs and activity groups, specifically for older people in their communities. Where a Hub has a Community Transport scheme, this asset adds to their offer by providing transport services for people to the setting, and back home. There are examples of Hubs collaborating to offer transportation so that people can attend. In addition, close collaboration takes place between the hubs and the Gwynedd Dementia Actif Service. In many areas, the staff at the hub support the provision by being a part of the sessions or providing support with transporting people to the sessions. It must be noted that the hub activities are funded through various grants and these are mainly short-term grants, which poses a risk to the sustainability of the activities.

In Blaenau Ffestiniog, 'Y Dref Werdd' coordinates the Hub. They have been organising a group for older people once a month at the location where the daycare used to be provided in the Community Centre. It is also very exciting to be able to share that there is a very positive development underway and this provision by 'Y Dref Werdd' will be offered two times a month as well as inter-generational work in collaboration with Ysgol y Moelwyn once a month. 'Y Dref Werdd' is also starting a Parkinson's support group offering to support individuals living with the condition and their families.

We are also aware that there is a new hub development set up in Porthmadog very recently and we are very keen to collaborate and learn more about this new development.

The vision for the Adults, Health and Well-being service is for everyone of all ages to receive the support they need in the most suitable and convenient way for them. Since the needs of every

individual and their family / carers are different, in order that they can continue to live their lives as they wish, we must adapt our services to be more closely tailored to the actual needs of those requiring our support. We will also invest to develop a provision to obtain more respite for individuals and their family or carers at our residential centres.

The proposal (and opportunity) here is to ensure that more choice and control is available for people over their care and support, and the hope that this will more likely meet their needs and personal and individual outcomes. This would also encourage and maintain independence and social participation. Personal care and support will be enabled by means of person-centred assessments that are based on strengths. This is also an opportunity to offer a provision of an individual budget through direct payments, so that people can organise a provision of their choice and live their life as they wish.

What is being offered as an alternative provision in the Cricieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog areas?

As part of the review, the service is continuing to engage on day care provision arrangements in Gwynedd and is in regular discussions with the Commissioning Unit and the Health and Well-being Support Manager on mapping local social provisions in both areas.

The Community Resources Teams have made direct contact with the people who used to attend the Cricieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog centres and confirmed that the circumstances of the majority of original attendees have now changed and some have passed away.

In the context of the proposals for Encil y Coed, Cricieth, a meeting was held with the local Councillor in November 2024. A discussion was held on the fact that individuals and their carers favoured more bespoke support instead of attending a centre with traditional activities. Very positively, the community of Cricieth is managing to hold its own activities and it appears that there is not as much of a demand for a traditional day care provision there by now. There is a feeling that there is a greater need for a local information hub in Cricieth, to enable people to gain easy access to information about support services in the area. Work is underway with the local community to look at how a provision or convenient information system can be established for the people of Cricieth, within the area's existing resources. This also provides an opportunity to discuss partnership options with the third sector, Grŵp Cynefin and Internal Provider, to make use of the Hafod y Gest Extra Care Housing site in Porthmadog.

In the context of Canolfan Blaenau Ffestiniog, some months ago, a conversation was held with the local member and discussions were held during November 2024 with the members of the Trust/Blaenau Ffestiniog Community Centre Committee. Some concerns were expressed about the potential impact on the residents of the Ffestiniog area, specifically so on vulnerable individuals who were experiencing loneliness and a lack of social provision for them. It was noted that Y Dref Werdd was offering a social provision for residents in the area who were faced with loneliness.

Further discussion will be held with members of the Trust early in 2025, following their discussions with the Community Support Teams on the centre's situation for the future. Based on this full picture, there will be an opportunity to consider options on the support that the Council can offer, including facilitating the ability to collaborate with local enterprises to establish their own community/social provision.

The Department is also continuing to strive to recruit and strengthen services at Bryn Blodau in the hope of recommencing some day care provision on some weekdays.

General

Currently, alternative support to day care is being offered in both areas through a combination of domiciliary care services, dementia support service, specialist day care from Health (Blaenau Ffestiniog Health Centre and Hafod Hedd, Bryn Beryl), Dementia Actif weekly activities, sessions by Y Dref Werdd and Age Cymru.

It can also be confirmed that a new local enterprise has been in contact recently. They hope to offer day activities for people aged over 65 years with dementia, or a long-term health condition, in the Llŷn and Eifionydd area. They intend to use facilities that are already available at local community hubs, at Hwb Heli in Pwllheli, and Y Traeth Football Club, Porthmadog. They are prepared to provide day activities in different settings and on different days in many local communities. Further discussions will be held with them early in the new year.

The financial context.

It is important to emphasise again that the financial context is not the main reason for the recommendations to change day services in the Cricieth and Blaenau Ffestiniog areas. The introduction in this report clearly outlines the legislative, well-being, service quality and moral rationale behind the proposed changes. However, the financial context cannot be disregarded either. In general, day services are facing budgetary challenges, mainly attributed to the savings that need to be found and the cuts to be made, due to the shrinking local authority budgets, the modernisation challenges and the increasing demand. The Llechen Lân report submitted to the Cabinet in the Autumn and which has been given considerable attention in the national press recently, has highlighted these challenges for older people care services in particular.

Acting on the recommendation to bring to an end the use of Y Ganolfan, Blaenau Ffestiniog and Encil y Coed, Criccieth to deliver day care Services for older people would confirm a sum of up to £182,690 towards savings to be found.

Whilst this would appear to be a blow which would cause further problems to older people services, it is believed that the recommendation in this report is one of those rare occasions that offers a better service provision and offers more choice for individuals, whilst also contributing to the response to the financial challenges.

5 NEXT STEPS AND TIMETABLE

The day centres at Cricieth and Blaenau have not been open for five years, and the individuals requiring support are receiving alternative services and/or support. The services will formally cease following the Cabinet's decision. The Council will identify and develop further opportunities to collaborate further with other partners, and offer a range of different services. The focus would be on building on the strengths of those attending, strengthening skills and learning new skills and giving them a flavour of new experiences.

The Council will continue to use local resources and services and work with the communities and third sector to support the development of hubs and enterprises that can strengthen the provision of services that can support people to live their best lives in their communities.

The Council will also continue with the effort to seek to ensure that the provision of services and opportunities which support older people, are balanced across the County.

6 VIEWS OF THE STATUTORY OFFICERS

Chief Finance Officer

"I note the author's comments that the objectives of the decisions sought are not to achieve financial savings. Despite this, the financial challenges and pressures on the care services are well-known to Cabinet members; I am satisfied that the decisions sought are reasonable under the circumstances and I have no objections to them."

Monitoring Officer

"The report confirms the situation which stems directly from the circumstances of 2020. The proposal gives the Cabinet an opportunity to review this and come to a decision on the situation."

7 APPENDICES

1. Impact Assessments on Equality Characteristics, the Welsh Language and Soci-Economic Disadvantage.
2. Well-Being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 Assessment