

<b>MEETING</b>	<b>The Council</b>
<b>DATE</b>	<b>2 October 2025</b>
<b>TITLE</b>	<b>The Annual Report Of The Statutory Director Of Social Services 2024/25</b>
<b>PURPOSE</b>	<b>To submit the report for the attention of Council Members</b>
<b>AUTHOR</b>	<b>Dylan Owen, Statutory Director of Social Services</b>

## **1. Background**

- 1.1. At the end of every fiscal year, all Statutory Directors of Social Services are required to provide and publish a report regarding the performance of Social Services within the local authority during the previous year.
- 1.2. The purpose of the annual report is to note the local authority's journey towards improvement in providing services to residents, to those who receive information, advice and assistance, the individuals and the carers who receive care and support.
- 1.3. Under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act, I as Director am asked to consider the range of information and experiences that affect the ability of the Council's Social Services to provide reliable, sustainable services of the highest quality, and to express my opinion in the report and present it to the Council. The report draws attention to any lessons learnt and outlines the priorities for the year to come. It also explains how we assessed people's needs and included them at the centre as we shaped our services and care provision.
- 1.4. The format follows national guidelines and a template, and we assess our performance according to four main headings: **People**, **Prevention**, **Partnership** and **Well-being**. I would like to thank the Senior Executive Officer, Lois Owens, for her diligent and detailed work on this report and for her support for the work.
- 1.5. The past year has not been easy. As stated in the report foreword, some work plans had to be delayed in order to focus on serious cases of child abuse here in Gwynedd. Safeguarding is at the core of our work, and when this fails, the impact is profound and far-reaching.
- 1.6. There was also a clear increase in demand across children's services and adult services, with the nature of the cases becoming more complex. Financial sustainability, recruitment and retention of frontline staff, demographic changes as highlighted in the Llechen Lân report, and securing suitable and safe placements for children in our care all cause significant concern. In view of this, we work closely with our key partners to ensure that suitable services are available locally - for children and adults alike.

- 1.7. It is clear from the performance reported here that managers and staff have made a heroic effort to be able to cope with the demands that have been placed on them during the year. It is important to recognise and celebrate the successes and innovative work of our teams. The report contains real stories and quotes (with the names changed), which show a deep appreciation of our workforce. It shows how good social work can change lives - helping people to live independently and healthier.
- 1.8. I would like to acknowledge the the good work and successes across a number of areas. For example, the **Learning Disability Service** has succeeded in doubling the number of individuals who are on the path towards work and are now earning a salary. In addition, the **Dementia Actif** scheme continues to demonstrate its value - not only to the individuals living with dementia, but also to their carers, and to the wider community in terms of social value. In the children's field, we have succeeded in opening **small group homes**, which means that young people in care can now stay close to their communities and natural connections, rather than being located far away. This is an important step towards providing local, sensitive and suitable support to their needs.
- 1.9. Also, the development of the **Care Academy** is a positive step towards strengthening the skills of the workforce, attracting more people to the field, and raising the profile of care work as a valuable and professional career. It offers continuous training and development opportunities that respond to the real needs of the service and the community.
- 1.10. There's always room for improvement, of course, and the report highlights a number of areas that require further attention. Among these are **support for unpaid carers, reducing waiting lists for home care** (although there has been a significant reduction in this area over recent months), and the need for **clearer strategic plans for accommodation and support**. These areas are included on the work program for the coming year, with the aim of ensuring continuous improvements.
- 1.11. In accordance with the Council's internal performance procedure, the relevant services will be challenged over the next year and reports on the performance will be presented to the Scrutiny Committees regularly. An overview of the performance of the services for the whole year will also be available in the Gwynedd Council Performance Report for 2024/25.

## 2. Recommendation

- 2.1. The Council is requested to note the content of the report submitted by the authority's Statutory Director for Social Services.

## 3. Views of the Statutory Officers

**The Monitoring Officer:**

Presenting the report to the full Council provides an opportunity to consider the work and challenges which faces “Social Services” from the perspective of the statutory director. I am satisfied with the propriety of the report.

**Head of Finance Department:**

I believe that the financial information contained in the annual report is a fair reflection of the situation of the Social Services for 2024/25. I am satisfied that the approval of this annual report will not involve any additional financial commitment from the Council.