

MEETING	The Council
DATE	11 July 2024
TITLE	The Annual Report of the Statutory Director of Social Services 2023/24
PURPOSE	To submit the report for the attention of Council Members
AUTHOR	Dylan Owen, Statutory Director of Social Services

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 of the report followed national guidelines over the past few years, but, you will see that is somewhat different this year, and we assess our performance according to four main headings: People, Prevention, Partnership and Wellbeing. This is due to changes to the template following a consultation by the Welsh Government during the summer of 2023.
- 1.5. On receiving your feedback on last year's report, I have also taken the opportunity to highlight more clearly under each heading those areas where our performance is good, and the areas where we have room for improvement. I continue to try to make it more accessible and reader-friendly this year. In addition to a written report, we are preparing a series of video clips to highlight the importance of the services' work and the difference it makes to the lives of the people of Gwynedd.
- 1.6. It is a pleasure to be able to report that the performance of Gwynedd Social Services is good overall, which reflects our workforce's commitment and resilience. The year gone by was not easy, and an increase in demand was seen across the children's services and the mental health service, with a number of

cases now more intense and complex. The cost-of-living challenges and the impact of waiting times for health treatments continue to be felt in our communities. It is obvious 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 on them during the year. It is important to celebrate the successes and innovative work within our teams.

- 1.7. As highlighted in the report, we have also experienced substantial challenges, and certainly we have key matters that require our attention on a local, regional and national level. Financial sustainability, recruitment and retention of staff on the front line, demographic changes together with ensuring suitable and safe placements for children in our care are cause for concern. As a result, we are working hard, jointly with our key partners, to seek to ensure that appropriate services are available locally. This is the case about the children and adults' fields alike.
- 1.8. The performance of relevant services is challenged in accordance with the Council's internal procedures and reports on this performance are presented by the relevant Cabinet members at regular intervals. An overview of the services' performance for the whole year will also be available in the Cyngor Gwynedd Performance Report for 2023/24.

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 2023/24. I am satisfied that the approval of this annual report will not involve any additional financial commitment from the Council.