

To: Members of the Performance
Scrutiny Committee

Date: 13 July 2023

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Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the **PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** to be held at **10.00 am** on **THURSDAY, 20 JULY 2023** in the **COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, RUTHIN AND BY VIDEO CONFERENCE.**

Yours sincerely

G. Williams
Monitoring Officer

AGENDA

1 APOLOGIES

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (Pages 5 - 6)

Members to declare any personal or prejudicial interests in any business identified to be considered at this meeting.

3 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

Notice of items which, in the opinion of the Chair, should be considered at the meeting as a matter of urgency pursuant to Section 100B(4) of the Local Government Act 1972.

4 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING (Pages 7 - 18)

To receive the minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 8 June 2023 (copy attached).

10.05am – 10.10am

5 RECRUITMENT, RETENTION AND WORKFORCE PLANNING (Pages 19 - 54)

To receive a report (copy enclosed) from the Interim Head of Service: Human Resources on Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning.

10.10am – 10.45am

6 CURRICULUM FOR WALES (Pages 55 - 60)

To receive a report from the Head of Education Services on the progress made in relation to the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales (copy enclosed).

10.45am – 11.15am

BREAK 11.15AM - 11.30AM

7 ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS (ALN) TRANSFORMATION (Pages 61 - 66)

To receive a report from the Head of Education Services on the Additional Learning Needs (ALN) transformation (copy enclosed).

11.30am – 12pm

8 DRAFT DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT (Pages 67 - 136)

To receive the draft Director of Social Services Annual Report from the Corporate Director: Communities, Modernisation and Wellbeing (copy enclosed).

12pm – 12.30pm

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 137 - 160)

To consider a report by the Scrutiny Coordinator (copy enclosed) seeking a review of the committee's forward work programme and updating members on relevant issues.

12.30pm – 12.45pm

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

To receive any updates from Committee representatives on various Council Boards and Groups.

12.45pm – 1pm

MEMBERSHIP

Councillors

Councillor Hugh Irving (Chair)

Councillor Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair)

Ellie Chard
Chris Evans
Martyn Hogg
Carol Holliday
Alan Hughes

Paul Keddie
Diane King
Terry Mendies
Andrea Tomlin

Voting Co-opted Members for Education (Agenda Items No. 6 & 7 only)

Terence Flanagan
Kathleen Jones

Neil Roberts

COPIES TO:

All Councillors for information
Press and Libraries
Town and Community Councils

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LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000

Code of Conduct for Members

DISCLOSURE AND REGISTRATION OF INTERESTS

I, *(name)*

a *member/co-opted member of
*(*please delete as appropriate)*

Denbighshire County Council

CONFIRM that I have declared a ***personal / personal and prejudicial** interest not previously declared in accordance with the provisions of Part III of the Council's Code of Conduct for Members, in respect of the following:-
*(*please delete as appropriate)*

Date of Disclosure:

Committee *(please specify)*:

Agenda Item No.

Subject Matter:

Nature of Interest:

*(See the note below)**

Signed

Date

*Note: Please provide sufficient detail e.g. 'I am the owner of land adjacent to the application for planning permission made by Mr Jones', or 'My husband / wife is an employee of the company which has made an application for financial assistance'.

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PERFORMANCE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Performance Scrutiny Committee held in Council Chamber, County Hall, Ruthin and by video conference on Thursday, 8 June 2023 at 10.00 am.

PRESENT

Councillors Ellie Chard, Chris Evans, Martyn Hogg, Carol Holliday, Alan Hughes, Hugh Irving (Chair), Paul Keddie, Diane King, Terry Mendies, Gareth Sandilands (Vice-Chair) and Andrea Tomlin

Lead Members – Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets, Councillor Gwyneth Ellis and Lead Member for Welsh Language, Culture and Heritage, Councillor Emrys Wynne.

Observer - Councillor Huw Hilditch-Roberts

ALSO PRESENT

Corporate Director: Governance and Business (Monitoring Officer) (GW); Interim Head of Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets (NK); Strategic Planning & Performance Officer (EH); Principal Manager: Community Resilience (CT); Interim Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation Services (BE); Digital Officer North Wales (PB); Scrutiny Co-ordinators (RhE); Zoom Host (KJ) Committee Administrator (SJ).

Partnership Director for Openreach – Mr Martin Williams

1 APOLOGIES

Councillor Barry Mellor, Lead Member for Environment and Transport, invited to present agenda item 8, had tendered his apologies as he had already committed to attend another meeting.

2 DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No interests of a personal or prejudicial nature were declared.

3 APPOINTMENT OF VICE CHAIR

Nominations were sought for the office of Vice-Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year. Councillor Ellie Chard nominated Councillor Gareth Sandilands for the role of Vice-Chair, Councillor Carol Holliday seconded the nomination. No other nominations were put forward. The Committee:

Resolved: that Councillor Gareth Sandilands be elected Vice-Chair of Performance Scrutiny Committee for the 2023/24 municipal year.

Councillor Sandilands thanked Committee members for their support and for entrusting him with a further term as Vice-Chair of the Committee.

4 URGENT MATTERS AS AGREED BY THE CHAIR

No items of an urgent nature had been raised with the Chair or the Scrutiny Co-ordinator prior to the commencement of the meeting.

5 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

The minutes of the Performance Scrutiny Committee meeting held 27 April 2023 were submitted. It was:

Resolved: that the minutes of the meeting held on 27 April 2023 be approved as a true, accurate and correct record of the proceedings.

Matters arising from the minutes:

The Corporate Director: Governance and Business confirmed that a session had recently been held with the Council's Senior Leadership Team (SLT) to discuss the collective approach towards managing risks across the Authority, with a particular emphasis on those risks which were outside of the Council's risk appetite.

Enquiries had been initiated with respect of how the Council could monitor that all of its commissioned care providers were paying their staff, as a minimum, the 'real living wage'. This was a complex matter, involving a number of stakeholders, and therefore confirmation was still awaited on whether this could be done. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator agreed to follow up the enquiry.

Information with respect to the delay in presenting the 'Recruitment, Retention and Workforce Planning' report had been included in the 'Scrutiny Work Programme' report included in the meeting's agenda pack. Members were advised by the Corporate Director: Governance and Business that, due to the on-going recruitment process to SLT posts which was not due to conclude until late July, officers would due to severe capacity issues struggle to prepare and present the requested report to the Committee at its July meeting. Whilst acknowledging the additional work entailed with the current recruitment exercises to senior posts members expressed their concern about the repeated delay with the report's presentation to the Committee, particularly as recruitment and retention was causing service delivery pressures across all Council services. The Corporate Director: Governance and Business agreed to request that the HR Service provide the Committee with as comprehensive a report as possible having regard to current workloads and priorities.

6 POOR INTERNET CONNECTIVITY IN DENBIGHSHIRE

The Chair welcomed the Lead Member for Broadband and Digital Strategy along with officers to present the report on poor internet connectivity in Denbighshire (previously circulated). On behalf of the committee he welcomed Martin Williams from Openreach.

Mr Williams thanked the committee for the invitation to attend the Performance Scrutiny Committee. He explained he was the Partnership Director for Openreach in Wales. His team was responsible for the roll out of full fibre broadband across Wales engaging with key stakeholders and communities on updates on the commercial builds and options for communities. The team also looked after the current co-funded contract with Welsh Government.

The Lead Member informed members included in the papers was the current information on levels of broadband in properties in the community. He stressed it was the responsibility of Openreach to install fibre in houses in Denbighshire. There was no legal requirement for Openreach to connect households to that fibre. Denbighshire County Council did not have the power to influence how Openreach operate. Members heard there was numerous plans including voucher schemes with the agency subject to eligibility. The process for a group to come together and apply for the voucher schemes took time. UK Government had put together the Gigabit Project which impacted the Gigabit voucher. Members heard there were alternative technologies such as wireless connections, satellite and 4G available but were not always the best solution for residents. It was dependant on the location of the property.

It was hoped that the windfarm grant provision in Denbighshire would help bridge any funding gaps between the Gigabit Voucher scheme and fibre install costs.

The Interim Head of Business Improvement and Modernisation Services along with the Digital Officer explained, Denbighshire had introduced the Digital Officer role to engage with communities, businesses and residents to offer a reasonable internet connection to their property. It was explained reasonable was a speed of 30 mbs, preferably fibre. Officers had to work with Openreach and go through their fibre partnership schemes to use Government money to fund. Currently the authority was restricted to where work could be completed due to upgrade programmes underway. Members heard the Gigabit voucher scheme was currently suspended in Wales due to the UK Government Initiative Gigabit Project was under tender. It was stressed officers have a good working relationship with Openreach.

One issue observed was the amount of money in the voucher scheme. Welsh Government ceased supporting the Gigabit voucher last year which in turn reduced it by 50%, UK Government have since increased the value of the voucher to £4500. It was hoped that it would reach the more rural areas. The really hard to reach areas would require further funding to achieve fibre internet.

The Chair thanked all the officers and Lead Member for the detailed introduction and invited members to raise any points for further explanation. The following points were discussed in greater detail:

- It was stressed the priority within the Corporate Plan of a better connected Denbighshire and the need to work in partnership with Openreach to achieve the targets set in that theme.
- It was felt the need for better connectivity in Denbighshire would be beneficial for both residents and businesses.
- Members heard there were over 100 network providers in the UK of which Openreach was just one. Predominantly in Denbighshire it was Openreach that was the main provider.

- The full fibre coverage in Denbighshire was very good. Currently the best in Wales for full fibre coverage. The coverage currently was 71.6% across the authority for full fibre. A £10mil investment from Openreach may have been one of the reasons for the high level of coverage. In relation the Wales average for full fibre coverage was 47%.
- Members were informed about the free website 'think broadband' which could test the connectivity in an area.
- Members stress the difficulty encountered when obtaining residents and businesses to participate in the voucher scheme. It was noted a time scale may have been due to a deadline prior to suspending the scheme.
- Infrastructure builds had taken place across all of Wales both rural and urban areas. It was hoped that in conjunction with the other full fibre providers up to 85% of the UK will have full fibre available by the end of 2026. The last 15% would potentially need further investment in the future.
- The voucher scheme from start to finish could take 12-18 months to complete that incorporated the initial period of obtaining sign ups to the development of infrastructure needed to provide the service.
- Officers and the Openreach representative encouraged members to contact them direct to review any quotes for areas or communities and work with them to move forward.
- Communication with the areas currently with lower internet connectivity to work with them to support and aid through the process.
- The telephone provider was responsible to informing residents and businesses of copper being turned off. When the copper exchange was turned off, houses that did not have fibre would still use copper wires from the home to the box until they are upgraded. The copper was not being retired it was the electronics within the exchange. The copper lines would still be there.
- The importance of take up was stressed by officers and engaging with everyone in the authority was essential.
- Other network providers could offer a service and input any infrastructure needed for that property.

The Chair thanked the Officers and in particular Martin Williams for his time and detailed explanation and discussions to members comments and concerns.

At the conclusion of an in-depth discussion the Committee:

***Resolved:* subject to the above observations and with a view to supporting the vision of a better connected Denbighshire, that a further progress report on internet connectivity, future upgrading and roll-out plans, along with information on schemes or support available for hard to reach communities and properties in the county, be presented to the Committee in six months' time.**

7 COUNCIL PERFORMANCE SELF-ASSESSMENT 2022 TO 2023

The Lead Member for Finance, Performance and Strategic Assets along with the Interim Head of Service Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and

Assets and Planning and Performance Officer guided members through the report (previously circulated).

The Lead Member stressed this self-assessment was based on the new Corporate Plan. A great amount of work had been placed in to the report and the attachments from officers, Cabinet, SLT etc.

The report presented to the committee were statutory reports and provided members the opportunity to assess if the authority was achieving what it set out to in accordance with the Corporate Plan.

Officers confirmed appendix 2 was a quarterly performance report based on the Corporate plan and overview of governance areas, which was a statutory document. Which responded to the authorities' duties under the Well-being of Future Generations Act, the Equalities Act and the Local Government and Elections Act.

This Committee along with Cabinet, received an update of the performance report 4 times a year, quarter 1 and 3 are received virtually via email with quarter 2 and 4 are tabled at a meeting for a discussion.

It was stressed this was the first performance review of the new Corporate Plan and would be used as a baseline for future self-assessments going forward.

Officers were aware within appendix 2 to the report, there was a large number of indicators and measures showing as red – priority for improvement. Members were reminded it was the first year of a five-year plan and suggested the themes and objectives demonstrated challenges faced in the community of which the authority wanted to improve. It was hoped going forward with the plan those red indicators would improve to a more positive position.

It was hoped that members felt the report beneficial and helpful in identifying areas for further scrutiny in the future.

Officers highlighted the number of key indicators that referred to the Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation. This was collated by Welsh Government and was reported on once a term, an update was expected in the next year or two. It did reflect the levels of deprivation across the county.

Appendix 1 was the self-assessment. That document was presented to the Performance Scrutiny Committee annually along with County Council and the Governance and Audit Committee. The report took stock of how the authority was performing against the Corporate Plan and the objectives set in the plan, and the extent to which our performance was resulting in positive outcomes and how well our governance was supporting continuous improvement.

It was stressed that at this point in time the documents were both still live documents and would be presented to County Council for approval in July 2023. A greater amount of Nationally benchmarked data was being measured against which officers felt was important. Further work was needed to agree what excellence looked like in some of those measures.

In the opinion of officers, the two reports represented a fair analysis of where the authority stood at this stage of the Corporate Plan. Officers were seeking members

feedback, and consider the reports and identify areas where further work may be required to address and performance concerns.

The Chair thanked the officers and Lead Member for the detailed introduction and comprehensive reports.

Responding to members' questions the Lead Member and officers:

- Sustainable Travel was a pledge carried over from the previous Corporate Plan. It was officers understanding a policy was currently being taken through the Cabinet process. Updates were expected in terms of indicators that can be used against this initiative by the end of June 2023.
- In Denbighshire, our default approach to setting performance thresholds is to take the upper-quartile (best performing) from nationally comparable information as the point where performance is considered 'Excellent'. The 'Priority for Improvement' threshold is usually the median. Midway between these two values determines the threshold between 'Acceptable' and 'Good' performance. If no data is available that we can compare ourselves with (either nationally or by comparable grouping), then we will take a local view on what we feel reasonably determines 'Excellent' and 'Priority for Improvement' performance. This should represent our ambition.
- Each Corporate Plan theme was given an overall status of performance for its measures and projects. Performance Officers always reviewed data provided and queried any issues they observed.
- Members noted the improvement in the energy ratings in Council's housing.
- Members suggested one area that they may like to scrutinise was the Early Intervention and Prevention team for homeless prevention. Especially following the change in legislation around notice periods issued for people to leave properties. The Scrutiny Coordinator informed members a report was due to be presented in September 2023 titled 'Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan'. It was suggested to request information on the new legislation and its impact be included in that paper.
- Performance officers where possible include percentages not numbers for indicators and measures, which provided a stronger indication of performance, for example the level of service that was being provided.
- Members made reference to the important across council issue of recruitment and retention. Members noted the issues faced across all areas and departments in the authority.
- The software package used to collect all performance data was Verto. Officers were happy to offer members further information on the system if they requested.
- Overall performance statuses for each theme were determined by two aspects that were judged, those being measures and the projects. The measures were the important element that illustrates what was being seen in the community. It demonstrated what residents and communities were experiencing in line with those themes and those areas officers hoped to see an improvement.
- A report on the Welsh Language Strategy was due to be presented to Cabinet in June.

The Chair thanked the officers for the detailed report and appendices.

Following consideration of the report the Committee:

Resolved: - subject to the above observations -

- (i) to receive the report and its contents;***
- (ii) to encourage all elected members to utilise the report as one of the tools to be used to inform future Scrutiny work programmes;***
- (iii) to note the Council's progress in developing its performance objectives along with its initial performance in delivering its new Corporate Plan; and***
- (iv) request that enquiries be made to establish the current position with regards to the development of a Sustainable Transport Plan for Denbighshire, with a view to determining whether Scrutiny could help progress its development and support its future delivery.***

8 REVIEW AND REFRESH OF DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S CLIMATE AND ECOLOGICAL CHANGE STRATEGY (2021/22-2029/30)

The Interim Head of Service- Strategy & Performance, Projects, Climate Change introduced the report to members (previously circulated).

Members were reminded that the authority had a Climate and Ecological Change board in place in response to the declaration of a Climate Change and Ecological Emergency by Council in July 2019. A great deal of work was completed to develop a strategy. Within the terms of reference for the strategy was a commitment to review the strategy on a three yearly basis. This was good practice in terms of programme and strategy management allowing responses to changes in the external environment can be included in the plan.

The Climate Change Programme Manager provided members with further details and information. She informed the committee it was the first review of the strategy to be conducted with the next in 3 years' time – 2026/7.

Members were guided through the review and refresh as reported in the covering report as follows –

- a) the scope of the current strategy.
- b) the target pathways to achieve the 2030 targets of Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive Council.
- c) the actions within the strategy - what needs to be changed and what needs to be added.
- d) the measures of success - whether any need to be added or changed.
- e) the information provided about finance, governance, partnership working and sharing learning.

It was stressed to members; officers were keen to engage with a wide range of populous at the early stage of the review and again at the end of the review. Members heard the start review commenced on the 18 May 2023 with a closing date of 2nd July 2023. To date 59 responses had been completed and returned to officers.

The independent assessment had been received. It had been completed and returned and was being reviewed and reflected upon.

The re-establishment of the cross party Climate Change and Ecological Emergency political working group had begun with representatives from each political party being sought.

The aim of the review was for the revised strategy to be approved by County Council and Cabinet in February and March 2024. It was hoped the committee would agree for an update report to be presented to Performance Scrutiny Committee in early 2024 prior to County Council and Cabinet.

The Chair thanked the officers for the detailed introduction. In response to members questions the following points were discussed in greater detail:

- The survey would be made available for residents to complete and return online, paper copies would also be made available. Communication with environmental groups to distribute paper copies had also been agreed. Officers noted the challenge engaging with residents and hoped a public engagement session would be arranged in the summer.
- It was also hoped that an in person meeting with the public on the adoption of the revised strategy. Officers welcomed any suggestions and support from members with engaging with the public.
- Members were in full support of the working group. It would be a vital part for members of the group to report back to political groups any messages or information coming from the group.
- Part of the constitution, the authority had the power to acquire or lease land to deliver the ambitions of the council. The constitution was updated in relation to the acquisition of land for carbon sequestration and ecological improvement purposes in 2022. Any land purchases had to go through a robust process to ensure it was appropriate for the intention of the purchase.
- Provision was inserted to the constitution under the principals of decision making which requires any decision to have regard to climate and ecological change. A number of delegated authorities would receive sight of any proposed acquisition proposals including the Asset Management Group.
- A reminder would be sent to all City, Town and Community Councils to share the questionnaire and post on social media websites.
- It was noted that the majority of correspondence received from the public was usually electronically. Paper copies would be shared for residents to complete with an emphasis on online publicising.
- A vast amount of statistics around wildflower meadow and its impact on climate and ecological change was available for members. It was hoped in the future the team would present a workshop to members.
- Members stressed the importance of communication. It was felt it was a vital aspect of informing residents of the authorities priorities and the background for completing certain projects such as wildflower meadow areas.

At the conclusion of an in-depth discussion the Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) subject to the above observations to support the commencement of the review and refresh of the Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to be conducted during 2023/24; and***
- (ii) to support the approach that will be taken when reviewing the Strategy and for adopting a refreshed Strategy in early 2024, including pre-decision engagement with Performance Scrutiny Committee ahead of presenting the refreshed Strategy to Cabinet and County Council for adoption.***

9 SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

The Scrutiny Co-ordinator introduced the report and appendices (previously circulated) the purpose of which was to seek the Committee to review its programme of future work.

Members were guided through the draft forward work programme in Appendix 1. It was confirmed a report on recruitment and retention would be included on the agenda for the next Committee meeting scheduled for 20th July 2023. Also scheduled for that meeting was a report on Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning Needs Transformation for which the co-opted members will be invited to attend. In addition, the Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022/23 was scheduled for the next meeting.

At the last Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group meeting, it was decided to include 5 reports over the next 12 months on the committees forward work plan which were all educational items. The next Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group meeting was arranged for 25 July 2023.

Committee members were encouraged to complete a scrutiny proposal form (Appendix 2) in respect of any topic which in their view merited detailed examination by Scrutiny. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed she would liaise with the Chair and Vice Chair to complete a proposal for a report on Draft Sustainable Travel Plan.

Appendix 3 was the Cabinet forward work programme for members' reference.

Appendix 5 to the report was the table of members who represented the committee on each of the Service Challenges meetings. It was highlighted to members a vacancy on the Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital & Assets. It was suggested at the last meeting Councillor Paul Keddie might be interested in attending that meeting. The Scrutiny Co-ordinator confirmed she had discussed the role with Councillor Keddie who stated he would be happy to represent the committee at that group, if members were in agreement.

Due to a change in the committee membership, a representative was required to attend the Corporate Support Service: People meeting. Councillor Martyn Hogg agreed to attend the Corporate Support Service: People. All members were in agreement.

In response to an enquiry the Scrutiny Co-ordinator agreed to investigate whether there was a connection between the 'Learner Travel Measure (Wales)' report,

currently delayed and listed under 'Future Issues' due to the Welsh Government (WG) seeking further information from authorities across Wales on school transport, and an overspend on school transport in the county.

The Committee:

Resolved:

- (i) subject to the amendments and additions outlined in the report and agreed during the course of the meeting, to confirm the Committee's Forward Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and***
- (ii) to appoint Councillor Paul Keddie as the Committee's representative on the Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets Service Challenge Group, and to appoint Councillor Martyn Hogg to replace Councillor Jon Harland as the Committee's representative on the Corporate Support Service: People Service Challenge Group.***

10 FEEDBACK FROM COMMITTEE REPRESENTATIVES

The Vice-Chair, Councillor Gareth Sandilands, gave a brief overview of matters discussed at the Capital Scrutiny Group (CSG) which had taken place the previous day. Amongst the matters discussed were proposals to develop the Greengates Farm site into a nature reserve and how best to spend the £0.5m+ grant monies received towards that work. Discussions had also taken place on work associated with the 21st Century Schools programme.

The Chair, Councillor Hugh Irving, reported on a recent meeting of the Queen's Building Project Board which he had attended. During that meeting Board members had been informed that the new Queen's Building structure was on target to be handed over to the Council by mid July 2023. In addition, tenders had been received expressing an interest in becoming the operator for the new facility. These had been evaluated by the Tender Evaluation Panel, with the conclusions following the evaluation process being presented to the Project Board who subsequently formulated a recommendation in respect of a preferred operator for the facility. That recommendation would be presented to Cabinet in the near future seeking it approve the recommendation and appoint an operator.

The Committee:

Resolved: to receive the feedback and updates received.

Meeting concluded at 12.45pm.

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20th July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Julie Matthews, Lead Member for Corporate Strategy, Policy and Equalities
Head of Service	Louise Dougal – Interim Head of Service
Report author	Louise Dougal – Interim Head of Service
Title	Workforce Planning, Recruitment & Retention and Sickness Absence

1. What is the report about?

1.1. This report provides current information and progress of the workforce plan including recruitment and retention activities and also provides turnover and sickness absence data for 2022/2023.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide current information, data and progress.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. That the Committee confirms that it has read, understood and taken account of the information being presented and supports the ongoing monitoring of turnover and absence.

4. Report details

Workforce Plan (including Recruitment and Retention Activities)

4.1. A corporate workforce plan was agreed by the Council in January 2022 together with an Action Plan to address the agreed priorities. The plan and action plan

were brought to Performance Scrutiny Committee in March 2022. Workforce planning for 2023 has been paused to allow the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) restructure to be completed and the recruitment of our 5 vacant Head of Service roles. However, work on the action plan continues.

- 4.2. An audit has just been completed of the workforce plan action plan, this report is due to go to Governance and Audit Committee in July 2023 by the Head of Internal Audit. A copy of this report is in Appendix 1.
- 4.3. In summary, the report confirmed that Human Resources (HR) have robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the Corporate Workforce Plan. The development of some policies and guidance has been delayed due to vacancies within the team and workload pressures, however these have new revised completion dates.

Recruitment, Retention and Staff Turnover

- 4.4. Appendix 2 provides an overview of the staff turnover. Staff turnover rate defines how many employees leave an organisation during a set period of time . The Denbighshire County Council (DCC) turnover rate is 11.6 %, turnover in 2022/23 has increased and it is at its highest rate for 6 years in Denbighshire. As a general rule, an organisation should be aiming for a turnover rate of 10% or less.
- 4.5. A high turnover rate can be costly and disruptive to a business; however, it is important to note that whilst we are experiencing a higher turnover rate, our rate is still average compared to the national average and is below the UK average.
- 4.6. Appendix 2 shows that there have been 299 leavers to DCC in the last financial year, however the position headcount has increased during this time by 114 positions. The position headcount for services at the end of March does demonstrate that position headcount has been maintained therefore we have been able to recruit in most cases.
- 4.7. Recruitment & Retention Strategies which have been introduced or improved to support the Council in the delivery of services in the future:
- 4.8. Recruitment:

- New recruitment pages on the intranet to promote DCC – please visit : <https://www.denbighshire.gov.uk/en/jobs-and-employees/jobs-and-employees.aspx>
- Increase in career pathways to support recruitment into hard to fill positions.
- Recruitment workshops for frontline jobs rather than traditional application form approach – out in the communities
- Created new basic application form for lower graded posts.
- Created new advert templates to promote Denbighshire as an employer of choice.
- Advertising in special publications
- Created new Facebook page for recruitment only – increased followers and increasing posts.
- Paid / sponsored adverts on LinkedIn & Facebook
- Specialist recruitment Packs for hard to fill posts.
- Mystery Shopper
- Looking at best practice across the UK and using self-assessment tools to ensure we are maximising opportunities.

4.9. Retention:

- Benefits page updated on intranet.
- Benefits sessions advertised for staff.
- Cost of living sessions.
- Learning & Development opportunities increased.
- Access to free training and have establish good links with colleges and universities.
- Bespoke training for departments – funding where possible through the free apprenticeship levy.
- Looking at terms and conditions (T&Cs) to ensure they are comparable with regional colleagues and reviewing some areas.
- Pay table review.
- People Strategy – Promotion of our Culture and Values

Sickness Absence

4.10. Appendix 3 gives an overview of sickness absence for 2022/2023. The average days lost for this period is 9.56 days which is a reduction from the previous year. In a recent circular for Wales, 15 councils responded, from those responses, Denbighshire were in 2nd position with the lowest days lost for employees, with the average being at 12.19 days lost.

4.11. The top 5 reasons for absence have remained consistent over the previous 3 years, however, there has been a notable reduction in the number of absences recorded as Stress – Personal which no longer features as a top 3 reason.

4.12. COVID absence accounts for 10.48% of our absence rates.

4.13. Sickness absence is monitored on a monthly basis by HR and Managers and support is provided to managers on the application of the policy.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. The work on these key areas contributes to theme 9 in ensuring Denbighshire County Council is a good employer and is an excellent place to work by delivering and embedding the staff well-being policy, supporting training and workforce development, promoting fairness, equality and diversity and working collaboratively both across the Council and with partners to alleviate problems with recruitment and retention.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. Absence of staff to carry out their roles can have a significant impact on services. Financial costs arrive from back filling roles, i.e. cooks, refuse collectors. Non-financial costs come from the additional pressures on managers, teams, and employees in services to carry out additional work and training.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. Not applicable

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Not applicable

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Staff costs form the majority of the Council's revenue expenditure and it is vital that this resource is managed effectively and efficiently. The workforce plan is an important tool in that management and the possible financial impacts are summarised in section 6.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. The main risk comes from staff absence whether that be due to sickness absence or turnover. We have HR Officers working in services to support and improve attendance through our HR Policies.

10.2. We are also promoting our values and supporting our leaders to lead with compassion. We promote the importance of 1-2-1 meetings for all staff so employee's health, wellbeing, work life balance and workload is actively managed.

11. Power to make the decision.

11.1. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000

11.2. Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution outlines Scrutiny's powers with respect of monitoring performance in relation to policy delivery and/or service areas.

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Appendix 1

D222315 - Internal Audit of Workforce Planning

Internal Audit engagements are conducted in conformance with the
Public Sector Internal Audit Standards

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Purpose and Scope of Review

Provide assurance for Section 151 officer, senior management and inform the Annual Internal Audit report and Annual Governance Statement. Reviewing policies and procedures in place, looking at how Human Resources (HR) are looking at Corporate and Service risk registers around capacity and resilience of key roles: -

1. To consider the Councils Leadership and Management Development process, looking at the People Strategy in place which outlines the culture, standards, and expectations of the workforce, in line with the CEO Principles.
2. To review the Councils Recruitment and Retention Policy to see if it is still fit for purpose.
3. To evaluate how the Council is promoting itself as a high performing and empowering workforce to encourage people to join the authority or staff to remain.
4. To review the Council's current /future arrangements around developing a Flexible and Agile Workforce.
5. To look at how the council is supporting staff with Health and Wellbeing matter.

Audit Opinion

The review confirmed there are robust HR initiatives and strategies in place to support the Corporate Workforce Plan. Agile policy and guidance is on target and is on the agenda to be presented to Cabinet in May 2023, with a target of June 2023 to go live. Leadership conferences have been reviewed by the Chief Executive Officer (CEO) and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) with a timetable in place for the next 12 months. The review of Leadership Conference is required prior to one to one's being carried out and performance indicators are being monitored. Succession planning is carried out routinely and a decision has been made to draft a formal plan by the end of April 2024 to support managers.

The HR department had a number of vacancies within the team, and are in the process of recruiting SLT members, which is priority. Therefore, the development of some policies and guidance has been delayed. Management induction is a mechanism for supporting and upskilling new managers on policies, procedures, tools and systems has also been delayed until September 2023. These delays pose a moderate risk (See Issue 1).

The One Council Approach is making good progress, corporate induction and new starter provisions are functioning well and Welsh Unions Learning Funding (WULF) ensures regular courses, which are well advertised and also includes a good provision of management courses. The Operational Development specialist (OD) helps identify skills gaps so that future provisions offering bespoke training can get underway. Discussions are ongoing to support the Welsh Language Strategy and Welsh courses are promoted for employees to develop their skills.

Testing confirms that HR have taken a proactive approach to recruitment with regular workshops being held for CSS/CS vacancies and in September 2022 a job fair organised by HR proved successful. The number of staff on a career pathway has doubled in the last three years and managers are seeing the benefits of career pathways as managers are growing their own and filling skill gaps as well as retaining staff. New adverts and person specifications for vacancies have been streamlined to encourage more applicants and employee benefits are advertised well.

HR are demonstrating a strong commitment to support Health and Wellbeing. There is a mass of resources and policies which are easily assessable and publicised well. There are

dedicated Mental Health first aiders in each department listed on the intranet. HR have identified the need to ensure the list is current and intend to schedule reviewing this on a 6 monthly basis. Policies are updated regularly, but we advise going forward, that the date of review and next review date should be recorded on the front cover, as it was not always clear during testing (See Issue 2)

The Staff Council continues to be effective, having been used as a consultative body for communicating messages such as NWOW and the Corporate Plan.

Based on the scope of our review, we give a 'Medium' assurance overall.

Details of the definitions of the ratings used in our report are included in Appendix 2.

Medium Assurance ●	Minor weaknesses in management of risks and/or objectives but no risk to achievement of objectives
--------------------	--

Action Plan

Issue 1 – Not all Policies and Procedures are in place. - Moderate Risk ●

Vacancies in HR team and other priorities have led to delays of actions covered in Point 1 of the Corporate Workforce Plan which includes: the Peoples Strategy, Leadership Strategy, Succession Planning and Managers Induction.

The three specialist vacancies in HR have now been filled, so HR are confident that the People Strategy and Leadership Strategy should be in draft by the end November 2023, anticipating approval by January 2024 with a roll out at the end of March 2024

See Root Cause 1 for more detail.

Priority	Agreed action	Responsibility	Deadline
	1.1 Peoples Strategy to be drafted		30/11/2023
	1.2 Leadership Strategy to be drafted (which forms part of the Peoples Strategy)		30/11/2023
	1.3 Succession Planning to be drafted		01/04/2024
	1.4 Management Induction to be drafted		30/09/2023

Issue 2 – Not all strategies are fully operational. – Moderate Risk ●

Vacancies in HR department and other priorities have led to delays of actions covered in Point 2 of the Corporate Workforce Plan. The review identified there is a Recruitment and Selection Policy in place was reviewed by the previous post holder but has not had a full review recently.

There has been a lot of work completed surrounding support for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy. Mental Health first aiders and Menopause champions are in place, however the list of mental first aiders on the intranet is out of date and needs updating along with identifying service mental health champions.

Testing evidenced that policies were updated regularly however version controls or review dates should be updated when making even minor changes to documents.

See Root Cause 2 for more detail.

Priority	Agreed action	Responsibility	Deadline
	2.1 Review recruitment policy with consideration being made to increase content in relation to retention		31/03/2024
	2.2 Ongoing work in relation to the onboarding process for iTrent to continue		to be included in HR system specification 31/12/2023
	2.3 Schedule / Practice into keeping Mental Health First Aiders on Itranet current		

Appendix 1 – Root Cause Analysis

Root Cause 1 – Policies and Procedures outlined in Corporate Workforce plan not yet in place.

Policy/guidance development have been delayed due to other priorities or obstacles i.e. Senior Leadership recruitment, new HR staff members being trained on relevant systems to develop the policy/guidance.

The People Strategy has been delayed by 3 months. Draft will hopefully be ready by the end of November 2023 and approved by January 2024, with the rollout carried out at the end of March 2024. This also applies to the Leadership Strategy; which will be part of the People Strategy.

A formal Succession Planning Strategy is not yet in place and looking to draft a written process by April 2024. Succession planning is however carried out as part of the council's workforce planning.

Agile working Policy and guidance is on target and due to be reported to Cabinet briefing and the Full Cabinet in May 2023; hoping to go live in June 2023, with the rollout of drop-in training/information sessions for managers.

Leadership conferences have been reviewed with CEO & SLT. A timetable for the next 12 months has been agreed and is in place.

The Management Induction programme is delayed until the end Sept 2023.

Root Cause 2 – Not all Strategies are fully operational

Recruitment and Retention Policy

There isn't a specific recruitment and retention policy in place however there is a Recruitment and Selection Policy. Reference to retention is minimal within the current policy only making mention that it is the responsibility of the recruiting manager to perform a positive induction.

The current on-boarding process has been put on hold and will be considered as part of the new HR System specification due in the next 6 months.

Support Health and Wellbeing Strategy

There is a lot of work gone into supporting health and wellbeing however this too, has been delayed due to the aforementioned priorities and difficulties.

Mental Health First Aiders and Menopause Champions have been introduced. Service Mental Health Wellbeing champions have not been appointed yet.

HR recognise that the list of Mental Health First Aiders on Intranet needs to remain current as some named first aiders on the intranet have since left the authority.

Appendix 2 – Definition of Ratings Used Within the Report

Assurance Levels

High Assurance ●	Risk and controls well managed and objectives are being achieved
Medium Assurance ●	Minor weaknesses in management of risks and/or controls but no risk to achievement of objectives
Low Assurance ●	Significant weaknesses in management of risks and/or controls that put achievement of objectives at risk
No Assurance ●	Fundamental weaknesses in management of risks and/or controls that will lead to failure to achieve objectives

Action Plan Priority

Priority	Impact	Timescale (indicative)
P1	Action is imperative to ensure that the objectives for the area under review are met	To be implemented immediately. Explanation to Governance & Audit Committee should timeframe extend beyond three months
P2	Requires action to avoid significant risks to the achievement of objectives within the area under review	Implemented as soon as possible. Explanation to Governance & Audit Committee should timeframe extend beyond six months
P3	Action to enhance controls or improve operational efficiency	Implemented within six months. Governance & Audit Committee will be advised if longer timescale is necessary and/or justified

Internal Audit of Workforce Planning

Risk Assessment Criteria

Risk Severity	Escalation Criteria	Likelihood & Impact
Moderate ●	Risk containable at service level – senior management and Senior Leadership Team (SLT) may need to be kept informed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event is almost certain/likely to occur in most circumstances with very low impact • Event is likely/possible to occur with low impact • Event will possibly/unlikely/rarely occur with medium impact • Event rare and may occur only in exceptional circumstances with high impact
Major ●	Intervention by SLT and / or Corporate Executive Team (CET) with Cabinet involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event is almost certain to occur in most circumstances with low impact • Event is almost certain/likely to occur in most circumstances with medium impact • Event will possibly/unlikely to occur at some time with high impact • Event rare and may occur only in exceptional circumstances with very high impact
Critical ●	Significant CET and Cabinet intervention	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Event is almost certain or likely to occur with high impact • Event is almost certain/likely/possibly to occur with very high impact

Report Recipients

- Corporate Director Governance and Business
- Interim Head of Corporate Support Service People
- Lead Business Partner - Organisation Development
- Chief Executive Team
- Scrutiny Coordinator
- Chair-Performance Scrutiny Committee
- Lead member for Corporate Strategy Policy and Equalities
- Governance & Audit Committee

Internal Audit Team

Sonia Fox-Byrne Auditor (Career Pathway)	Fox-Byrne.Sonia@denbighshire.gov.uk
Nia Jones Auditor (Career Pathway)	nia.f.jones@denbighshire.gov.uk
Sara Webster Auditor	sara.webster@denbighshire.gov.uk

Key Dates

Review commenced	March 2023
Review completed	May 2023
Reported to Governance & Audit Committee	25 July 2023

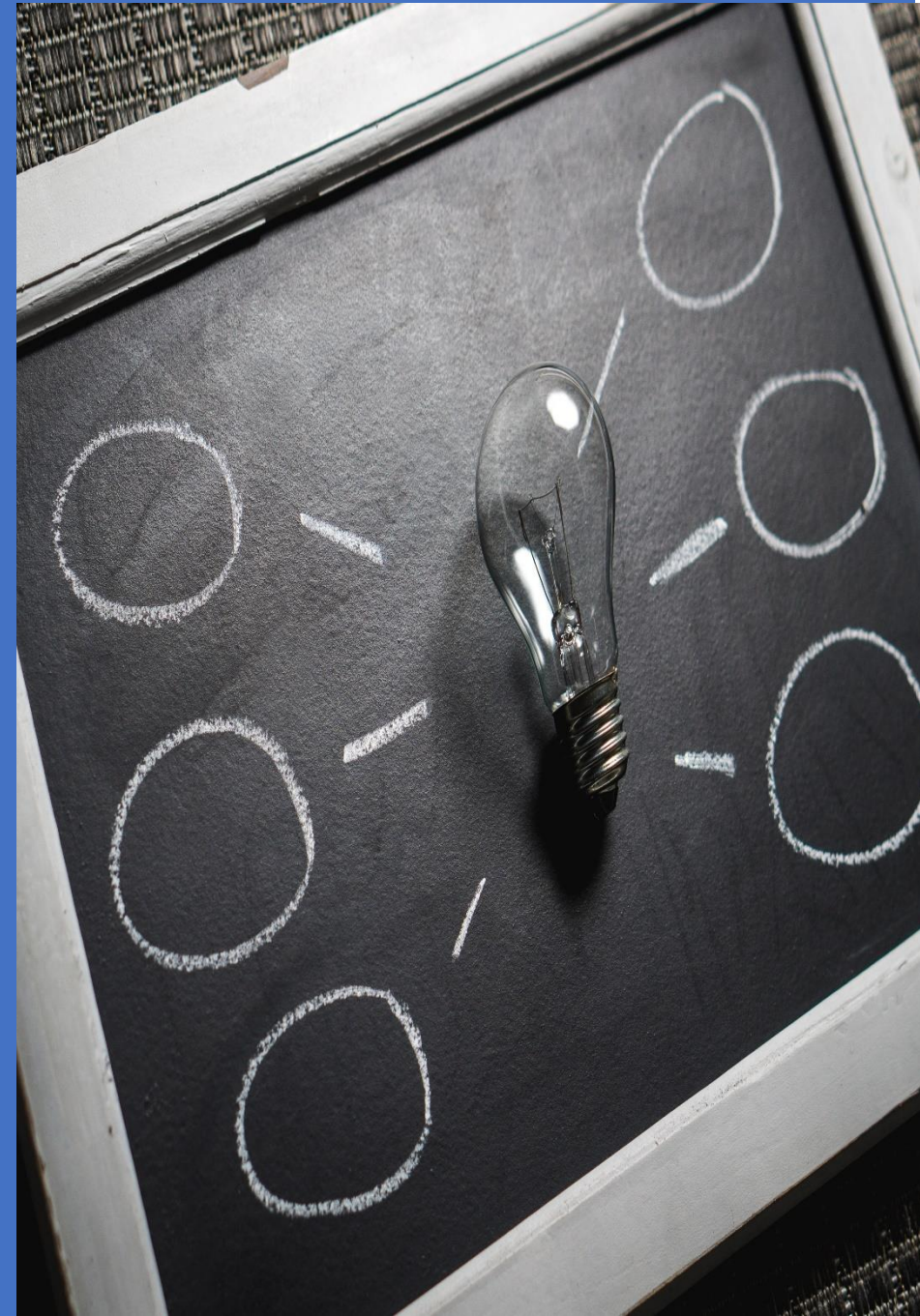
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Scrutiny Report

Appendix 2

Turnover & Position

Headcount



Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

Turnover

Please note due to the restructure of Services in October 2019 we do not have more than 2 full years' comparison for some services.

Staff turnover rate defines how many employees leave an organisation during a set period of time . DCC Turnover in 2022/23 has increased over the last two years and is at its highest rate for 6 years. Business Improvement and Modernisation has experienced a 12% increase, although in real terms this increase equates to 11 leavers (13 in total).

Service	2017/2018 (%)	2018/2019 (%)	New Service	2019/2020 (%)	2020/2021 (%)	2021/2022 (%)	2022/2023 (%)
Business Improvement and Modernisation	10.5	16.6	No Change	15.5	4.9	2.3	14.4
Community Support Services	8.4	10.6	No Change	10.6	9.8	11.7	15.3
Customers, Communications & Marketing	8.4	9.7	Communities & Customers	5.7	5.6	8.3	8.9
Education & Children Services	6.6	8.8	No Change	8.1	6.0	9.8	10.6
Finance	4.9	0	Finance & Property	3.0	3.2	5.7	7.8
Highways & Environmental Services	9.7	9.5	Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services	4.7	6.7	13.2	13.5

Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

Legal, HR & Democratic Services	9.9	4.3	No Change	9.7	6.1	7.4	11.2
Planning & Public Protection	11.1	7.0	Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services	6.1	6.4	10.4	11.4
DCC (excluding schools)	9.9	9.1	DCC (excluding Schools)	9.3	6.9	10.6	12.4

It should also be noted that Community Support Services have also experienced an increase in Position Headcount compared to the previous financial year as depicted in the below table. An increase can also be seen in Finance & Property due to the return of the Revenue and Benefits Service to Denbighshire County Council.

Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

Position Headcount

Service	Mar-22	Mar-23	Count Diff
Business Improvement & Modernisation	89	91	↑ 2
Chief Executive Section	2	3	↑ 1
Communities & Customers	198	208	↑ 10
Community Support Services	533	581	↑ 48
Corporate Directors	2	3	↑ 1
Education & Children Services	350	350	↑ 0
Finance & Property	166	219	↑ 53
Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services	718	718	↑ 0
Legal, HR & Democratic Services	82	81	↓ -1
Planning, Public Protection & Countryside Services	262	262	↑ 0
Total of Positions within Services Ex Schools	2402	2516	↑ 114

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The median rate of labour turnover as reported by the CIPD Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey 2022 is as follows:

2011	2012	2013	2014	2016	2019	2020	2021
13%	12%	10%	14%	16.5%	16%	No Data Collected	6%

[Resourcing and Talent Planning Survey | Reports | CIPD](#) NB: This survey is not conducted every year and therefore there are some gaps in years. It is important to note the following statement for 2021 figures: 301 respondents gave complete figures for calculating their labour turnover. There is considerable variation across organisations, but the median rate of labour turnover in 2021 (6%) is

Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

considerably lower than in previous years. As in previous years, the majority of turnover is attributed to employees leaving voluntarily. However, caution must be applied here, as the findings are based on a small sample of organisations and there is considerable variation between them.

Cendex, a trusted provider of data since 1968. Cendex has one of the largest collections of reward data in the UK, are reporting 16.4 per cent of employees resigned in 2022, a noticeable increase on the 9.6 per cent voluntary resignation rate in 2021, and one that pushed the total labour turnover rate to 22.5 per cent, compared to 14.6 per cent in 2021.

Benchmarking data is available for Local Authorities which includes schools and is the percentage of staff who leave the employment of the Local Authority:

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	2014-2015	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Denbighshire	13.1	11.9	11.1	9.3	8.6	9.3	7.5	10.5	11.6
Wales	12.9	11.4	11.6	11.4	11.2	10.8	8.2	10.5	Not Available

Top 5 Reasons for Leaving – Positions (not people)

The data demonstrates that for the past four years, 'Resignation' is the most common reason for leaving a position within DCC, followed by 'Retirement' for the past three years. The percentages for involuntary reasons for leaving (Dismissal, Re-Organisation and

Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

Redundancy) decreased from 12% to 10.8% in 2020-2021 and to 8% in 2022-2023. The total leavers to position is 299 for 2022-2023 excluding Schools and DLL compared to 246 the previous year, the highest level recorded for 4 years.

2019-2020	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
Total 168	Resignation	266	62
	End of Fixed Term Contract	55	13
	Retirement	43	10
	Dismissal	32	7
	Redundancy	29	7
2020-2021	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
Total 162	Resignation	192	57
	Retirement	59	18
	End of Fixed Term Contract	30	9
	Dismissal	19	6
	Redundancy	15	4
2021-2022	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
Total 246	Resignation	150	61
	Retirement	46	19
	Dismissal	16	7
	End of Fixed Term Contract	10	4
	Redundancy	9	4
2022-20223	Reason	No. of Leavers	% of Leavers
Total 299	Resignation	205	68%
	Retirement	48	16%
	End of Fixed Term Contract	20	7%
	Dismissal	18	6%
	Died in Service	3	1%

Leaving Reason by Grade (people not positions)

A total of 299 employees left DCC in the year 2022.2023, with 48.8% of those leavers on Grade 4 or below and 11.7% on Grade 10 or above. Out of the 299 leavers, 49.4% gave the reason as 'Resignation Personal' for their departure with the majority (27%) of those on Grade 4 and below. 62.9% of leavers on a Grade 10 or above were recorded as resigning.

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2022.2023			
Grade	Total	Reason	Count
GRADE 1 / NMW	67	Died in Service	0
		Dismissal	4
		End of Fixed Term Contract	0
		Redundancy	2
		Resignation	52
		Retirement	8
		TUPE Transfer	1
GRADE 2	17	Dismissal	3
		End of Fixed Term Contract	4
		Resignation	8
		Retirement	2

Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

GRADE 3	32	Dismissal	1
		End of Fixed Term Contract	7
		Other Reason	0
		Redundancy	0
		Resignation	22
		Retirement	2
GRADE 4	30	Died in Service	1
		Dismissal	2
		End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Redundancy	1
		Resignation	20
		Retirement	5
GRADE 5	30	Died in Service	1
		Dismissal	2
		End of Fixed Term Contract	2
		Redundancy	0
		Resignation	22
		Retirement	3
		Other	0
GRADE 6	23	Dismissal	0
		End of Fixed Term Contract	0
		Redundancy	0
		Resignation	15
		Retirement	8
GRADE 7	23	Dismissal	2
		End of Fixed Term Contract	2
		Resignation	15
		Retirement	4
		TUPE Transfer	0
GRADE 8	18	Died in Service	0

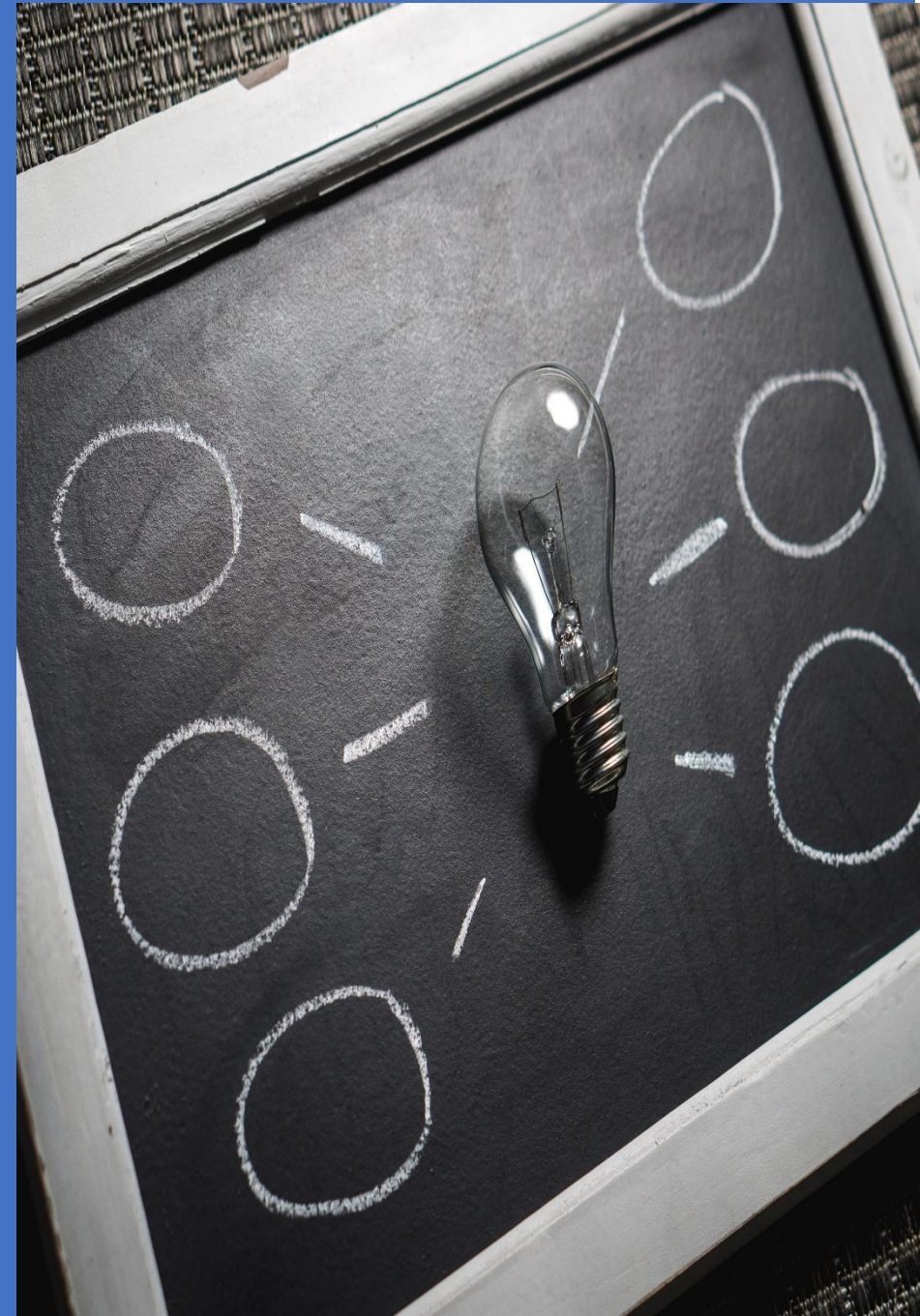
Scrutiny Report for Turnover & Position Headcount

		End of Fixed Term Contract	2
		Other	1
		Resignation	12
		Retirement	3
GRADE 9	24	End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Dismissal	1
		Redundancy - Compulsory	0
		Resignation	17
		Retirement	5
GRADE 10 - 14	35	Dismissal	3
		Died in Service	1
		End of Fixed Term Contract	1
		Redundancy - Compulsory	0
		Resignation	22
		Retirement	8

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Scrutiny Report Appendix 3 Absence 2022/2023



Absence in Denbighshire County Council

The last 10 years of published WLGA Benchmarking Absence Data for average days lost by employee for sickness absence, Denbighshire County Council (DCC) is consistently below the average sickness absence rate for Welsh Authorities by an average of 1.79 days per year.

DCC had the lowest absence rate for Welsh authorities in 2019/2020 and were on a downwards trend for absence. In 2020-2021 our sickness rate experienced a considerably decrease which was in line with other Welsh authorities due to social distancing measures. During 2021-2022 sickness levels increased within DCC following the low levels experienced during the pandemic. However, this rise was reflected in all Welsh Authorities' recorded absence, with Denbighshire remaining in the lowest four for recorded absences and again below the Welsh average.

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Absence – Denbighshire County Council Total						
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Denbighshire	8.4	8.3	8.1	6.5	9.8	9.56
Wales	10.4	10.5	11.2	8.5	11.8	No Data Available

Absence - Short, Medium, Long Term

Short term absence was on a downward trend Pre-pandemic. In 2019 – 2020, 24% of sickness absence was due to short term absences and this reduced further to 16% in 2020 – 2021. However, following on from the pandemic there has been a rise in short term sickness rates recorded, culminating in the highest levels of short term sickness for 6 years (31%).

Absence – Long Term, Medium Term, Short Term						
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Long Term	50%	50%	59%	62%	55%	48%
Medium Term	23%	24%	17%	22%	22%	20%
Short Term	27%	26%	24%	16%	23%	31%

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Long term absence during the Pandemic period of 2020-2021, increased from 59% to 62% of all absences in that period, however the actual days lost during that same period had reduced from 17,634 to 14,515. However, as short term absence rates have increased long term absences have decreased to DCC’s lowest recorded level over a 6 year period.

Total days lost have increased by 5450 compared to an increase of 12,307 the previous year

Short term absences are classed as 1 – 7 days, medium term absences are 8 – 27 days and long term absences are 28 days or more.

Absence – 2019 to 2020		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	17,634	59%
Medium Term	4,903	17%
Short Term	7,166	24%
Total	29,704	100%

Absence – 2020 to 2021		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	14,515	62%
Medium Term	5,013	22%
Short Term	3,709	16%
Total	23,238	100%

Absence – 2021 to 2022		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	19,452	55%
Medium Term	7,344	21%
Short Term	8,749	24%
Total	35,545	100%

Absence – 2022 to 2023		
	Days Lost	Percentage
Long Term	17,869	48%
Medium Term	7,428.36	20%
Short Term	11,555.14	31%
Total	36852.31	100%

Absence – Sickness reasons

The following tables show the percentage of absence which is attributed to each reason.

The top 5 reasons for absence have remained consistent over the previous 3 years, however, there has been a notable reduction in the number of absences recorded as Stress – Personal which no longer features as a top 3 reason. Instead, Stomach/Liver/Kidney Digestion as a reason for absence now features, recording 8.78%.

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2020-2021	
Reason	% of absence
Depression/Anxiety	17.5%
Other Musculo Skeletal	11.6%
Stress - Personal	11.4%
Surgery	7.4%
Covid-19	5.9%
Stomach / Liver / Kidney	5.8%
Cancer	5.2%
Colds / Flu / Infections	4.7%

2021-2022	
Reason	% of absence
Depression/Anxiety	13.8%
Covid-19	11.4%
Stress - Personal	10.2%
Other Musculo Skeletal	8.8%
Colds / Flu / Infections	7.3%
Stomach / Liver / Kidney	6.3%
Not Known / Other	6.0%

2022-2023	
Reason	% of absence
Depression/Anxiety	13.26%
Infections - to include Colds Flu	10.77%
Covid-19	10.48%
Stomach Liver Kidney Digestion	8.78%
Other Musculo Skeletal	8.68%
Surgery	6.36%
Stress - Personal	5.87%

Scrutiny Report for Absence 2022/2023

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Stress - Bereavement	4.5%
Back / Neck	4.5%
Stress - Work Related	4.1%
Not Known / Other	4.0%
Ear / Eye / Sinus / Dental	3.2%
Neurological / Headaches / Migraine	3.0%
Heart / Blood Pressure / Circulation	2.8%
Chest / Respiratory	2.4%
Diabetes / Thyroid / Endocrine	1.0%
Genito-Urinary / Menstrual Problems	0.9%
Skin Related Disorders	0.3%

Cancer	5.8%
Surgery	4.9%
Stress - Work Related	4.3%
Chest / Respiratory	4.3%
Back / Neck	3.7%
Stress - Bereavement	2.8%
Neurological / Headaches / Migraine	2.8%
Ear / Eye / Sinus / Dental	2.7%
Heart / Blood Pressure / Circulation	1.8%
Genito-Urinary / Menstrual Problems	1.7%
Skin Related Disorders	0.6%
Diabetes / Thyroid / Endocrine	0.5%

Not Known/Other	5.12%
Stress - Work Related	4.80%
Chest Respiratory - to Include Chest Infections	4.76%
Neurological - to include Headaches Migraine	4.31%
Heart Blood Pressure Circulation	3.28%
Cancer	3.21%
Back Neck Problems	3.01%
Stress - Bereavement	2.61%
Ear Eye Nose Mouth Dental - to include Sinusitis	2.10%
Pregnancy Related	1.34%
Genito-Urinary - to include Menstrual Problems	0.74%
Disability Related	0.20%

Absence – Services

Please note due to the restructure of Services in October 2019 we do not have more than 4 full years' comparison for some services.

6 of the 8 Services have experienced an increase in absence rates compared to the previous year and it is expected that this will remain at an increased level due to the ongoing backlog of treatments and surgeries for staff, following the pandemic.

Service	2017/2018	2018/2019	New Service	2019/2020	2020/2021	2021/2022	2022/2023
Business Improvement and Modernisation	8.8	4.34	No Change	6.75	4.47	5.26	7.15
Community Support Services	15.07	13.78	No Change	12.21	10.87	15.50	10.85
Customers, Communications & Marketing	5.13	8.21	Communities & Customers	8.29	8.45	7.44	8.53
Education & Children Services	10.76	10.06	No Change	7.66	9.47	14.06	14.29
Finance	6.14	2.5	Finance & Property	5.79	6.08	7.71	6.98
Highways & Environmental Services	7.39	9.11	Highways, Facilities & Environmental Services	9.97	7.43	10.26	12.6
Legal, HR & Democratic Services	5.45	2.79	No Change	4.34	6.79	5.45	10.84

Planning & Public Protection	7.79	8.59	Planning, Public Protection and Countryside Services	4.37	3.55	7.76	8.16
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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20 July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Gill German (Lead Member for Education, Children and Families), Geraint Davies (Head of Education)
Report author	Jacque Chan (GwE), Mair Herbert (GwE), James Brown (DCC) and Ruth Thackray (DCC)
Title	Curriculum for Wales Update July 2023

1. What is the report about?

1.1. The report provides an update on the progress made by schools since Curriculum for Wales became statutory for all primary school learners, and those secondary schools who opted in to start in Year 7, in September 2022. Additionally, the report offers information on how secondary schools and settings have been preparing to start teaching Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 from September 2023 as per the national implementation rollout timescales.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1. To provide information regarding the work that schools have undertaken as part of implementing the new curriculum, in line with [national expectations](#) published by Welsh Government.

3. What are the Recommendations?

3.1. Scrutiny is invited to discuss the details of this report and to identify any aspects of the Curriculum for Wales work which may benefit from detailed examination in the future.

4. Report details

Context

4.1 In September 2022, the new Curriculum for Wales became statutory for all learners from Nursery to Year 6. Secondary schools were given the opportunity to start with Year 7 in September 2022; one secondary school in Denbighshire opted in. All other secondary schools and settings will start with the Curriculum for Wales in Years 7 and 8 in September 2023. The Curriculum for Wales is a national framework with the Four Purposes as the shared vision. The framework is based on the principles of progression for all learners and requires schools to design their own local curricula based on their learners and community.

Primary Schools

4.2 All schools have designed their curriculum in line with the Four Purposes and to meet the mandatory requirements of Curriculum for Wales and, as such, have a balanced curriculum offer to meet the needs of all learners. Curriculum summary documents have been developed by each school and made available to parents and local community as per the requirements of Welsh Government.

4.3 All schools are implementing their development plans to realise the new curriculum. Leaders are currently evaluating how well those plans have been delivered and using that evidence to identify priorities for the school in the next year.

4.4 The local authority has ensured that all curriculum support aligns to the expectations and principles within Welsh Government's [Journey to Curriculum Roll-out](#). This support is through regular professional dialogue with each school's link Supporting Improvement Adviser (SIA) and a range of professional learning opportunities at both a cluster and individual school level. The network has shared their practice through GwE's support centre and more recently a marketplace sharing event in Llandudno for all regional schools where practitioners from Denbighshire schools, presented and shared their work.

4.5 There has been a strong focus on developing effective teaching and learning as part of Curriculum for Wales. This work has involved creating regular opportunities for teachers to jointly-plan examples and curriculum models to

share across schools. Many schools have made effective use of the toolkit for 3-8 year olds through attending termly networks, regional sessions and bespoke cluster training. As a result, this has had a positive impact on provision and pupil outcomes as well as reducing variation within schools.

- 4.6 Developing collaboration continues to be a priority for all schools in Denbighshire. Most clusters are committed to developing peer review for evaluation of leadership and curriculum provision through the Schools Partnership Programme. Schools are currently collaborating to self-evaluate their practice and the quality of their improvement planning. Furthermore, all clusters of schools have developed and implemented transition plans, actively engaging in professional dialogue opportunities to develop a shared understanding of assessment and progression with peers within and across primary and secondary sectors.
- 4.7 During this initial implementation phase, schools have recognised the importance of planning regular, structured professional learning for all staff and governors. Having a clear vision for Curriculum for Wales through engagement with learners, parents and local community is also of importance as this provides clear direction for designing the local curriculum offer. Many schools are sharing emerging practice where learners can apply a range of skills in meaningful local contexts. There is also an understanding that curriculum development will be a continuous process and will evolve over time, as schools monitor, evaluate and refine their curriculum provision using a range of sources.
- 4.8 When considering areas for further development, schools have identified areas such as continuing to develop and refine their curriculum provision to meet the needs of all learners to support wellbeing and reduce the impact of poverty on educational attainment, develop their practices in assessment and progression, and preparing for the changes identified in the new school improvement guidance: framework for evaluation, improvement and accountability ready for implementation in September 2024.

Secondary Schools

- 4.9 One secondary school opted to introduce the new curriculum to Year 7 in September 2023. Seven secondaries and 2 special schools will introduce this

to Years 7 and 8 in September 2023. Lessons learned during the implementation phase at the secondary school that commenced rolling out the new curriculum from September 2022 have been shared. The eight schools have been supported by GWE through a range of general, bespoke and collaborative strategies.

- 4.10 The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) and governors of the secondary school that commenced rolling out the new curriculum from September 2022 were keen to embark on the roll-out at the same time as the primary cluster to benefit from opportunities to work and learn together, and they worked with learners, staff, parents, governors and the wider community to develop the vision and values to support the four purposes of the Curriculum for Wales.
- 4.11 The school has reviewed and evaluated the curriculum plan as the year has progressed, taking a wide range of views into account. They are aware that there are opportunities to further develop independent learners. Plans have been adapted to ensure that best practice is acknowledged and shared.
- 4.12 The school has worked closely with others to share best practice in planning for progress, assessment and reporting. They have accepted a range of opportunities to learn from others and accept support. The Deputy Head has shared her experiences with the schools in the alliance and others including at the regional GwE Celebration event held on 22nd June.
- 4.13 Members of the GwE team have conducted a rapid review and also observed lessons in Year 7. They saw a pro-active approach to teaching and learning, with good planning and high levels of engagement. Examples of learners' work will be displayed for parents, Year 6 learners and others in a showcase event at the end of June.
- 4.14 GWE has provided a wide range of support for school at all stages of the implementation journey this year, including conferences to share emerging practice, support to clusters and alliances to co-develop plans such as those for assessment and planning for progression, webinars and workshops to support developing teaching and learning, feedback and pedagogical approaches.
- 4.15 Funding has been made available to all clusters and secondary schools alliances to support their collaboration into 2023/24, to continue to develop

approaches to planning, developing a shared understanding of progression and reporting to parents on progress, next steps in learning and ways in which parents and carers can support their child's learning. This is supplemented by a support plan detailing bespoke support for each school on the particular aspects it has prioritised for attention within its school improvement plan.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

5.1. This area of work contributes towards making Denbighshire a healthier and happier place where young people want to live and work and have the skills to do so as identified within the Four Purposes. It also contributes to make Denbighshire a place where young people can learn and make good progress in their skills, learning in a fair and safe environment. This will help ensure all learners have the best start in life and can realise their full potential.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1 Implementing the New Curriculum will have minimal impact on other services. The local authority (LA) will continue to liaise with GwE to utilise Welsh Government grants to support schools in implementing the Curriculum for Wales.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment will generally be required for decisions or proposals for change in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards. Welsh Government have impact assessed the rollout of the new curriculum.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 Through liaison with GwE, there is regular discussion with colleagues across Wales and Welsh Government to collect feedback and identify aspects for further discussion and development. Scrutiny have previously received a report on the rollout of Curriculum for Wales

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. Costs will be met from existing delegated budgets to schools, Education budget and also grant funding that has been made available from Welsh Government.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. The implementation of the Curriculum for Wales is reviewed by Estyn as part of their inspection work. The local authority and GwE are already working in partnership to monitor and support schools with their implementation, thereby reducing the associated risks.

11. Power to make the decision.

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 Sections 7.3, 7.4.1 and 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution.

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20 July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Gill German (Lead Member for Education, Children and Families), Geraint Davies (Head of Education)
Report authors	Geraint Davies and Joseph Earl
Title	Additional Learning Needs (ALN) Transformation Update July 2023

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. The report provides a further update on the progress made to ensure the Local Authority and schools are ready to meet their statutory requirements under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, 2018 (ALNET Act).

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To provide information regarding the actions taken ensure the Local Authority and schools are ready to meet their statutory requirements under the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, 2018 that started in September 2021 and is being implemented until 2025. ([Following Ministerial announcement on implementation timescales](#))

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. Scrutiny are invited to discuss the details of this report and to identify any aspects of the transformation work which may benefit from detailed examination in the future.

4. Report details

Context

4.1. The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act, 2018 will replace the current Special Educational Needs Code of Practice for Wales (2002). The new Act will be supported by regulations and an ALN Code. The Act replaces the terms 'special educational needs' (SEN) and 'learning difficulties and/or learning disabilities' (LDD) with the new term 'additional learning needs' (ALN). This will replace existing plans, such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs), Statements of SEN and Learning and Skills Plans.

Progress

- 4.2. **Regional** - Denbighshire continues to work collaboratively with colleagues across the region and with support from the National Implementation Lead (Elizabeth Jones). The initial regional working groups have now finished, but Denbighshire continues to work collaboratively with regional colleagues at strategic and operational levels where necessary.
- 4.3. **Training** – Training on the ALN reforms continues to be provided to local authority (LA) teams where needed. The LA continues to provide support and guidance to schools where required. At the recent Additional Learning Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) meetings schools' systems and processes have been discussed, shared and explored and we have had a workshop on writing Individual Development Plans.
- 4.4. **Budgets** - School Inclusion (including ALN) funding is fully delegated to schools as agreed in the school budget forum. This is working towards a 3 year rolling average following moderation Provision Mapping from schools. The aim of this is to allow schools to plan more effectively in supporting learners who are deemed to need support and to be reactive to the needs of all learners. We are in the process of refining the Provision Map schools use to capture this information.
- 4.5. **IT System** - Denbighshire, Flintshire, Conwy, and Wrexham have now implemented the regional IT system (Eclipse ALN) that enables the management of the new ALN processes. The regional IT ALN system, Eclipse, has had a workflow specifically created for moving learners from SEN to ALN system to

guide schools through the process. Denbighshire IT, along with regional colleagues, continues to work to refine the system. At present they are working with the supplier, OLM, on the online Individual Development Plan (IDP).

- 4.6. **Learner Support** - The Team Around the School (TaS) has been established to continue to meet the current requirements of the Statutory Assessment process and the ALNET Act 2018 in relation to early intervention and prevention and accurate, timely identification of additional learning needs. We have now carried out an informal review of this support and have updated the Terms of Reference accordingly.
- 4.7. **Provision** – We continue to work with schools to map out their provision, including interventions and strategies that they use to support learners with and without ALN.
- 4.8. **Individual Development Plan (IDP)** – We have been supporting schools with the ALN consideration process where needed. Schools and the LA continue to work on moving learners from the SEN system to the ALN system. This year the LA has started to move learners with statements of SEN to IDPs in line with Welsh Government guidance and timescales.
- 4.9. **Documentation** – Documents to support schools continue to be produced and refined where needed. Regionally developed IDP/No IDP notices and accompanying letters have been shared with schools. Processes for supporting learners, with and without ALN, in Denbighshire are continuing to be refined and shared with schools. The LA is working on a set of Principles around supporting learners with ALN.
- 4.10. **School Readiness** – Schools have continued to be supported with the implementation of the ALNET Act (2018). Information is shared in ALNCo meetings alongside training. Bespoke support has been given where requested or deemed appropriate.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1 This area of work contributes towards making Denbighshire a healthier and happier place where young people want to live and work and have the skills to do

so. It also contributes to make Denbighshire a place where young people can learn and grow, in a fair and safe environment and have the best start in life regardless of any additional learning needs they may have.

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 6.1. DCC ICT are supporting Education Services and schools with the Eclipse IT system. We will continue to use Welsh Government Online IDP grant funding to support the ongoing costs of housing the IT system.
- 6.2. The LA continues to utilise Welsh Government grants to support the LA and schools in implementing the ALN reforms. This year the Welsh Government have increased funding allocated for ALN implementation from £6.6m to £12m, and implementation timelines have been extended by a year. This is in acknowledgement of the increased demands on the workforce to respond to the needs of children and move children from SEN to ALN alongside establishing inclusive education practices in the school. This level of funding will also be available in 2024-25 and indicative allocations will be provided to local authorities in the coming months. LA central ALN grant funding has however remained static.
- 6.3 Educational Psychologists (EP) – Nationally it is understood that there will be an increased workload through the introduction, implementation and embedding of the ALN reforms. Based on nationally recommended ratio of 1 EP to 5,000 children DCC will require 6 EPs, [currently have 4], budgeted for 5. Denbighshire Education Service are sponsoring a member of staff through the three year course, to enable her to become qualified as an Educational Psychologist. She would then return to Denbighshire to take up a qualified EP post as a fluent Welsh speaker, in Sept 2026. The sponsorship arrangement means that she will return to Denbighshire for Years 2 and 3 to do her placement. Not having sufficient EPs (especially Welsh speaking EPs) is a risk to key Authority legislative duties such as ALNET 2018, Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Wellbeing and to the 'Cymraeg 2050 – A Million Welsh Speakers' agenda. WG pay for 10 training places per year in Cardiff University. Over 100 applications a year are received, and a rigorous recruitment process is followed. They also offer two unfunded places on this course beginning Sept 2023.

6.4 We have recently made the temporary ALN Advisory Teacher to a permanent position to support the LAs duties under the ALNET Act (2018). We have also recruited two temporary ALN advisory teachers to support implementation of the ALN Code and ALNET Act (2018) within the LA and across schools.

6.5 One of the Inclusion Officers for ALN has started flexible retirement and has reduced to two days a week.

7 What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment will generally be required for decisions or proposals for change in order to comply with the Equality Act 2010, the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language Standards. Welsh Government have impact assessed ALN Transformation journey.

8 What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1 Discussions (where applicable) with trade unions and head teachers have been very positive. We have work regionally in setting up a parent partnership as a forum to share and receive comment on the continuing work on the ALN reforms.

9 Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1 Costs will be met from existing delegated budgets to schools, Education budget and also grant funding that has been made available from Welsh Government.

10 What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 We previously reported pressures in the Educational Psychology team and Additional Learning Needs teams and mitigated the risks as highlighted in section 6.

10.2 Pressure in the ALN team due to conversions required and number of cases is a risk that was reduced through the recruitment of 2 temporary members of staff

10.3 It was previously highlighted as a risk following the retirement of the previous Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (EYALNLO), however, recruitment took place and a new member of staff is now in place for this role.

10.4 The funding arrangements are currently being discussed at a national level with regards to the Independent Special Post 16 Institution (ISPI). Had the first proposal been accepted Denbighshire would be financially impacted. Following the raising of concerns WG have agreed to review the processes again. We await their decision and will participate in the discussions.

11 Power to make the decision

11.1 Powers in relation to matters detailed in this report are as per:

- Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000;
- Section 7 of the Council's Constitution

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20th July 2023
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Elen Heaton / Cllr Gill German / Nicola Stubbins
Head of Service	Ann Lloyd / Rhian Morrle
Report author	Ann Lloyd
Title	Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. Every Statutory Director of Social Services in Wales is required to produce an annual report which summarises their view of the effectiveness of the authority's social care services and priorities for improvement.
- 1.2. The draft annual report for 2022 – 2023 is attached at Appendix 1. The report is intended to provide the public with an honest picture of services in Denbighshire and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges faced.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To enable members to scrutinise the draft annual report prior to it being submitted to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and published on the Denbighshire County Council (DCC) website.

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee consider whether the report provides a clear account of performance in 2022 – 2023
- 3.2. That members consider whether the report raises any performance issues / concerns that require further scrutiny

4. Report details

- 4.1. Overall our performance is comparable with the previous couple of years this is against ongoing recruitment and retention issues and increased complexity of need and demand for services.
- 4.2. We were pleased to note that in Children's Services we seen a 44% decrease in the number of children looked after (4 children) experiencing one or more changes in schools, that were not due to transitional arrangements. This ensures we are giving these children as much stability as we can when it comes to their education.
- 4.3. Also in Children's Services we have seen the number of care leavers completing at least 3 months of employment, education or training double from 5 in 2021 / 2022 to 10 in 2022 / 2023 and 7 of those went on to continue to be in employment, education or training for a further 13 – 24 months. We also saw a small drop in the numbers experiencing homelessness, 9 in 2021 / 2022 to 7 in 2022 / 2023. The partnerships we have developed to provide ongoing support to these young people are bringing the positive outcomes that we are all striving for.
- 4.4. During the last year the Children's Service's Edge of Care Team have delivered good outcomes, working with the whole family where children are considered to be 'on the edge of care'. The team provide intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple complex problems and enable the child(ren)'s circumstances to improve and to give the family the skills so they can sustain their own improvements.
- 4.5. In Adult Services we have seen much of our services return to some form of normality following the Covid 19 pandemic. Our 2 care homes increased the number of activities going on and got the community back in through the doors. Also we re-opened our work and day opportunity services, with significant investment in both Popty and Meifod. We were also pleased to see the completion of Awel Y Dyffryn Extra Care Housing in Denbigh and nearly all of the 66 apartments being allocated. We now await the completion of Llys Awelon Phase 2 in Ruthin which is expected in the Spring 2024.

- 4.6. The Adult Social Care Edge of Care Team have made great strides in offering a volunteering service to support many older people in Denbighshire, providing much needed assistance due to the lack of domiciliary care provision. We have also see significant growth in the number of Micro-Providers now delivering care and support in local communities, which is not only helping us meet demand but generating enterprise across the county.
- 4.7. There has been limited opportunity to start new projects as this last year has been about consolidating practice after the Covid 19 pandemic and coping with the increased complexity of demand and recruitment and retention problems.
- 4.8. However, as we move forward into 2023 / 2024 we will focus on the Welsh Government's Rebalancing Social Care agenda and how we achieve that here in Denbighshire. Across both Adults and Children's Services we will work with a range of stakeholders to develop solutions to address the ongoing recruitment and retention problems within Social Care.
- 4.9. Focus will be given to the development of in-county short breaks and emergency respite provision for children with complex disabilities and we will continue to encourage the use of direct payments across both Adults and Children's Services to support individuals and families to have choice and control over their care and support needs.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 5.1. During the 2022 – 2023 financial year Adult and Children's Services contributed to the following themes within the Corporate Plan
- A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs
 - A prosperous Denbighshire
 - A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire
 - A learning and growing Denbighshire
 - A fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire

6. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

6.1. The development and publication of the annual reports does not cost anything other than officer time, and does not impact on other services. The future plans and actions identified for Adult Social Care & Homelessness and Education & Children's Services within the report will be delivered through core budgets, or through partnership funding, such as Regional Integration Fund (RIF), but there remain significant financial pressures within both Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

7. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

7.1. The annual report does not require a Well-being Impact Assessment because it provides a retrospective evaluation of performance and the publication of the report has no potential impact on future generations. However, Well-being Impact Assessments will be undertaken in relation to any future plans or development of services which have been mentioned in these annual reports, as and when required.

8. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

8.1. Feedback from service users and carers about our services form part of our existing quality assurance process and as such has contributed considerably to the development of the annual report.

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. The cost implications of any emerging issues in the annual report must be considered within the context of the council's wider budget position and Medium Term Financial Plan. The financial pressures and challenges for the services and the Council are clearly outlined in Section 5 (b) in the Annual Report.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1. There is a detailed risk register for both Community Support Services and Education and Children's Services. As this report is about Social Services in Denbighshire, any risks associated with the issues covered in this

report (and actions to mitigate and manage them) are captured in the service risk registers.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1. Statutory guidance (including the requirement to publish an annual report) is issued within the Code of Practice on the Role of the Director of Social Services under Part 8 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

11.2. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.4.2(b) sets out Scrutiny's powers in relation to monitoring performance and delivery of policy objectives.

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Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

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Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

1. Introduction

Denbighshire County Council's Director of Social Services Annual Report demonstrates how we have promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

During the last 12 months, in common with lots of other industries, social care has been experiencing significant recruitment and retention issues. We have a number of vacancies that we have been unable to fill across our Adult and Children's Services. Predominantly these are professional roles such as Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, as well as a range of non-professional roles including support workers and care staff. This has impacted on waiting times, seen staff take on bigger workloads and meant that we have had to prioritise our statutory responsibilities ahead of developing new and innovative services.

However, through continued hard work and strong leadership, we have made progress against many of the aims that we had for this year and have seen innovation that we introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as our Edge of Care Team in Adult Services, become embedded into service delivery. Projects that were started a couple of years ago, such as Bwthyn Y Ddol, have seen some setbacks but are continuing and progress is being made.

This report will provide an evaluation of Denbighshire County Council's performance in delivering social services functions over the last year. We will explain how we have achieved the Welsh Government's 6 quality standards for well-being outcomes:

- Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
- Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health, and emotional well-being
- Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs
- Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships
- Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
- Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

2. Director's summary of performance

It is that time of year again when we provide an evaluation of the work both Adult and Children's Social Services have undertaken during the last year. Once again I am incredibly proud of the dedication, commitment and hard work that our Social Services and wider Social Care workforce teams have delivered at a time of increase in both demand and complexity of need of our citizens requiring care and support.

During 2022 we had 3 staff nominated in the Social Care Wales Accolades, one winning their category and 2 being finalists. These awards recognise outstanding staff and having 3 finalists from Denbighshire reflects our workforce who regularly go above and beyond their role to achieve the best outcomes for our citizens.

Like most other Local Authorities in Wales, we in Denbighshire have significant recruitment and retention issues across both professional and caring roles. There have been significant challenges within our Children's Service and resources are having to be redeployed to ensure we meet our statutory obligations and keep both adults and children safe. At a corporate level we are working closely with not only our managers and Human Resources Team, but regional and national colleagues to address the staffing issues in social care.

However, what we have seen is innovative and creative approaches being put in place to ensure our citizens get the right care and support. This includes the expansion of our Edge of Care Team in adult services, where volunteers are supporting people with lower level care and support needs.

We have also seen the Micro-Provider scheme expand during the last 12 months and these community-based providers are supporting people in their neighbourhoods / local communities. Whilst this is not a replacement for domiciliary care, Micro-Providers are providing care and support in rural areas and in those areas of the county where our domiciliary care providers are struggling to recruit staff.

Across both adults and children's services we have seen an expansion of the use of Direct Payments which give citizens and their families / carers more choice and control in meeting their care and support needs and achieving outcomes that matter to them.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

I was delighted to see the re-opening of Meifod and Popty, day and work services in Denbigh during the year. Popty has been developed into a learning academy with a focus on independent living skills development and has moved to new modern premises. The re-opening of Meifod took longer than anticipated but now provides a wider range of activities other than making wooden products and has seen the investment of laser and 3D printers.

Within Children's Services I am delighted that the Bwthyn-y-Ddol multi-disciplinary team are now in place and supporting those children and families who are at the edge of care and at risk of becoming looked after. Whilst it is frustrating that there have been a number of setbacks with the development of the regional assessment centre, work has now begun and we hope to see the completion of the centre in Spring 2024.

We have also enhanced the support offered to Special Guardians, kinship carers and the families of children formally looked after. I am also pleased to see the positive impact the Parent Participation Group has had on families and carers across Denbighshire.

A lot of work has been undertaken and will continue to develop our services for care experienced young people. There is a real partnership approach with Education and Children's Services, Youth Services, Working Denbighshire, our Homelessness Prevention Team and a range of partners to develop services within the county to support and offer the best opportunities for young people.

Over the last year we have seen good outcomes from our Children's Service's Edge of Care Team who provide intensive home-based interventions for the whole family where children are considered to be on the 'edge of care'.

We know that during the coming 12 months both adults and children's services are going to have further challenges in meeting the demands of the services they provide. This is due to the ongoing recruitment and retention issues, and the increase in complexity of need and demand for services. However, we will focus on ensuring we meet our statutory duties as social service departments and continue with much of the development work that has been brought forward from this financial year, such as the development of Bwthyn-Y Ddol, and the development of in-county short breaks and emergency respite provision for children with complex disabilities.

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In adult services we hope to see the extension on Llys Awelon Extra Care Housing in Ruthin completed and new residents moving in, and we will continue with our work to improve our reach and support to unpaid carers across the county, and work on the Welsh Government's Rebalancing Social Care agenda.



Nicola Stubbins

Corporate Director for Social Services and Education

DRAFT

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

3. How people help us to shape our services

Engaging with our citizens to help shape and co-produce our services is of paramount importance to us here in Denbighshire. It is critical we shape, commission and deliver services that meet the needs of our citizens now and in the future. There are many ways in which we do this across both Adult and Children's services, with examples below.

Older People's Services

Age Connects coordinate a number of older people's fora across the county. The members of each forum decide what topics they want to discuss in each meeting but are also open to having visitors who come to seek advice and gather views on a range of topics. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) have attended in the past to ask for views on the services members receive and contracts officers from Denbighshire County Council sometimes attend to ask for help to shape the services they are procuring.

Members of the fora contribute to the regular Age Connects newsletter and relevant meetings. Many attended the Ageing Well in Denbighshire meeting in October 2022 where the Older Person's Commissioner for Wales was in attendance and reported their success in influencing the operation of the flexi bus. The changes to the flexi bus had caused significant alarm and forum members met with DCC officers to ask for further changes to be made. These further changes have now been implemented much to the satisfaction of the members.

Meetings are held with residents in care homes and information is fed back to the individual home's management team or, where appropriate, Adult Services staff in order to influence service development. As an example; we identified that many care home residents do not have family or friends visiting and when talking to them they commented that they sometimes feel lonely. This led to us supporting Book of You, who have received a grant from Age Friendly Communities. Book of You now arrange for visitors to those that request them in 4 homes in the south of Denbighshire.

Staff from the Community Resource Team in South Denbighshire participated in a community engagement meeting in Denbigh, called the Listening Campaign. Denbigh was the first town chosen in North Wales to host this and this forms part of the regional dementia work that is taking place.

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New Mental Health Volunteer Service

We currently have 6 individuals who are preparing to volunteer for our new mental health volunteer service, supporting citizens who have acute and enduring mental health conditions. They will be providing 1:1 support and assisting the delivery of our 'Well-being through Art' sessions in the south of the county. We will be looking to recruit more volunteers over the next 12 months.

Case study

A was referred for support because of her social anxiety and emotional dysregulation due to symptoms of Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD).

A spends most of her time in the house, feeling isolated and lonely. She will self-neglect and self-harm at times. On receiving the referral for support the volunteer coordinator spent time getting to know A, trying to establish what support she would benefit from and what personal goals she had. During their conversations A shared that she had always enjoyed art but did not have the confidence to link in to community groups. She also had some art materials at home but she had not used them for many years.

Over a number of weeks, the volunteer coordinator talked to A about the group sessions, reassuring her that they were specifically for individuals who struggled to join mainstream groups and that the sessions were delivered in a way that was person centred so she could complete her art work at her own pace. A started to attend the groups in January and has attended each session since then. She has also disclosed to staff that after starting the sessions she decided to convert her spare bedroom in to her 'art studio' so that she can do artwork at home on a daily basis.

A states, "The art group gives me structure. I look forward to bringing my artwork back each week and showing it to you. This group makes me want to stay well and strong so I can keep coming each week. You'll never believe this but I've been commissioned to do a canvas". "This is the highlight of my week". "I just love it. It's been a massive positive step in my life coming here to this group".

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Carers

The Edge of Care Team have been working in partnership with NEWCIS in order to rethink our carers' respite offers. Listening to carers and learning from research has greatly helped this work. Protected space to explore creative, innovative and bespoke solutions has been achieved through practitioner Think Tanks and reflective practice sessions.

Another example of people helping shape our services came recently when an unpaid carer joined the Voluntary Organisation Grant panel to help us decide which of the applicants should receive grant to deliver support for parent carers of adults with complex disabilities.

When re-commissioning the carers assessment service unpaid carers were involved from the outset. Meetings were held with local focus groups to discuss what was working well, what wasn't working so well (in their experiences) and to gain information to help identify areas for improvement. This informed and influenced the shape of the new service and service specification. A local unpaid carer was invited to be a member of the evaluation panel and her lived experience was really valuable in the scoring process and contract award.

Adults at Risk

In responding to allegations of abuse and neglect, the Safeguarding Team ensure that the personal outcomes of the adult at risk are informing the response and the solutions towards making them safe.

Global Resettlement Team

The Global Resettlement Team who work with refugees from Syria, Afghan and more recently Ukraine, is made up of a number of Ukrainian staff, which helps inform the delivery of services and provides additional support to families ensuring we can embrace and celebrate their culture.

People with Learning Disabilities

In response to citizen's feedback we are continuing to develop person centred talking points in Hwb Siarad, transition, long-term and Children's Occupational Therapy. Feedback has been that citizens and families prefer to engage via virtual appointments in the first instance.

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Across the team we have developed ways to respond to this utilising technology; Owl camera, interactive white board, social media apps, Alexas and tablets provided by the transformation project and funded through Welsh Government grant funding. It was recognised by all (agencies, citizens, families, professionals) that person centred planning needed a review and rejuvenation.

The team appointed a person-centred coordinator for 6 months (funded via the Learning Disabilities Transformation Team) to look at the use of person-centred planning (PCP) work, as the team felt it had become outdated. Both practitioners and providers were less enthusiastic about it, although the approach is embedded into their work. The PCP coordinator consulted with providers and practitioners around improving PCP practice and bringing citizens, families and providers on board without increasing work demands. This is an ongoing piece of work with several training sessions arranged in 2023-4. We are hoping to ensure that PCP work is kept alive and is more personalised around each citizen with a choice of different tools in place to enable citizens to live the lives they choose, as independent and as safe as possible. The use of technology is also assisting with carbon reduction, since travel is less.

Global Resettlement Team

In response to the Ukrainian Refugee situation, The Global Resettlement Team was established in the summer of 2022. As we developed the team, we recruited a number of Ukrainian staff, who arrived into Wales through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Utilising the skills and knowledge of the staff informs the delivery of services and provides support to families ensuring we can better understand their needs and also celebrate their culture. To ensure we were managing the expectations and meeting the needs of the families, weekly meetings were set up and encourage open communication and feedback.

Young Carers

What is important to Young Carers, the things they want done differently and why, is important to Denbighshire Children's Services not only as Commissioners but also working in partnership with our commissioned service, Credu (known as WCD Young Carers). WCD Young Carers have held small group sessions for some Young Carers as they said that large groups were not for them. Some of them are on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Spectrum and others have anxiety and mental health issues that mean they would rather be in a smaller group environment.

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WCD Young Carers have provided an Art Therapy session and an Animal Therapy session which were both well attended and valued. Young Carers asked to have sessions with animals – our commissioned project applied for funding to be able to bring animals to groups (via animal experience parties).

Some of our harder to reach Young Carers have said they would rather have climbing, BMX biking, Mixed Martial Arts sessions and visit Zip World. We are able to provide them with these sessions to give them an alternative outlet for their Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and steer them away from anti-social behaviours.

WCD Young Carers have their own Young Carers' Forum where they highlight the things that matter to them locally and regionally. Young Carers recently visited The Senedd, where they were able to share their views with Members. It was an amazing opportunity for both Young Carers and Senedd Members to learn about each other. Our Young Carers shared these points;

1. It is important that Young Carers are connected with appropriate support from the outset, without being passed around different organisations before finding one that fits.
2. Bereavement support is needed for Young Carers and support for Young Carers with important transitions in their caring role.
3. Changes can be profound and mean changes to identity - for example when caring role is lessened when a loved one dies. Support should be more connected and accessible with better information about services. Young Carers may have to explain their story over and over again and this can be very difficult.
4. It should be mandatory that schools are aware and fully supportive of Young Carers. Some are excellent, but not all.
5. Social Services and Health should be including and involving Young Carers in key family information including safeguarding. Adult responsibilities are expected but Young Carers are not treated equally as adults.
6. More person-centred respite and wellbeing opportunities for Young Carers are needed.
7. More funding. Increased recognition of Young Carers needs to be followed with increased financial support for organisations supporting the rapidly growing numbers of Young Carers, as they are very stretched.

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We commission and work in partnership with the WCD Young Carers Service, through returns and quarterly meetings, to ensure the voice of our Young Carers is heard. The issues that are raised by them are highlighted either by our own attendance, or that of the commissioned service, at internal groups and by links with schools via our Education Service colleagues, regional and national meetings.

This is Millie. She is an incredible asset to WCD Peer Mentors and a fabulous fundraiser. She shaved her head to raise money, but perhaps more importantly, to raise awareness of Young Carers.



Some of our active forum members from across WCD and Credu went to The Senedd to voice their views and in the hope of influencing policy and service changes. While in Cardiff, they managed to visit some attractions, as you can see from these photos.



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Children's Services

Language that Cares – As professionals, we recognise that sometimes we don't use the same language as children and young people and we wanted to come up with a list of words they would like to change to make it clearer for them to understand when we talk to them about their day to day life. A survey was conducted with Children Looked After and we are currently consulting with this group of children and young people on the findings. We have already made changes to language used across the service and will implement further changes in the coming year.

What makes a good Foster Carer - the KIC (Kids in Care) Cub were asked for their views at their session on 21 February 2023 to capture young people's views on what makes a good Foster Carer, Social Worker and their views on current placements.

To help in raising awareness of fostering in Denbighshire, Foster Carers have been taking part in producing blogs, mailshots and videos sharing their experiences.

As part of Regulation 42 – Quality of Care of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003, questionnaires were sent out to children / young people, Foster Carers, Fostering Panel Members and Children's Services staff to gain their views on the quality of care provided by the Foster Wales Denbighshire Service and how useful this service has been to them. The feedback assists the department to improve the service as well as recognising what has worked well.

Have Your Say Surveys - To gain views of children / young people and parents on the impact Education & Children Services has had on their lives and how useful the service received is or has been, a range of Have Your Say Feedback surveys have been designed. The results assist in improving the service as well as recognising what has worked well. Accompanying the surveys is a guidance sheet explaining the method and process for each survey and all forms are saved on the child's file.

End of Placements - These are completed by social workers, foster carers, parents and Children / young people at the end of a placement (regardless of the cause of the placement coming to an end). These reports provide important information about user and staff experiences of the placement and services they have received and thus provide an important source of information for identifying potential quality improvements.

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Looked After Consultation Documents – Consultation forms which are outcome focussed have been devised in preparation for children and young people's Looked After Care (LAC) Reviews. They are for completion by children / young people and parents / carers and tie in with the Social Services and Health & Well-being Act and National Outcomes.

Young Person's Child Protection Pre-Conference Form - To capture voices of children and young people at Child Protection Conferences. Staff encourage the young people they work with to complete the consultation forms in advance of a Child Protection Conference, particularly if they do not want to attend. The consultation documents are available in both Welsh and English. Capturing the young people's views enables conference members to hear things from the young person's perspective - sometimes when discussing concerns, the voice of the young person can be missing.

Child Protection Conference Feedback Forms - Professionals, parents / carers and young people attending are asked to complete a feedback form and give their views.

Foster Carers are asked in their Annual Reviews how fostering has impacted them and their family.

Children / Young People whose parents foster are also asked for their opinions/views about what's good about fostering as part of Foster Carers' Self-Assessment.

Mind of My Own – Mind of My Own is an online platform that allows children and young people working with our Education and Children's Services to engage with their worker and share their views about the care they receive, their concerns, worries and successes. Children and young people can use Mind of My Own to contribute to their wellbeing outcomes as part of their care and support plans. In 2022 Members of the KIC Club (Kids in Care – Young People's Forum) were invited to join 'Mind of My Own Challenges' to promote use of Mind of My Own and ensuring their views were heard.

Communication and Involvement

We have recently appointed a Communication and Involvement Officer within Families First and Flying Start. We are consulting upon, developing and implementing a communication plan and framework for the engagement and involvement of children, young people and families in the design and delivery of our programmes.

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We collect, collate, analyse and summarise information from our Integrated Families First and Flying Start service users, in the form of narrative and qualitative reporting, case studies, and feedback to ensure that the perspectives and experiences of children, young people and families are appropriately reflected. We have been running Family Fun Time events across the authority to support engagement and interaction with our families. These have been very well attended and many of the Ukrainian families we work with have attended. Their engagement with us has been brilliant.



Compliments and Complaints

During the last year both Adult and Children's Social Services teams have received a total of 29 complaints between them. This is slightly higher than the previous year and although the number of Social Services complaints dealt with at Stage 1 were generally low during low during Quarters 2 and 3. All complaints were reviewed, with learning identified and implemented across services as appropriate.

Complaints in 2022/23 were in the most part related to communication issues and this is a common theme. Where there is poor communication from Social Services staff, we acknowledge this is our response and work to make improvements. We also try to work with citizens when there is a lack of understanding or unrealistic expectation. For example, where someone is unable to contact a particular member of staff they normally deal with, explaining that they are engaged in work that means they cannot respond immediately and offering for them to talk to someone else or providing a timescale as to when they will be able to get back to them.

9 Stage 2 complaints were received in 2022/23 which is the same number as received in the previous year. None of these were under the statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure Regulations (Wales) 2014 and only 1 was upheld.

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All but one Stage 2 complaints were dealt with within the required statutory timescales. Historically, as an authority Denbighshire has few statutory investigations at Stage 2 and this suggests satisfactory investigations at Stage 1 are taking place.

The Council's C360 complaints database enables services to record, where appropriate, any learning from complaints. Learning identified from the complaint is implemented within the team or Service and then, where appropriate, shared more widely across the Council.

Learning can come from complaints whether or not they are upheld and two examples are noted below;

A complaint relating to a death in a care home was not upheld but a Stage 2 investigation found learnings for the Council, highlighting areas in which we can change our practice to ensure there are more robust checks and balances in place. This involved Senior Care and Support Workers following up on any medication that has been changed or discontinued by health professionals and ensuring that all conversations and concerns are fully documented.

A complaint relating to equipment provided to a citizen through our Community Equipment Store was upheld. The complainant was unaware that the equipment was for short term use. The manager informed the complainant that he would ensure that lessons are learned and that in future, practitioners are fully aware of how the processes work and follow through with proper communication with families.

In the year April 2022 to end March 2023 Adult Social Services received 73 compliments and Children's Services received 74.

This is 10% more than the number received the previous year. Receiving positive feedback from our citizens gives staff great satisfaction and a boost to their morale and allows us to identify best practice, which will then be shared with other teams or services and specifically in relation to care homes will be shared with our independent providers too. Examples of compliments received include;

"I and my Mum just wanted to thank you for all the support you have given us over the past few weeks. My Mum is improving every day. The bed lever was installed on Monday and the steps are being installed on Friday. You should be very proud of the work that you do. I'm not easily pleased - but these thanks are certainly easily given."

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“A grandmother shared that a staff member in Children’s Services has been very helpful and supportive throughout her intervention with the family. They are very appreciative of the time and effort she has put in to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of her grandchild. The mother also said she is “sad that F is not the worker anymore because she has always helped.”

A supervising social worker from Cumbria praised Denbighshire Children’s Services and a couple of staff. He shared that their agency has worked with numerous different professionals and Local Authorities across the UK but they were incredibly impressed with Denbighshire. They have not worked with a Local Authority before who have taken the time to travel across the country on a regular basis to offer support to a child and their carers, or who had offered such a high level of ongoing support via telephone calls / virtual meetings.

4. Promoting and improving the well-being of those we help

a) Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

This is what we said we would do

- embed the work of the Independent Living Advisers across both adults and children’s services to support individuals and their families to have their care and support delivered through a direct payment and further develop use of Pre-paid Cards to increase efficiency
- continue to develop our provision for carers and reach out to engage with unpaid carers across Denbighshire

This is what we have done and achieved

2059 adults had a care and support plan in place during this year. There is no variation from 2021-22.
76.7% of assessments for children were completed within statutory timescales. This is on par with 76.59% in 2021-22. There was an increase of 13% in the number of assessments being carried out in 2022/23.

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People with Learning Disabilities

The Complex Disability Team's Talking Points has expanded this year. Every new referral accepted to the team is seen using their preferred method of communication and using an outcome focused citizen led discussion.

Talking points appointments take place in our drop in centre in Morfa Clwyd, Rhyl or in other locations depending on where that person lives - for example we may use a room in a library. It depends on the citizen's preference and virtual appointments are also offered. Talking Points appointments are offered once a new referral comes in to the team so we can have a 'What matters' conversation with the citizen and (if they wish) their family. We can offer information and advice and decide whether the Complex Disabilities team is the most appropriate team to provide support for the citizen.

Referrals are often closed before a social worker is allocated, because the support required has been identified and provided via Talking Points. Talking Points help support the citizen and their family to consider voluntary and third sector services and take control of their own lives, which reduces dependency on services and pressure on our workforce.

Case study

Mr A referred himself for support via SPOA as he had mental health problems and was looking for help. He has autism and lives alone.

The first contact our Complex Disability Team made to Mr A, as with all new referrals at Talking Points, included asking how he would prefer to have the first 'What Matters' conversation. We try to offer first appointments to suit the person's preferred method of communication. Mr A said that, due to his autism, trying to express himself verbally often left him for days afterwards with low mood, anxiety and insecurities. For the first 8 contacts we agreed to communicate by text message and e-mail only. He said he found this person-centred approach very useful and it took a lot of pressure off him. He also said it meant he could take time to process questions and think about what he wanted to say in response. It worked well and we were able to complete a picture of his needs (assessment) and agree a plan that he was happy with. He was able to say things that he would find difficult to say face to face.

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Mr A shared his feelings of isolation and loneliness. After some time, he felt able to let me into his flat and share some of the problems he was having with managing his living space. Between us we were able to secure the services of a volunteer from the Edge of Care Team. I was also able to support Mr A to complete a self-referral to Integrated Autism Services and the community mental health service, where he enrolled on a short course around coping skills for resilience.

As outcomes were met Mr C did not require formal or paid care and support from social services and we agreed together to close his case to the team. I do keep in touch via the Edge of Care Team and Mr A is happy that he can contact me or SPOA in the future should his needs change

Current well-being projects the Complex Disability Team are involved in, are Just Enough Support (JES) and Progressional Approaches to Supported Housing (PASH). This has included developing different types of supported accommodation, such as own front door and us facilitating group activities and learning opportunities to develop individual's skills to help them live independently. JES is a time limited, progression focused, Support Worker service which involves the citizen and an Occupational Therapist co-producing a support plan based on the goals and outcomes the citizen would like to achieve.

The objectives of the service are:

- To encourage and support adults with learning disabilities to learn new skills and to be more independent
- To help prepare people for independent living and to support them to develop new friendships with other people in similar circumstances (peer support)
- To promote and encourage the appropriate use of technology as a means of people being active and connected and as a way of helping people to learn new skills
- To increase confidence and self-value using meaningful everyday activities
- To improve community participation and reduce social isolation to enable individuals to be active in their local area and to give people a sense of belonging and identity
- To reduce reliance on the family carer
- To reduce long term reliance on statutory services, by establishing an approach that focuses on progression and the achievement of agreed outcomes
- To link in with Active Support approaches and processes

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PASH involves planning work with families and promoting more local, cost effective and person centred supported living placements as an alternative to residential placements. There is a focus on preventative working with specialist input at the planning stage. It is also intended to increase investment in social value models of delivering care and support in community settings.

The outcome of this work has been a self-sustaining network within the community, with citizens being involved with every part of the transition of moving into their own tenancy, including tendering the support they required. JES supported four citizens to move into an own front door project with an unexpected outcome of the moving in group sessions being that all four citizens now provide support to each other. Initially this arose from lack of availability of suitably trained staff, because we had a number of projects progressing at once. However, the benefits to the four individuals, who all moved in at the same time, became apparent and we hope to replicate this approach when a similar project comes along.

Citizen participation has been a cornerstone to this approach, but also involved a range of partners including Citizens Advice Denbighshire and Health colleagues who supported healthy eating, staying safe, telecare with the transformation team, learning about money management and cooking skills.

Contracts and Commissioning officers undertake regular monitoring visits to care homes across the county and as part of their visit will chat to residents about their experience. Any feedback received influences the monitoring reports and can lead to home being required to make changes or improve care services. Recently a resident commented that he wanted to live elsewhere and wasn't happy where he was placed and plans are now in progress, with help from an advocate, to arrange a move for him.

Carers

The Independent Living Advisors are supporting with Direct Payments including joint visits, in some instances, with carer assessors to help people set up accounts and pre-paid cards and providing information about rights and responsibilities in relation to having choice and control over their care and support. For example, a carer is now enjoying 'girl shopping' and coffee shop stops, in the knowledge that her husband is enjoying clay pigeon shooting, where he gets to enjoy 'male banter' and others who understand his particular set of needs.

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Another example includes, a Micro Provider who enables a daughter to take a break from her caring role by taking her mother out to do the things she likes to do, with company she is really enjoying – chips or ice cream on the prom! Our volunteer service has also played a pivotal role in relation to careful matching of interests, hobbies and skills, in order to support carers and their loved ones to maintain or enjoy new experiences.

It's not all one way either – for example, one citizen has taught a volunteer to play Yahtzee and another has learned new skills in relation to supporting someone with a sensory need.



Older People

Community Resource Team staff in South Denbighshire undertake joint visits with the Independent Living Advisors to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes.

Staff also promote direct payments when conducting assessment of needs with citizens who require care and support.

Development of Special Guardianship Order (SGO) support & support to former Children Looked After (CLA) / their families

Education and Children's Services have, through the use of Welsh Government grant money, enhanced support offered to Special Guardians, kinship carers and the families of children formally looked after. Additional support staff have been recruited to work exclusively with these children, young people and their families, giving easy access to support and advice.

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Collaborative Communication

Education and Children's Services have invested heavily in Collaborative Communication which is a strengths based, outcomes focused model of service delivery. Collaborative Communication aims to achieve outcome focused service delivery which works in partnership with children and families where personal outcomes are explored to overcome various life challenges.

Collaborative Communication also enhances and invests in the wider workforce through developing mentors and trainers to enable the model to be embedded into practice. Collaborative Communication focuses on a series of skilled, thoughtful conversations that aims to resolve the service user dilemmas. Collaboration in establishing sustainable outcomes whilst maximizing autonomy, independence and strengths is at the heart of the model. Collaborative Communication notices people for the problems they face not the problems they cause; notices the resources and strengths people have to overcome their personal obstacles and explores their strengths, values, hopes and aspirations.

By using this model of service delivery we aim to move away from the traditional problem focussed approach and task focussed plans. Our holistic approaches focus on the person and their networks/family whilst understanding the unique identity of each person / situation. The ultimate goal of the model is to enable people to live as fulfilled a life as possible and achieve a sense of wellbeing. Collaborative Communication has developed a number of mentors and trainers across both children's, adults and early help services with reflective groups forming the thrust of cultural change.

All new starters will be provided with Collaborative Communication skills ensuring it is embedded into practice as 'The Denbighshire Way'.

We have provided Collaborative Communication training for our Flying Start Health, and Childcare and Early Language Development Teams. Flying Start Health report that they are very enthusiastic about implementing and embedding this way of working within Denbighshire. We are currently seeking consultancy support to look at our paperwork, process and procedures to align this way of working collaboratively with our children, young people, and families.

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To embed this process further within child protection, Denbighshire are currently recruiting to the post of Effective Child Protection (ECP) Practice Mentor, who will lead on the ECP project and work within the Collaborative Communication model of service delivery.

Family Group Conference

The Therapeutic Service provide a Family Group Conference (FGC) Service which is a process led by family members to plan and make decisions for children about whom professionals have expressed concerns and who may be deemed to be at risk.

This risk can be from many quarters and may be a risk of significant harm towards the children and/or a risk of the children becoming or remaining looked after by someone other than family etc. The FGC is a process that aims to build on a family's strengths to empower them to understand the wider concerns and if necessary plan, with the support of professional services and community networks, to keep their children safe. The FGC is a voluntary process and families cannot be 'forced' to have one.

Family Group Conferences can be used in any serious situation where a plan and decision needs to be made about a vulnerable child. Family Group Conferences are mainly used in child welfare matters; particularly when a child is at risk of going to or remaining in care. A FGC is often effective in making safe plans for children, enabling many to stay within their family network as an alternative to going into or remaining in care and the allocated FGC coordinator remains independent of the family situation.

To ensure all families, including those receiving early intervention, are able to access this support, we commission a service which uses a variety of approaches to deliver flexible, bespoke support. Support may include options such as Family Group Conferences, Mediation, Relationship Advice and/or Counselling as appropriate to each family.

Lifelong Links

Lifelong Links aims to identify and engage relatives and other supportive adults, connected to a child in care, who are willing to make a lifelong commitment to that child. Research shows that the continuity and permanence of these relationships can offer young people ongoing support, provide an explanation of historical events, and reinforce their identity and sense of belonging.

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The Lifelong Links process provides the child or young person with supportive connections for the future.

The process is guided by the young person, parents and the Lifelong Links coordinator. However, the allocated social worker for the young person has specific responsibilities and expectations during the different stages of the Lifelong Links process.

If staff are considering a young person for Lifelong Links, they request a Therapeutic Consultation with the Therapeutic Service, to discuss the appropriateness of the referral. If it is decided that the Lifelong Links process is a good fit for the young person, their consent will be required before a Lifelong Links Coordinator can be allocated.

The allocated social worker and the Lifelong Links coordinator will discuss the process further and define the expectations.

Further consent is required, from the individual who has Parental Responsibility for the child or young person, to progress to a planning meeting which is arranged by the Lifelong Links Coordinator where all significant professionals are invited.

This is what we still have to do

Review the care and support provision provided across the county in line with Welsh Government's Rebalancing Social Care
Continue to embed Collaborative Communication across Adult, Children and Early Years Services

b) Working with people and partners to protect people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.

This is what we said we would do

- develop further care and support capacity across Denbighshire by continuing to support the Community Catalyst project to develop micro-enterprises.
- continue to work in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Conwy County Borough Council to develop and implement Bwthyn y Ddol

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This is what we have done and achieved

During the last 3 months of 2022 – 2023 there were 25 people experiencing delayed transfers of care for social care reasons. The average over the full year was 26.

The average age of adults entering residential care homes in 2022 - 23 was 82. This is slightly younger than last year when the average age was 84.

People with Learning Disabilities

Our Complex Disability Team focus on encouraging citizens and their families to attend their annual health check-up for citizens who have a Learning Disability. The team has also been working closely with our health colleagues and Regional Transformation team to develop initiatives to support a range of well-being provision.

The team participated in Train the Trainer sessions with Bangor University, to be able to deliver mindfulness to citizens as part of their role.

Children's services

Bwthyn Y Ddol

The multi-disciplinary team continues to work with children and young people who are at the edge of care and are at risk of becoming looked after - their parent or carer, for a variety of reasons, is unable to manage a healthy family dynamic. The team initially focus on completing a holistic formulation of strengths and difficulties, risks and needs through a consultation process, in order to recommend a program of interventions.

The model of care has been developed through a multi-agency team with a focus on the requirements and specific needs of the children and young people within Denbighshire and Conwy. This innovative approach to an evidence based model of care, along with the reflective practice adopted by the team, has already seen very positive results with children / young people successfully completing the intervention and safely remaining at home with family.

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Barnardo's Care Leaver Service

In 2022 we worked with Barnardo's Care Leaver Service (Personal Advisers) to ensure a co-produced Emergency Contacts list for Care Leavers, including Emergency Mental Health Support, was uploaded to Denbighshire's Leaving Care Webpage.

Parent Participation Group (PPG)

Parents and Carers are our first line of defence in keeping children safe from all forms of exploitation. Being aware of the changes that might indicate their child is being exploited means parents can seek the right support. Child exploitation has no place in our society and we need to come together as communities and have open conversations about how children are being hurt, so we can keep them safe.

PPG is a parent and carer led group which brings parents and carers together to share experiences in a safe space. Professionals from various sectors join the group session to share the purpose of their role and share education. The group provide feedback on things that go well and things that don't go so well.

Through this process of sharing information and both professionals and families learning from each other, the children in the community are able to be kept safer. The group is facilitated by Denbighshire Therapeutic Service and below are some of the things parents and carers have said about the group:

Being in the group "stop(s) you doubting your parenting"
It is "somewhere I can say anything and get support"
"So much information – easy to understand"
"I feel understood...I feel more capable in parenting"
"I am not alone...I feel more confident"
"I have a voice and people listen"
"Safe space Safe place"
"They all really genuinely care"
"I have learnt so much around Child Sexual Exploitation and now I understand"
"I've started to smile again thank you to everyone"
"And I thought it was only me, no longer alone / isolated"

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Dialectical Behaviour Therapy - Connected Parent Group

The Therapeutic Service have delivered a well-respected therapeutic intervention Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) alongside their Connected Parent Program, focusing on how relationships / experiences between the child and their primary caregiver builds positive, healthy attachments that can act as a buffer against adverse childhood experiences.

This parenting group brings parents / carers of babies together for an 11-week DBT skills group that intertwines the Connected Parent Program. DBT is a skills based experience that allows individuals to develop core skills that help regulate strong emotions, manage stressful situations and experience a kinder relationship with themselves and others.

The Connected Parent Program incorporates the skills individuals are developing through DBT, to build an understanding of how parenting young children also enhances the development of their child's brains in a healthy way that will help them have strong emotional connections with their parent as their secure base.

Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) – Team Around the Family Assessment

As part of the JAFF, undertaken with each member of the family including children and young people, the needs of each individual child / young person help shape the commissioning of our services, via our data analysis.

Consequently, when we re-commission new services from Autumn 2023, specialist support for children and young people around Mental Health and Wellbeing, Additional Needs, Domestic Abuse, & Family Relationships will be tendered.

My Voice

Our commissioned service Family Life Skills has provided the My Voice Service to offer creative and mindful interventions helping to encourage positive emotional well-being changes for children and young people aged 5 – 17. My Voice helps with Physical health, being safe, relationships, feelings and behaviour, friendships, confidence and self-esteem, worries about school or college.

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Older People

Through the weekly complex case meetings that the Community Resource Teams hold, better outcomes are achieved.

The multi-disciplinary team approach, consisting of a range of health and social care professionals, ensure that citizens get the best care and support from the most appropriate professional. The case study below clearly demonstrates, that by working together hospital admission can be avoided and the wishes of the person are taken into account.

Case Study

Citizen lives alone in the community. Her outcome was to remain living in the community and to be safe. She has a supportive son who visits daily and domiciliary care in the community, with 4 single handed calls a day. Complex physical health issues and lack of mobility mean support is needed with all aspects of personal care and activities of daily living.

Physical and mental health was deteriorating, with citizen presenting as confused at times, lacking insight into her care and support needs and also presenting with difficult behaviours. Social Worker had previously completed mental capacity act assessment in relation to care and support needs and deemed in citizen's best interests to have care and support at home.

Citizen was nursed in bed and when trying to roll onto her side for toileting and personal care needs citizen would often push against carer, shouting out saying she was in pain. For this reason, care was increased to double handed care and GP reviewed pain management.

Moving and handling equipment was already in place - gantry hoist & Wendylett sheets with handles - which enabled the domiciliary care staff to complete care safely and effectively.

The citizen had a profiling bed with a pressure relieving mattress. However, the District Nurse advised a new mattress was required as citizen developed severe deteriorating wounds and new pressure ulcers were developing in citizen's spine, hip and sacrum.

Citizen had always expressed never wanting to be hoisted, and there was extremely high risk of skin being further damaged by use of sling. District Nurses requested ambulance support to transfer the lady out of bed and a new mattress was put in place without hoisting. As a result of the joint working the team prevented further deterioration to citizen's skin and avoided hospital admission. The citizen achieved her outcome to remain in her own home.

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The South Localities Community Resource Team attend ward round meetings in Denbigh and Ruthin Community Hospitals to strengthen relationships and facilitate timely discharges. As a result of this a compliment was received from Ruthin Hospital highlighting in a Delayed Transfer of Care (DTC) meeting how a Dementia Social Care Practitioner expedited an early hospital discharge. Working together through the multi-disciplinary approach supports timely discharge from hospital as demonstrated in this case study.

Case Study

Citizen 95 years of age was living alone and a referral for a ramp was received. She was placed on our Occupational Therapy waiting list. During this time, the citizen was admitted to hospital and on admission she tested positive for Covid-19.

The Community Resource Team (CRT) duty officer was asked to contact the hospital for an update as no information had been received that the citizen was medically fit for discharge. The Duty Officer was unable to contact the ward or BCU Progress Chaser. When Progress chaser returned call to CRT, confirming the citizen was medically fit for discharge and advised they were listed for transfer to Community Hospital, as it was identified she needed equipment at home.

Citizen had been working with Therapies in the hospital including Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy to regain her functional abilities. It was recommended that she was discharged with 2 calls a day, morning and evening, to support with personal care. The CRT contacted the local provider and they were able to provide the support needed to facilitate discharge. Further to a case discussion in the CRT, it was established that the identified equipment was available and could be delivered that afternoon to citizen's home.

Several attempts were made by the CRT to ring Progress Chaser to request ambulance transport destination be changed from the Community Hospital to the citizen's home, but again no answer. The citizen's son contacted the CRT to say that the ambulance transport had actually been cancelled. Several phone calls were made within the CRT and eventually transport was rebooked and citizen returned home.

A message was received from the son advising his mother was settled at home and thanked the team for all their hard work. She had also had a settled night and a shower in her own home the following morning.

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Turn Only Once (TOO) is a personal care routine developed by Jo De Clercq, a Physiotherapist in Belgium for individuals with dementia. The principles of his approach are that citizens are cared for with minimal, but precise touch and much reduced handling.

It is known that citizens with dementia lose several of their senses and this includes the sense of proprioception (knowing where their body is in space).

Each time the citizen is touched or handled this causes anxiety and agitation as they do not understand what is happening. As a result, the individual tenses and they find the position which gives them the most sensory feedback which is an increased flexed position (foetal position).

TOO is combined with 24-hour postural support and this has in Belgium resulted in greatly reduced numbers of individuals developing pressure injuries or contractures.

TOO supports our Moving with Dignity approach, as it advocates that a personal care routine is completed by one person.

One of our Senior Occupational Therapists has been awarded funding from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (Innovation Award) for an educational visit to the residential home in Belgium, to learn about this approach. It is her intention that following this visit a small research project can be completed with residents in Denbighshire. If we can demonstrate that the approach can reduce agitation, this could delay the need for a change in category of placement, or increase the time an individual remains at home before placement is needed.



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Micro-providers

As of 1st January 2023, we have established a permanent post in the Edge of Care Team to continue the micro-provider initiative in Denbighshire.

There are 28 established micro-providers in Denbighshire, supporting around 120 citizens to meet the care and support needs they require in their own home.

The support offered by the micro-providers can include services such as personal care, practical help around the home, cleaning, cooking, gardening, dog walking, companionship - anything at all that will help someone be happier and safer in their own home.

There have been positive outcomes for the citizens using micro-providers, which we hope will continue.

Case Study

Daughter of citizen was becoming very stressed as she was having to go round and support her mother each morning to wash and dress prior to safe hands collection, daughter was late for work on many occasions, this caused relationship breakdown with mother and daughter as things were very rushed and tense whilst supporting in the mornings.

A micro-provider is now supporting Monday to Friday, with a morning visit to help with personal care, medication prompts and meal preparation. The micro-provider sent a very in-depth referral form with fantastic questions, to get to know citizen prior to arranging a meeting with citizen and daughter to introduce herself.

This has had a very positive outcome for both citizen and daughter, who now enjoy time together at the weekends, stress free. "The micro-provider is professional, thorough and very quick with communication responses, highly recommend."

Carers

Working with the Edge of Care team we are able to support carers and their cared for, carefully matching volunteers who have similar interests. As an example, rather than a traditional style service, an Edge of Care volunteer has been matched, through their shared interests and character, to provide weekly companionship to a gentleman who spends most of his time at home following a change to his health.

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His wife, who is an informal Carer was upset that her husband was really missing 'male banter' and opportunities to share his love of 60's and country music.

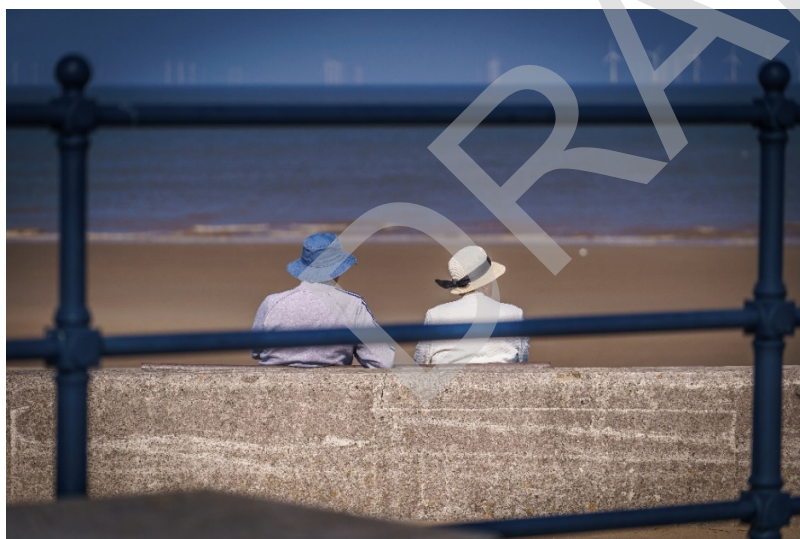
The family now look forward to the volunteer visits and they tell us that they consider him as part of their family. We know that they get the best biscuits ready for his visits!

It makes it even more special that the volunteer, sadly lost his wife during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Edge of Care Team maintained regular contact with him through a significant period of change, leading to his decision to take up volunteering. It's been lovely to see his confidence grow and new friendships develop.

This is what we still have to do

To trial the Touch Only Once (TOO) approach which in the longer term can improve the lives of citizens and their families.
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To continue with the review of Mental Health Services in Denbighshire.
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c) Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

This is what we said we would do

- Continue to embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures into all aspects of Children's Services.
- Ensure effective preparation of all staff across Adults and Children's Services for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards

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This is what we have done and achieved

98.80% of all adult protection enquiries were completed within statutory timescales. This is a slight reduction compared to last year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Of those children who were placed on the child protection register during the collection year, the number that has been previously registered under any category, at any time during the previous twelve months was 4. There were 3 children in this group in 21/22.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The total number of days on the child protection register for children who were removed from the register during the year was 27,354 (28,281 days 21/22).• The total number of children removed (de-registered) from the child protection register during the year was 77 (82 children in 21/22).• This gives us an average of 355 days per child (345 days in 21/22).• This is an increase of 10 days from the previous year (100 days in 21/22).

The implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards has currently been put on hold by the United Kingdom Government. Therefore, we are continuing to work to current legislation and are completing Deprivation of Liberty Standards as necessary.

The Herbert Protocol has been promoted and staff continue to be encouraged to advise and complete this with citizens, especially those living with dementia. Staff keep up to date with briefings and research and these are discussed in regular Social Worker meetings.

Contracts and Commissioning staff and Reviewing Officers review and monitor all providers and the care provided to older people in Denbighshire. Any concerns are followed up and where serious can lead to multi agency Escalation of Concerns meetings, attended and supported by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). These lead to the development of action plans and will generally ensure that no further placements are made with that provider until issues are resolved. All safeguarding concerns are managed by the Safeguarding team with close involvement of, as appropriate, Health partners, Adult Social Care Officers and CIW.

Managers within the Complex Disability Team attend essential Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings in relation to high risk domestic abuse and sexual violence cases. They also manage safeguarding casework in partnership with BCUHB and Denbighshire Safeguarding teams. Casework includes completing capacity assessments (particularly around keeping people safe online), healthy friendships and sexual relationships.

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Practitioners and citizens are encouraged to attend specialist training courses by Jiwsj and SPARC, sourced by the Complex Disability Team. Professionals regularly adapt information into easy read formats for citizens to use.

Children's services

Return Home Interviews – the Intake & Intervention Service Manager is a member of a Task & Finish Group with North Wales Police and other Local Authorities regarding Return Home Interviews, working together to improve the process and data provided.

Mind of My Own 'Return from Missing Scenario' investment - Denbighshire Education & Children's Services have re-invested in an add-on scenario for the digital participation and engagement tool, Mind of My Own, from 2022-2026. The 'Return from Missing Scenario' is a tool to gather information and intelligence that can better inform Return Home Interviews and/or intervention and safety plans in a way that young people may find easier as they can complete it on their own or with support, anytime, anywhere. This key information can help safeguard young people and prevent further missing episodes. Where appropriate, we would encourage use/offer of Mind of My Own 'Return from Missing' with children and young people who have gone missing from home or care, alongside or in addition to completion of a Return Home Interview.

Information Factsheets - A variety of information factsheets for children, young people, parents / carers and professionals have been established in relation to Child Protection Procedures, Conferences, Core Groups, Leaving Care and Being Looked After. They are on the Denbighshire County Council website and are available in a range of formats, including Welsh, to meet legislative accessibility standards

Children's Services Gateway - A project to improve practice and process within the Gateway is underway, after feedback from CIW's assurance check and follow up targeted inspection. Additional staff have been allocated to the Gateway, including increased management capacity.

Development of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – Denbighshire along with partners in North Wales Police are discussing the development of a MASH model in order to establish a more effective multi-agency strategy discussion mechanism.

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A dedicated officer has been assigned to Denbighshire that has resulted in strategy meetings taking place at a set time each day, allowing other agencies to join as appropriate. Work on this project is ongoing but all agencies are committed to improving the opportunity to discuss child protection referrals in a multi-agency forum.

Child Practice Review Learning – Denbighshire practitioners have access to Community Care Inform which is a website to assist professionals working with children and families to make and evidence decisions and assessments. All staff who have signed up receive regular e-mail bulletins on trending information, research and learning from child practice review and details of new members of staff are forwarded to set up accounts.

This is what we still have to do

To continue working with partners to establish a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
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To continue reviewing and monitoring the practice and processes within the the Children's Services Gateway
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d) Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

This is what we said we would do

- Further expand the work of the Edge of Care team in Adult Services to reduce social isolation, loneliness, improving health and developing independence skills for citizens.
- Develop provision that will provide appropriate accommodation with ongoing intensive person-centred support for Looked After Children with the highest complexity of need.

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- Continue to build upon work done so far and further develop Assistive Technologies to increase access and knowledge within Community Support Services and the community.

This is what we have done and achieved

During the year to 31 March, 4 looked after children have experienced one or more changes in school that were not due to transitional arrangements. This is a 44% decrease from the figure of 9 in the previous year.

Older People

Denbigh was chosen as the first community in North Wales to help shape the future of dementia care. The new, innovative Denbigh Community Listening Campaign was launched in March 2023 and aims to bring the regional dementia groups together with local residents, to share stories about the community and what is important to help to shape how local people with dementia are cared for.

The campaign puts local people at the centre of the discussion around dementia care. Along with support from Improvement Cymru and Citizens UK, the Denbigh Community Listening Campaign aims for local people to co-produce a plan for how support for residents of Denbigh should be tailored.

The aim is to ensure people with dementia have the best possible experience of living in their own home and participating in community life.

From local councillors, community volunteers and activity group leaders to shop owners and third sector representatives, community leaders will take a leading role in getting the conversation started across Denbigh.

Through talking and listening to people in Denbigh, stories will be collected about what it's like to live in the area and about the current dementia support, to establish a vision for the future representing the whole community's view.

Within our 2 residential care homes, Dolwen and Cysgod Y Gaer, we have had a range of digital technology equipment installed that provides leisure activities and supports those suffering from dementia, such as the Rempod, RITA (Reminiscence and Interactive Therapy Activities), tablets and iPads.

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In both Dolwen, Denbigh and Cysgod Y Gaer, Corwen we have strong links with the local community. This has seen neighbouring schools coming into the homes and undertaking inter-generational work on activities including arts, crafts and music.

Dolwen Care Home, Denbigh started a new music therapy project delivered by music therapy charity Nordoff and Robbins. The Denbighshire care home hosts the musical sessions every Monday across 12 weeks, either in small groups or on an individual basis. The sessions taking place include interactive and collaborative music making, where residents have the opportunity to sing, play instruments, listen, and even dance, if they wish.

Music therapy can support people with all kinds of conditions: from autism to dementia, learning difficulties to brain injuries, life-limiting illnesses to mental health issues, grief, and trauma. Shaped by more than 60 years of practice, Nordoff and Robbins has a unique approach to music therapy. The charity's trained music therapists aim to break through the barriers caused by life-limiting illness, disability, and social isolation.

Cysgod Y Gaer recently enjoyed a day filled with chances to meet a whole host of new furry (and scaly) friends. The residents and their families met with a number of animals, including rabbits, guinea pigs, a tortoise, corn snakes, a 10-foot python, a little Shetland pony and lizards.

The event was planned so that residents and their families could enjoy the experience of meeting the animals together and was hailed as a huge success.

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The animals were supplied by Animal Encounters, a local company. Catherine Roberts, Assistant Manager at Cysgod y Gaer Care Home said: “What a great afternoon had by all, from the young to a lady of 102 years old. It was lovely to see everyone interacting. The pandemic took precious time away from family and friends and there was so much joy and laughter to be seen by all ages”.

The residents and staff in Dolwen also enjoyed a visit from a local pony.



In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to support people in their own homes, Denbighshire Community Support Services set up a volunteering service to help take the pressure off traditional services. The ‘Edge of Care’ team help people all-across the county. Jackie is an Edge of Care volunteer, and has a very special friend who accompanies her on her home visits - her beautiful dog, Maisie. Maisie is the youngest volunteer on the team, and is almost 3 years old (in human years). She is less than 2 feet high, but is a massive stress reliever and help to the residents she visits weekly. The Australian Labradoodle is extremely well behaved and loves nothing more than receiving treats and being fussed. Whilst on the home visits, Jackie has a cup of tea with the resident and chats about their day and any needs they may have, whilst Maisie gladly receives some well-deserved treats.



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On Maisie, volunteer and owner Jackie said: “She was going to be given to a rescue centre and I couldn’t have that. So, we rescued her and to be honest she has rescued me too, and everyone else she meets really. I’ve had her for nearly two years now. Maisie never misses her visits, and we even visited a resident on Christmas day, so they could spend time with her. She’s a really calm dog and that’s why she is great when she comes along with me”.

Maisie has quickly become the best of friends with the members of the service and the citizens they support and they always look forward to weekly visits from Jackie and Maisie.

A Prestatyn resident who is an Edge of Care service user and has regular visits from both Jackie and Maisie said: “I am very glad for her coming, I feel like we have both saved each other in a way. Maisie has helped me with confidence, and I go out of the house more now”.

People with Learning Disabilities

Our Complex Disability Team get involved with key events and milestones in citizen’s lives and, in the first instance, will always strive to enable citizen’s to access mainstream services and resources. But recognise when specialist services and support are required.

Due to a lack of resources the moving in group was developed as a direct response to meet unmet need regarding learning the necessary life skills required to move into more independent living. We had a situation where 3 quite large community living projects were running concurrently – 8 people moving to Awel y Dyffryn, 3 to properties in Denbigh and 4 to Meliden. At this time the Just Enough Support scheme through Co-Options which provides life skills that people need to meet their chosen outcomes did not have the capacity to see every individual in time.

In Meliden, 4 tenants were moving at the same time and the idea arose of providing the life skills for 4 tenants at once, “the Moving In group”, to ensure they had suitable life skills to leave family homes and live more independently. Topics covered include - keeping safe & secure, what to do if there are water leaks or power cuts, cooking meals & healthy eating, local bus routes and nearest shops, money management and how to be a good neighbour.

Sessions were run by Co-options but co-produced by the Complex Disability Team. The 4 people got on well in early sessions and found they gave each other strong support, so continued with that support outside of the formal sessions.

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The group came out of necessity but the outcome was more than anticipated so the Complex Disability Team now hope to reproduce it when a similar opportunity arises. It was tried with 2 people moving in Denbigh but with a different agency and it was not as successful. When we have another 'own front door build' we will try to reproduce the moving-in group

Following the Covid-19 pandemic it was proposed is to stop running Popty, a Work Opportunity catering service and focus on providing learning opportunities, skill development and new enterprises. After engagement and consultation with citizens accessing the service previously, their families and practitioners a decision was taken to instead develop Popty as a learning academy. The service was relocated to Denbigh into more appropriate premises, to allow us to develop a service that was going to meet the ongoing needs of people with learning disabilities, as well as future service users.

Priority was given to the promotion of Health & Wellbeing through the provision of training opportunities and activities such as: cooking classes; food hygiene; healthy eating; exercise; wellbeing and personal safety. The aim is that citizens will develop tangible outcomes and life skills which promote independence, choice and control as well as improved physical and mental health.

In both Y Bont, which is based in Ruthin and Popty we have installed Promethean Interactive Screens and this has had a huge impact on citizen engagement. They are used for a variety of different tasks: to play interactive quizzes, display and create recipe cards, watch and follow You Tube guides e.g. recipes and to do group games. Every Friday both services use their screens to join an online music session and it is fantastic to see everyone enjoying themselves on the big screen.



This is complemented by the Mobi projector at Y Bont which allows our citizens to interact with games and touch screen technology on the floor – it encourages physical activity and is a big hit.

Both services have had an advisor come in to show them how to make the most out of Ipads and tablets. Popty has run a course for its citizens on how to use various functions on these devices to promote independence, both at home and in the work place.

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Global Resettlement Team

To ensure the Ukrainian families being supported in Denbighshire are provided with the right help, advice and information to find employment, a range of provision was sourced from Jobcentre Plus, Working Denbighshire and Third Sector partners. Specific employment training was delivered with ongoing support to find jobs, along with ESOL (English as a Second Language) training. We linked in with Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) to seek opportunities for the Ukrainian families to participate in society and help them to engage with various events within our communities.

Children's services

Education and Children's Services continue to support care experienced young people to access post 16 training and education, offering financial and practical support to attend college or apprenticeship's. Care experienced young people who choose to attend University are well supported, with services ensuring that all grants are accessed and that students have appropriate accommodation over the summer months. We have worked closely with Working Denbighshire to ensure care experienced young people have access to a range of employment and training opportunities and are supported to prevent becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Barnardo's Care Leaver Service (Personal Advisers) work with care experienced young people and care leavers to support their transition to adulthood. Barnardo's have undertaken a number of group sessions during 2022-2023 for care leavers including;

- day excursion to Glan Llyn outdoor pursuits centre
- 3-day residential to Glan Llyn outdoor pursuits centre where young people took part in kayaking, high ropes, paddle boarding, climbing, orienteering, archery, bowling and a basic substance misuse awareness session from Young People's Substance Misuse Service (CYPSMS).
- a trip to visit the 'Knife Angel' (national monument against violence and aggression)
- Cinema and Restaurant outing, young people completed work around budgeting and were able to socialise with peers.
- Young people have also taken advantage of leisure passes previously purchased through Moon Dance funding. Young people are reporting a positive impact on their emotional health and well-being.

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This is what we still have to do

To continue working with Age Connects and Conwy County Borough Council to become an Age Friendly Community. To continue with the development of the action plan that will be submitted with the application to the World Health Organisation.

To continue to develop a bid with Digital Communities Wales to secure funding to employ staff to help residents use and benefit from a range of digital technology within our care homes

To ensure that our telecare provision is ready for the National Digital switchover in 2025 as the majority of our equipment currently is only suitable for analogue phone lines.

Establish closer working relationships with Working Denbighshire to reduce the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Enhance the supported living options within Denbighshire to allow more young people to remain living within the county.

e) Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

This is what we said we would do

- Implement the actions of the State of Caring Action Plan to review and develop services that meet the needs of carers in Denbighshire.
- Continue with the development of Bwthyn Y Ddol and the multi-disciplinary approach for children on the edge of care.
- Development an in-county residential short breaks & emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire.

This is what we have done and achieved

15 children returned home from care during the year. Last year's figure was 18 children.

On 31 March 2023, 18 looked after children had had three or more placements during the year. Last year's figure was 19 children.

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Carers

We recognise the substantial contribution that unpaid carers make and put high importance on ensuring the best outcomes for unpaid carers. We are continuing to work collaboratively to strengthen support for carers by listening to what local carers say about how we can better meet their needs.

Progress of the State of Caring Action Plan was slower than initially hoped, due to various external pressures and internal staffing issues, but the actions identified in the plan are now being taken forward as part of wider work to support the implementation of the National Carers Strategy 2021 and Carers Charter. This will continue during 2023 – 2024.

The legacy of the Covid-19 Pandemic, rising costs of living and pressures on health and social care services are adding to the stress felt by unpaid carers. They are anxious and uncertain about what the future holds. They don't feel recognised or respected as experts in their own lives. Statistics tell us that more carers are living in poverty, cutting back on food and reducing work hours or leaving work all together. Many struggle to maintain their own wellbeing and often overlook their own needs because of their caring responsibilities. Carers report that support is often not available when they would most benefit from it.

To address some of these issues, we have a project delivered in partnership with NEWCIS and Citizens Advice Denbighshire. It provides practical and emotional support plus financial or benefits checks for those carers who are most at risk of isolation and carer breakdown. There is a waiting list for this service and further funding is being sought to ensure the longer term sustainability of the project.

Carer Assessors are reintroducing home visits and re-establishing relationships through attendance at Talking Points. They are strengthening the provision of information advice and assistance in collaboration with community navigators and other organisations supporting carers.

Children's services

Ending Physical Punishment legislation was cascaded out and formed part of the training to schools and staff across education services. All school staff received awareness to respond to this change where concerns were apparent and required intervention.

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This information was also sent out to parents / carers of children across Denbighshire at the time of implementation.

Edge of Care Program sits within the Therapeutic Service and aims to:

- Support families to address their problems and make positive changes that can reduce the risks for their children, as well as helping them make a positive contribution to the community in which they live.
- Provide intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple complex problems, where there is or has been a strong possibility of a child becoming looked after
- Enable a child's circumstances to improve and to give the family skills so they can sustain their own improvements.

The program has a clear focus on providing intensive home-based intervention for the whole family where children are considered to be 'on the edge of care'. The Edge of Care program also provides a similarly high intensity intervention for care- experienced children including those in residential settings where the plan is for them to return to their family of origin or general foster care or children who have been adopted where significant support is required to prevent their placement from faltering. The Edge of Care program works within the Integrated Family Support Team model of assessment and intervention and provides the intervention over a maximum of 12 weeks delivering practical short and building community/wider resources using clear outcome focused goals co-developed with the child / young person and their family.

Bwthyn Y Ddol - unfortunately the work on the regional assessment centre has seen significant delay and work is unlikely to start on site until the summer of 2023, in the meanwhile work is going to develop a temporary assessment centre.

In county residential short breaks and emergency care provision – due to capacity and resources, this work has not got as far as we would have hoped and is something we will be progressing during the next year.

This is what we still have to do

To improve the availability of short breaks and respite for carers in Denbighshire.
To continue implementing the actions in the State of Caring Action plan

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To continue with the development of the Bwthyn Y Ddol regional assessment centre in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council and BCUHB.

Development of an in-county residential short breaks & emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire.

f) Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs

This is what we said we would do

- Commission specialist supported accommodation for young people with complex needs that is person-centred and provides sustained support to mitigate the risk of the young person falling into a future cycle of homelessness.
- Work with partners to promote social care as a career opportunity by building on our recruitment to care and career pathways for young people
- Continue to review and modernise our offer of day and work services for people with complex disabilities.

This is what we have done and achieved

The total number of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in: a) the 12 months since leaving care was 10 (5 care leavers in 21/22) and b) the 13 - 24 months since leaving care was 7 (5 care leavers in 21/22).

7 care leavers have experienced homelessness during the year, within 12 months of leaving care (9 care leavers in 21/22).

Older People

The pandemic was particularly tough for care home residents especially when visiting was limited. Those who do not have family or friends visiting comment that they still sometimes feel lonely. This led to us supporting Book of You who have received a grant from Age Friendly Communities to arrange for visitors to those that request them, in 4 homes in the south of the county.

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Awel Y Dyffryn



The first citizens moved into the new Grŵp Cynefin Extra Care Housing facility in Denbigh, Awel Y Dyffryn, in February 2022. Currently, of the 42 2-bedroom flats and 24 1-bedroom flats, there is only 1 vacancy. Abacare have 11 members of staff providing on-site care packages, 24 hrs a day to those who need them, and emergency care can also be provided. Activities on site include bingo, quizzes and film nights too. There is also an on-site hair salon.

Excellent feedback has been received from citizens, staff and the local community.

People with Learning Disabilities

Complex Disability Team staff support citizen's and families with future planning, starting when citizens transition from children to adult services. We hold a housing needs database that informs future housing need and shapes services now and for the future. Supporting and facilitating citizen's moving into different types of supported living options is a huge part of CDT work and can take many years for outcomes to come fruition or to be realised to enable citizen's to meet desired outcomes.

The housing needs database has this year enabled us to plan for and identify suitable new homes for 3 individuals within our current supported living homes, providing varying levels of support. Two individuals have been able to move directly from college into their local community. The Complex Disability team have also used the housing needs database to evidence the need for future accommodation across the county and are working with a local housing association to develop a new accessible home for four more individuals, meeting their desired outcomes and reducing admissions to residential settings.

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Meifod, one of our Day and Work Opportunity Services reopened in the spring of 2022, following them being suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A significant investment through grant funding was made to improve aspects of the buildings in which they are located, including an upgrade of the heating and ventilation systems. The service also invested in both a 3D and Laser Printer. As a result of this we are able to offer more activities other than those associated with making garden furniture.

The new Boxer Laser Cutter has allowed the service to diversify into a different market and evolve with a different product range. The new technology allows our citizens to embrace a new way of working away from traditional woodwork with more of an emphasis on creativity and computer-based design. Working with the new software and understanding how the machine works will also open up more work possibilities going forward.



The individuals at Meifod are acquiring new skills that will give them experience of how modern machines work within the industry. The laser machine is also complementing our existing garden furniture production by being able to add the Meifod logo to our products, a service that we previously used to outsource. This ensures that both historic and modern techniques can work together.

During 2023 – 2024 we plan to maximise the use of the 3D printer to produce diverse, eco-friendly plastic products such as plant pots and mini gardens.

Children's services

Basic Income for Care Leavers pilot

In June 2022 Welsh Government launched a basic income pilot for eligible care experienced young people.

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Education and Children's Services have worked closely with Citizens Advice Denbighshire to ensure that eligible care leavers have independent financial advice regarding this pilot and are supported to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by being part of the pilot scheme.

Education and Children's Services continue to foster close links with housing and homelessness to improve accommodation opportunities for young people. The establishment of a monthly meeting between internal services and external partners has ensured that the housing needs of children looked after, care leavers and 16/17 experiencing homelessness are understood and appropriate priority given to this cohort.

This partnership working is also allowing greater future planning to meet the complex needs of individual young people alongside developing wider provision to support care leavers.

We have provided groups, activities, and events for children, young people and families through our Families First, Flying Start, and commissioned projects. Covid-19 impacted children, young people and families, some of whom have experienced isolation, anxiety, and depression. For some families, it has meant our staff working intensely with them to support and encourage them to come along.

We continue to improve engagement with our hard-to-reach families, although in some cases we are still working with them on a 1-2-1 basis in order to get to a stage where they feel confident enough to venture out and about to meet others. For some this can be a language and cultural barrier and we continue to gain their trust at their desired pace.

We have met with Working Denbighshire to look at what support can be offered to individuals interested in becoming childminders, and also support for older Young Carers.

Our Internal Care Management Team and Human Resources Recruitment Specialist have undertaken a number of initiatives over the last year to encourage and support young people to think about social care as a career. This has included attendance at the following:

- 2 events at Rhyl College
- Careers Wales events at Prestatyn High School, Christ the Word School and also Choose your Future Careers Festival at Kinmel Kinspa for Denbighshire and Conwy Schools
- Llandrillo College Freshers' Fairs – 1 in Rhyl and 1 Rhos on Sea

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- Working Denbighshire Careers Event for 16-35 year olds
- 2 Health and Social Care events in Coleg Cambria, 1 in Deeside and 1 in Yale College
- Working Denbighshire Taster Sessions online event for social care
- Meet the employer event – Coleg Cambria

During 2022 – 23 we formalised placements for Social Care and lined up a number of providers to match with potential students coming through the College-based City & Guilds route at both level 2 & level 3. This wasn't as successful as we'd hoped. Although we had a more formal recruitment and induction strategy in place, students were struggling with transport issues and getting to placements etc. This pilot was only run with one particular college, so in 2023-24 we are aiming to widen this audience.

We did successfully host in our locality Teams 3 level 3 students who expressed an interest in Social Work/Social Care / Occupational Therapy. All 3 students provided positive verbal feedback about their placements.

This is what we still have to do

To commission specialist supported accommodation for young people with complex needs that is person-centred and provides sustained support to mitigate the risk of the young person falling into a future cycle of homelessness.
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To continue to develop technology within our day and work services to increase participation and engagement of people with complex disabilities.
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To continue to work in partnership and develop innovative ways to attract more young people into social care as a career.

5. How we do what we do

a) Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

For the first time we have introduced Domestic Skills studies for domestic workers in care settings. It was identified this part of the workforce often felt neglected, so this package of training has been devised with them in mind and incorporates updates and refreshers on all aspects of health & safety, infection prevention and control, CoSHH, manual handling of objects and record keeping.

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We were also able to deliver a 'train the trainer' event for participants to be able to deliver the Manual Handling Passport. A working group will be established to monitor consistency and quality of training provided.

We have established closer links with BCUHB Care Home Corporate Quality Development Team and attend regular Joint Regional Training & Education Group meetings to map training which covers both areas and share resources and contacts.

A big part of this work will be to agree regional mandatory training for social care workers aside from the expectations of All Wales Induction Framework (AWIF).

Recruitment and retention remains a Corporate priority, with dedicated HR time provided to Education and Children's Services to improve recruitment and retention across the service and primarily into social work posts. There have been a number of positive outcomes from this focussed work including a revised vacancy pack, revised starting grade and progression pathway and support for staff to act as Practice Educators for social work students. Recruitment and retention will remain a priority area with continued focus over the coming year.

In early 2023 we successfully appointed a new Social Work Practice Learning Coordinator who will focus specifically on student social work placements; developing opportunities amongst existing services, but also seeking placement experiences with our partners who are able to host. They will also manage our relationship with the universities, supporting to shape the way social work education is delivered.

As a part of this work Denbighshire, along with Wrexham and Flintshire are working with our partner Higher Education Institution (HEI), Glyndwr University, to develop a part time route to the Social Work Degree. It is hoped this will be available from September 2023.

College placements for students studying the City & Guilds Level 2 & Level 3 Health and Social Care Qualification have been developed in collaboration with operational teams and Denbighshire's Human Resources team to ensure that we have more effective systems in place to support work placements in the future.

National Safeguarding Standards were introduced in October 2022 and a mapping exercise is now taking place to look at job roles in comparison to the requirements of the standards.

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Denbighshire Contracts and Commissioning team work closely with the Workforce Development team to ensure that information about resources, training and other support available is shared with all providers on a regular basis. They hold regular meetings with providers to ensure that there are clear channels of communication.

The Workforce Development team have invested in Virtual Reality to support training and intervention where understanding of abuse and trauma are required. They will primarily be used as tools to support interventions, but will also enhance learning experiences. As the year progresses we hope to develop this programme of learning and discuss future use and investment with partner agencies such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education and North Wales Police.

Education & Children's Services now have Collaborative Communication Mentors who are able to deliver training to new staff to support a service wide commitment to strengths based approaches when working with families.

Through support from the Social Care Workforce Sustainability Grant we have been able to commission a series of courses to support the wider workforce in being able to address training needs within their own services or organisations. In 2022 we were able to deliver a Level 3 Award in Education & Training allowing participants to run learning events themselves. 10 participants across Adults and Children's services engaged with the 4-day training event and we will now establish a working group to ensure consistency and quality in any training delivery.

Sheila Mullins, a care assistant in Dolwen Residential Home, Denbigh was a finalist in the Social Care Wales Accolades 2022 in the 'We Care Wales' award. Sheila was nominated by her line manager, who said "Sheila has been nominated for her dedication to the residents of the home she has worked at for more than 20 years. Sheila always goes the extra mile to help the people she looks after, making it her goal to get to know every individual in her care and find out the little things that matter to them. Even in some of our darkest times Sheila has always found a way to be positive and that was infectious to staff and residents alike."

More Than Just Words

Alaw Pierce, Service Manager won the Social Care Wales Caring in Welsh Award 2022. There is a [short video on Social Care Wales's website](#) that tells a little bit more about Alaw.

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Alongside Alaw, Catherine Roberts, Manager of Cysgod Y Gaer Residential Care Home, Corwen was a runner up in this category.

Staff attend weekly catch ups in the medium of Welsh to ensure that those who are learning keep it fresh in their minds. Short and long term Welsh language training is attended, to include week long total immersion courses at the Welsh language centre in Nant Gwrtheyrn on the Llŷn peninsula.

Providers are encouraged to provide support bilingually and to ensure that residents / attendees get support in their language of choice. They are also encouraged to distinguish between first language Welsh speakers and others, by using memory aides such as logos on bedroom doors and on personal files.



A Welsh language promotion week was held at Prestatyn Community Resource Team. This included a session from Margaret Watkins, Welsh Language Champion within Adult Services and Meilyr Emrys, BCUHB Welsh Language Lead, talking to us about using the Welsh language in the office, on e-mail and when answering the phones.

Posters were displayed to help and encourage staff to use a little Welsh where they can and of course to encourage staff to talk in Welsh to each other.

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Children's services

A list has been developed identifying who within Children's Service speaks fluent Welsh, are a moderate Welsh speaker or are learning Welsh. The list is regularly updated and shared with staff within the Service.

This helps with any queries that non-Welsh speaking staff might have on e.g. referrals and identify Welsh speaking Social Workers to speak to children / young people, parents and professionals. Staff are regularly reminded of the Welsh Language Standards and to contact their Champion if requiring help with anything relating to the use of the Welsh Language (e.g. e-mail signatures, telephone messages etc).

Education & Children's Services have a Facebook page in both Welsh and English and a 'Closed' Group for Foster Carers in which all information is published in both Welsh and English.

Staff are offered and provided with computer software for checking spelling and grammar in Welsh, and Welsh language interfaces for software (where an interface exists) i.e. Cysill, Cysgair.

They are also regularly reminded that messages such as Out of Office and answer phone messages must be bi-lingual. The Welsh Language Champion supports staff to ensure their answer phone messages and written responses are accurate.

The Service has taken part in 2 self-assessment analyses:

- Compliance with Welsh Language standards
- The Welsh Language Commissioner's Questionnaire – about current practices of public organisations in terms of promoting Welsh language services, and the data that exists on the use of Welsh language services

As part of a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in February 2023, Children's Services were inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales and the Head of Service was asked about the Welsh Language and the way we promote it within the Service. Inspectors were provided with information on how we adhere to the standards and promote usage and their findings will be mentioned in the final report which will be published later in the year.

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Through the Flying Start Programme, the offer of free childcare for two year-olds has been rolled out across Wales, with a particular emphasis on Welsh Medium provision and support. Through our Childcare and Play element, we have Welsh medium childcare in Rhyl, and will be extending Welsh medium provision in Prestatyn, subject to funding through the Early Years and Childcare Capital Grant. This will provide families with more choice. Being able to attract more first language Welsh staff to join the Authority is encouraging.

b) Our financial resources and how we plan for the future

Monthly budget monitoring takes place for both Adult and Children's social care, including Homelessness and regular finance reports are presented to the Senior Management Teams forecasting the year-end position.

Changes since the previous month's report alongside projected pressures are highlighted and discussed with mitigating actions where possible, although this continues to be a challenge when managing demand-led statutory Services. The annual budget is set following a lengthy process of anticipating future pressures and identifying savings across all services whilst engaging with elected members and others.

In the medium term, the Council has a rolling three-year Medium Term Financial Plan which sets out the estimated funding position over the period and, working with services, builds in estimates of required savings and additional funding requirements. This medium term planning process helped to identify and provide, through the council's budget, additional funding in 22/23. This helped to support growing pressures mainly due to annual care fee inflation and the rising costs of homelessness accommodation and Adult Social Care (£3.1m) and Children's Services (£0.750m). The projected inflation cost for 23/24 has had a significant impact on the additional funding required and an unprecedented increase to the social care budgets has been applied to Homelessness accommodation and Adult Social Care (£8.2m) and Children's Services (£2.0m).

It is recognised that the Council faces growing financial challenges going forward, due to the growth in inflation and demand outstripping increases in funding, and that all departments will need to play their part in identifying reductions in pressures and savings over the next few years.

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Main stream financial internal planning takes place on a monthly basis at Service leadership / management team meetings. There is a focus on performance and financial monitoring areas of the areas under greatest pressure. The Service finance officers also meet regularly with Heads of Service and the Management Executive Team.

c) Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability

Working in partnership with a wide range of organisations is critical to the successful delivery of both statutory and non-statutory services across both our Adult and Children's services. In Denbighshire we have some very long-standing and successful partnerships delivering collaboratively to provide the necessary support to some of our most vulnerable citizens across the county.

As resources become more stretched, working in partnership is essential to achieving the right outcomes for our citizens. Early intervention and prevention work is vital to ensure that we are minimising the complexity of need and addressing support needs as early as possible to reduce the reliance on statutory services. This is evident in some of the examples of partnerships detailed below.

The multi-agency Ageing Well in Denbighshire group has grown in attendance since merging with Dementia Friendly Denbighshire and this group has created an action plan describing the role that each member takes in getting us closer to our aim of having an age and dementia friendly county.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) is a key partner in delivering seamless health and social care. Weekly Complex case meetings continue with a multi-disciplinary team approach consisting of all GP surgeries within Central and South Denbighshire, Pharmacy, Mental Health team, District Nurses, Third sector, Social Care and Advanced Nurse Practitioners etc. From April 2022 to March 2023, there were a total of 1976 complex case discussions held.

A multi-disciplinary team has been established within our Complex Disability service for a number of years and it prides itself in working in partnership with Health colleagues.

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The team recently organised a staff development day due to the high number of new employees within the team, to ensure joint working remains central to person centred practice across the team.

In her report 'Rethinking Respite for People Affected by Dementia' (2018), The Older People's Commissioner for Wales concludes that much needs to change in terms of respite: a fundamental shift in our thinking and practice.

Rethinking the language and terminology we use around respite; consulting with people living with dementia and carers, using their knowledge and experiences to develop and shape models of care and support are just some of the areas of focus.

At an operational level we work with our neighbouring local authorities on joint initiatives and projects such as Bwthyn Y Ddol with Conwy County Borough Council and we are working closely with Flintshire County Council to procure a new finance system to support our financial assessment team in Adult Social Services.

All Wales Protocol for reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults

Welsh Government published the All Wales Protocol for reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults on 28th March 2022. The protocol is intended to help all professionals who come into contact with care experienced children and young adults while carrying out their work, in sharing a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and which safeguards and promotes their wellbeing.

The protocol is a framework for good practice for those working with care experienced children up to the age of 18 and young adults up to the age of 25. It aims to avoid their prosecution wherever possible and appropriate, by encouraging a response to incidents which reduces the likelihood of criminalisation, offending or reoffending. Managers, Social Workers and Social Care Practitioners have attended multi-agency training and workshops aimed at embedding this protocol across our service and within our work with partner agencies.

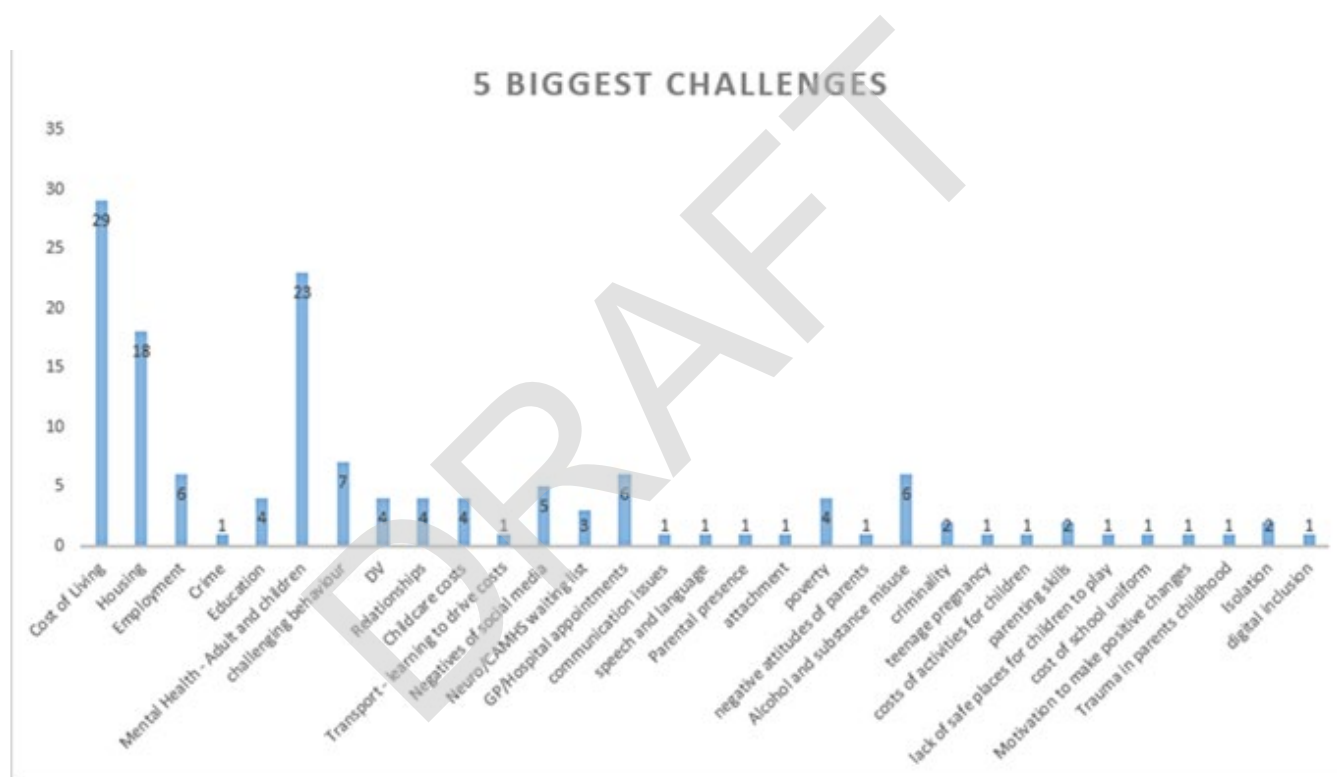
Strategically and operationally, Families First and Flying Start work closely with our internal teams and services, regional partners, and commissioned services.

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Our ethos is to work in partnership as much as possible in order for children, young people, and families to achieve the very best outcomes.

We are working with the Healthy Start Scheme to highlight accessibility of a healthy diet for low-income families, and work closely with colleagues within the Tackling Poverty Group, and Food Poverty Group to mitigate the cost of living crisis for our families as much as we can.

Working with North Wales Public Service Lab based at Glyndwr University we are looking at data from Public Health Wales to consider how our communities work with us to deliver co-produced services. We are starting with the 5 biggest challenges that our families face. Please find below, a graph of information we've collected so far during this new piece of work.



We have administered and designed jointly with Wrexham, Conwy, and Flintshire, the National Young Carers ID Card, joining in with Anglesey and Gwynedd where possible.

This included launching the card at Wrexham Football Ground where match proceeds were donated to third sector organisations supporting our Young Carers.

The council has very robust internal governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of Community Support Services and Children's and Education Services.

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Reports are taken to various Scrutiny Committees during the year to enable Elected Members to scrutinise policy and performance relating to social services, and to monitor the progress of any actions required in response to the Director's annual report or CIW's annual report.

We also have a very well established service performance challenge process, where each Head of Service is challenged annually on areas such as service performance and leadership.

The panel for each service challenge meeting includes the Chief Executive; Corporate Directors; Lead Members; Scrutiny Members and our external regulators (the Wales Audit Office and Care Inspectorate Wales).

In addition to the service challenge process, the council also has a very robust performance management framework, which includes regular performance reports being presented to the Corporate Executive Team (CET); Senior Leadership Team (SLT); Scrutiny; and Cabinet, and various reports being presented to scrutiny periodically on service specific issues, such as Homelessness, Contracts and Commissioning and Compliments and Complaints.

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Accessing further information and key documents

Glossary of terms

Carers Charter

The charter had been produced in consultation with local adult and young carers and Denbighshire Carer's Strategy Group to ensure all carers receive understanding and the best quality support. See details available on [DCC](#) website.

Community Navigators

Work alongside the local authority's Single Point of Access and conduct a What Matters assessment to determine what help they can provide and/or signpost you to suitable support in the community. See details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Community Resource Teams (CRTs)

Offer a more holistic approach to community based health and social care with health staff (including community nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and older person's mental health teams) and social services staff (including social workers, occupational therapists and social care practitioners) all based together. There are nine joint teams in Denbighshire and Conwy focusing on working closer together to provide care closer to home, offering better provision for the population and an increased focus and investment on prevention and early intervention. See details in [County Voice](#).

Denbigh Community Listening Campaign

Denbigh has been chosen as the first community in North Wales to help shape the future of dementia care. The Denbigh Community Listening Campaign aims to bring the regional dementia groups together with local residents, to share stories about the community and what is important to help to shape how local people with dementia are cared for.

Putting local people at the centre of the discussion around dementia care, along with support from Improvement Cymru and Citizens UK, the Denbigh Community Listening Campaign aims for local people to co-produce a plan for how support should be tailored for residents of Denbigh, to ensure people with dementia have the best possible experience of living in their own home and participating in community life.

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Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)

Aims to promote, support, enable and develop a sustainable Third Sector in Denbighshire. Supports organisations to deliver their services in an effective and sustainable manner by provision of low cost training courses, funding advice and information, supporting volunteers to enable them to get more involved in their communities. See details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

DBT is a type of [talking therapy](#). It's based on [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#), but it's specially adapted for people who feel emotions very intensely. The aim of DBT is to help you:

- Understand and accept your difficult feelings
- Learn skills to manage them
- Become able to make positive changes in your life

'Dialectical' means trying to understand how two things that seem opposite could both be true. For example, accepting yourself and changing your behaviour might feel contradictory. But DBT teaches that it's possible for you to achieve both these goals together.

Edge of Care Team - Adults

The Edge of Care team is based within Adult Social Care Services and recruits, trains and deploys Volunteers. The Team has demonstrated how the project can positively impact on planned care pathways, supporting discharge from hospital for citizens, working closely with our Community Resource Teams in delivering a 'team around the individual' approach, reducing demand for traditional planned care.

Edge of Care Service - Children

This is support for vulnerable families whose children are on the at risk of becoming looked after by the local authority. Details available on [Welsh Government](#) website.

Herbert Protocol

The aim of the scheme is to help keep people who are living with dementia safe, particularly if, as their condition progresses they start to 'walk about' which is not unusual following diagnosis.

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Often people will only travel a short distance, maybe into the garden or down the street and will return a short time later. However, some people can get lost and go missing. This can lead to feelings of confusion, fear and vulnerability for individuals and their families, particularly at night time or in inclement weather conditions.

The Herbert Protocol is designed to assist in locating individuals safe and well should they go missing, and provide reassurance to family and friends that the police have all the information they need to help locate the individual. [The Herbert Protocol is a national initiative adopted by North Wales Police \(external website\)](#), as well as many other police forces around the UK.

Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF)

The JAFF should be a streamlined system which delivers a holistic assessment of the needs of the whole family, leading to earlier and more comprehensive diagnosis of need; the development of a bespoke package of support to aid early prevention of potentially negative outcomes; and the promotion of family strengths to develop resilience which should help the family to cope better in the future.

Find out more about family support via the [Denbighshire County Council website](#).

Liberty Protection Safeguards

Planned to come into force in April 2022, they will provide protection for people aged 16 and above who are, or who need to be, deprived of their liberty in order to enable their care or treatment and lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements.

People who might have a Liberty Protection Safeguards authorisation include those with dementia, autism and learning disabilities who lack the relevant capacity. Details available on [Gov.UK](#) website.

Mind of My Own app

A mobile phone app that makes it easier for children and young people to talk to their social workers and other practitioners and have their voices heard. Details available on the company [website](#).

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Moving with Dignity

Since 2019, an Occupational Therapist has been working on this project within the Review Team, moving forward with practical plans to implement changes to the way Denbighshire residents are assessed for and receive moving and handling support. She has been tasked with scoping the issue, researching best practice, and identifying ways of providing effective training and reaching the right staffing groups (including local authority, health colleagues and provider services). This potentially has the benefit of speeding up the hospital discharge process and it could have a positive impact on the well-being and sense of control of citizens and their carers, increasing resilience and engagement.

North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)

Deliver information, one to one support, training and counselling to unpaid carers in North East Wales. Details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Single Point of Access (SPoA)

The team consists of experienced staff from health, social care, and the third Sector, who are able to provide information, advice and assistance about the services available. SPoA acts as the 'front door to services' to ensure you receive the right care, in the right place by people who have the right skills at the right time, first time. Details available of [DCC](#) website.

Social Services and Well-being Act (SSWBA) 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA) 2016

The SSWBA provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. More information available on the [Social Care Wales](#) website.

The RISCA strengthens protection for those who need it, establishes a regulatory system that is in-line with the SSWBA and creates a regulatory system that is centred around people who need care and support, and the social care workforce. The Act provides the statutory framework for the regulation and inspection of social care in Wales. More information available on the [Social Care Wales](#) website.

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Southwark cases

This guidance has been issued jointly by the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. It revises the guidance that was issued in April 2010.

Government guidance sets out the respective duties of children's services and housing services to secure or provide accommodation for 16 and 17 year-old children who are homeless or in need of accommodation. The [guidance](#) was originally issued following the [judgment by the House of Lords in the case of R \(G\) v London Borough of Southwark \(2009\)](#). It has now been updated to reflect changes in homelessness and children's legislation.

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Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	20 July 2023
Head of Service	Lisa Jones, Interim Head of Legal and Democratic Services
Report author	Rhian Evans, Scrutiny Co-ordinator
Title	Scrutiny Work Programme

1. What is the report about?

1.1 The report seeks Performance Scrutiny Committee to review its draft forward work programme (see Appendix 1). As part of its review the Committee is asked to reflect on how Scrutiny can support the delivery of the Council's Corporate Plan and its aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030, whilst also prioritising matters which the Committee deems important to scrutinise.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

2.1 To seek the Committee to review and agree on its programme of future work, and to update members on relevant issues.

3. What are the Recommendations?

That the Committee

- 3.1 considers the information provided and approves, revises or amends its forward work programme as it deems appropriate; and
- 3.2 determines whether any key messages or themes from the current meeting should be publicised via the press and/or social media.

4. Report details

- 4.1 Section 7 of Denbighshire County Council's Constitution sets out each Scrutiny Committee's terms of reference, functions and membership, as well as the rules of procedure and debate.
- 4.2 The Constitution stipulates that the Council's scrutiny committees must set, and regularly review, a programme for their future work. By reviewing and prioritising issues, members are able to ensure that the work programme delivers a member-led agenda.
- 4.3 For a number of years it has been an adopted practice in Denbighshire for scrutiny committees to limit the number of reports considered at any one meeting to a maximum of four plus the Committee's own work programme report. The aim of this approach is to facilitate detailed and effective debate on each topic.
- 4.4 In recent years the Welsh Government (WG) and Audit Wales (AW) have highlighted the need to strengthen scrutiny's role across local government and public services in Wales, including utilising scrutiny as a means of engaging with residents and service-users. From now on scrutiny will be expected to engage better and more frequently with the public with a view to securing better decisions which ultimately lead to better outcomes for citizens. AW will measure scrutiny's effectiveness in fulfilling these expectations.
- 4.5 Having regard to the national vision for scrutiny whilst at the same time focussing on local priorities, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) recommended that the Council's scrutiny committees should, when deciding on their work programmes, focus on the following key areas:
- budget savings;
 - achievement of the Corporate Plan themes (with particular emphasis on their deliverability during a period of financial austerity);
 - any other items agreed by the Scrutiny Committee (or the SCVCG) as high priority (based on the PAPER test criteria – see reverse side of the 'Member Proposal Form' at Appendix 2);

- Urgent, unforeseen or high priority issues; and
- Supporting the Council's continued recovery work in relation to the effects of the COVID-19 crisis on Council services, the local economy and the county's communities

4.6 Scrutiny Proposal Forms

As mentioned in paragraph 4.2 above the Council's Constitution requires scrutiny committees to prepare and keep under review a programme for their future work. To assist the process of prioritising reports, if officers are of the view that a subject merits time for discussion on Scrutiny's business agenda they have to submit a formal request to the SCVCG seeking Scrutiny to consider a report on that topic. This is done via the submission of a 'proposal form' which clarifies the purpose, importance and potential outcomes of scrutinising suggested subjects.

- 4.7 With a view to making better use of scrutiny's time by focussing committees' resources on detailed examination of subjects, adding value through the decision-making process and securing better outcomes for residents, the SCVCG decided that members, as well as officers, should complete 'scrutiny proposal forms' outlining the reasons why they think a particular subject would benefit from scrutiny's input. A copy of the 'member's proposal form' can be seen at Appendix 2. The reverse side of this form contains a flowchart listing questions which members should consider when proposing an item for scrutiny, and which committees should ask when determining a topic's suitability for inclusion on a scrutiny forward work programme. If, having followed this process, a topic is not deemed suitable for formal examination by a scrutiny committee, alternative channels for sharing the information or examining the matter can be considered e.g. the provision of an 'information report', or if the matter is of a very local nature examination by the relevant Member Area Group (MAG). No items should be included on a forward work programme without a 'scrutiny proposal form' being completed and accepted for inclusion by the Committee or the SCVCG. Assistance with their completion is available from the Scrutiny Co-ordinator.

Cabinet Forward Work Programme

- 4.8 When determining their programme of future work it is useful for scrutiny committees to have regard to Cabinet's scheduled programme of work. For this purpose, a copy of the Cabinet's forward work programme is attached at Appendix 3.

Progress on Committee Resolutions

- 4.9 A table summarising recent Committee resolutions and advising members on progress with their implementation is attached at Appendix 4 to this report.

5. Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group

- 5.1 Under the Council's scrutiny arrangements, the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group (SCVCG) performs the role of a coordinating committee. The Group has not met since this Committee last met. Its next meeting is scheduled for 25 July 2023.

6. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?

- 6.1 Effective scrutiny will assist the Council to deliver its Corporate Plan in line with community needs and residents' wishes. Continual development and review of a coordinated work programme will assist the Council to deliver its corporate themes, improve outcomes for residents whilst also managing austere budget and resource pressures.
- 6.2 Whilst the decision on the Committee's forward work programme itself will have a neutral contribution on the Council's aim of becoming Net Carbon Zero and Ecologically Positive by 2030, the Committee by effectively scrutinising all matters examined by it can help support the delivery of this ambition.

7. What will it cost and how will it affect other services?

- 7.1 Services may need to allocate officer time to assist the Committee with the activities identified in the forward work programme, and with any actions that may result following consideration of those items.

8. What are the main conclusions of the Well-being Impact Assessment?

8.1. A Well-being Impact Assessment has not been undertaken in relation to the purpose or contents of this report. However, Scrutiny through its work in examining service delivery, policies, procedures and proposals will consider their impact or potential impact on the sustainable development principle and the well-being goals stipulated in the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015.

9. What consultations have been carried out with Scrutiny and others?

9.1. None required for this report. However, the report itself and the consideration of the forward work programme represent a consultation process with the Committee with respect to its programme of future work.

10. What risks are there and is there anything we can do to reduce them?

10.1 No risks have been identified with respect to the consideration of the Committee's forward work programme. However, by regularly reviewing its forward work programme the Committee can ensure that areas of risk are considered and examined as and when they are identified, and recommendations are made with a view to addressing those risks.

11. Power to make the decision

11.1 Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000.

11.2 Section 7.11 of the Council's Constitution stipulates that scrutiny committees and/or the Scrutiny Chairs and Vice-Chairs Group will be responsible for setting their own work programmes, taking into account the wishes of Members of the Committee who are not members of the largest political group on the Council.

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Note: Any items entered in italics have not been approved for inclusion at the meeting shown by the Committee. Such reports are listed here for information, pending formal approval.

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<i>28 September</i>	Cllr. Gill German & Cllr. Emrys Wynne [Education]	1. Delivery of Welsh Medium Curricula and Non-Curricula Provision in the County's Schools	To report on the progress made to date with planning and implementing Welsh medium education in all of the county's schools in line with the Welsh Government's vision for Welsh language provision	To ensure that all schools are appropriately resourced and supported to achieve their statutory targets in relation to the delivery of Welsh-medium provision whilst also supporting all pupils to realise their full potential	Geraint Davies/James Curran/Carwyn Edwards	Sept 2022
GwE representative(s), Catholic Diocese's Education personnel/ Headteacher and Chair of the School's Governing Body to be invited to attend	Cllr. Gill German	2. Christ The Word [Education]	To consider the progress made in implementing and delivering the Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP) and the joint local authority & GwE Support Plan following the 2022 Estyn inspection of the school	Regular monitoring of the arrangements in place to address the recommendations contained in the Regulator's report will: (i) secure continual improvement in all aspects of the school's work to ensure that all pupils are supported to achieve their full potential; and (ii) ensure that the lessons learnt by all stakeholders are applied across all schools in Denbighshire as they introduce the new curriculum.	Nicola Stubbins/ Geraint Davies/James Brown/Mari Gaskell	January 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	3. Whole School Approach to Well-Being [Education]	To examine the approaches being taken with regards to addressing and supporting the mental health and emotional well-being of pupils in the county's schools	To ensure that the multi-agency approach taken by the Authority to address the increasing number of mental health issues in young	Geraint Davies	By SCVCG April 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				people is appropriately and sufficiently supporting the county's pupils. Identification of any gaps that may benefit from strengthening in order to provide holistic support for pupils in line with the Council's corporate priorities.		
	Cllr. Rhys Thomas	4. Denbighshire's Housing and Homelessness Strategy Action Plan	To examine the progress made to date in delivering the revised Strategy and Action Plan approved by County Council in December 2020 <i>(the report to also include data and analysis on the current impact, along with potential future impact, on the Homelessness Service of the introduction of the private rented sector 6 month tenancy termination notice period)</i>	The identification of actions that will support and ensure the delivery of the Council's Corporate Theme of quality housing that meets people's needs and ultimately the Corporate Plan.	Emlyn Jones/ Angela Loftus/Jane Abbott	March 2023
30 November	Cllr. Julie Matthews	1. Corporate Risk Register: September 2023 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	<i>Iolo McGregor/Nicola Kneale/Heidi Barton-Price</i>	January 2023
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (July – Sept) (Note: appendix not available until 23 November)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	Emma Horan/Nicola Kneale	November 2022
	Leader	3. <i>Economic & Business Development</i>	<i>To:</i>	<i>Formulation of recommendations in relation</i>	<i>Emlyn Jones/Tony</i>	<i>By SCVCG</i>

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
		(TBC)	<p>(i) consult with the Committee on the draft new Denbighshire Economic & Community Ambition Strategy for 2024 onwards;</p> <p>(ii) detail how the current and proposed new Strategy dovetail with the work of the North Wales Economic Ambition Board, Welsh & UK Governments and other economic development partners to support the delivery of a thriving economy in Denbighshire; and</p> <p>(iii) outline the work being undertaken to mitigate against the potential outcomes identified in Risk 36 of the Council's Corporate Risk Register</p>	to the new Strategy that will help secure the delivery, in partnership with all stakeholders, of a more prosperous Denbighshire that provides employment and business opportunities for residents to improve the quality of lives and support thriving, cohesive communities	Ward/Gareth Roberts	November 2022
	Cllr. Gill German	4. Safeguarding Report – Outcome of the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements [Education]	To consider the findings of the Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in Denbighshire County Council, along with the Council's proposed actions in response to any	To determine future monitoring arrangements for the delivery of an action plan in order to ensure that all pupils and young people in Denbighshire are protected	Geraint Davies/Rhian Morelle	By SCVCG April 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
			recommendations arising from the Inspection	from harm via effective multi-agency working		
25 January 2024	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	1. Library Service Standards 2022-23	To consider the results of the WG's annual evaluation of the Council's Library Service and receive information on how the Service has progressed and adapted its service provision during the year	Identification of any slippages in performance in order to formulate recommendations to redress the situation and ensure that the Service delivers the Council's Corporate Plan and its corporate themes in relation to a learning & growing; healthier, happy and caring; better connected; fairer, safer and more equal Denbighshire; a Denbighshire of vibrant culture and thriving Welsh language as well as a well-run and high performing Council.	Liz Grieve/Bethan Hughes	March 2023
	Cllr. Gill German	2. Ensuring Engagement in Education [Education]	To examine the work being undertaken to promote attendance and engagement in education, as well as the actions taken/sanctions applied where pupils are not engaging	Ensuring that all possible steps are being taken to monitor pupils' engagement with education, to provide appropriate encouragement and support for vulnerable and hard to reach pupils to re-engage with their education and to help them understand the long-term implications of not engaging.	<i>Geraint Davies/Wayne Wheatley</i>	<i>By SCVCG April 2023</i>
	Cllr. Barry Mellor	3. Denbighshire's Revised Draft Climate & Ecological Change Strategy 2021/22 – 2029/30	To present the Committee with: (i) the findings and conclusions of the consultation exercise undertaken to revise the Strategy; and	(i) Pre-decision scrutiny of the revised draft Strategy with a view to seeking Scrutiny's support for its adoption and implementation; and	Nicola Kneale/Helen Vaughan-Evans	June 2023

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				(ii) the revised draft Strategy for detailed scrutiny	(ii) For Scrutiny to determine whether it wishes to monitor its delivery going forward with a view to supporting the Council to deliver its net carbon zero ambition by 2030		
(Possibly invite a representative from Openreach ?)	Cllr. Emrys Wynne	4.	Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire	To consider the progress made to date, and future plans, for increasing and improving/upgrading internet connectivity for all areas of the county (including the latest position in relation to Fibre Community Partnerships and the UK Government's Project Gigabit roll out along with any other potential support/voucher packages that may be available for businesses and residents to access)	Support accessibility for all businesses and residents in the county to fibre broadband speeds that meet their individual needs, that will in turn support the delivery of the Council's corporate themes of a 'better connected Denbighshire', 'a prosperous' county that is 'fairer, safe and more equal' as well as a learning and growing county.	Liz Grieve/Barry Eaton/Cath Taylor/Fran Williams/Philip Burrows	June 2023
7 March	Cllr. Gill German	1.	2018 Estyn Inspection Recommendations [Education]	To detail in full the work undertaken to fully address the recommendations made in the 2018 Estyn Inspection report of the education services provided by Denbighshire County Council, including how the measures taken to address the recommendations were received and monitored.	Ensuring that all of the regulators recommendations have been complied with and regularly monitored with a view to delivering a learning and growing Denbighshire that is fairer, safe and more equal to all pupils	Geraint Davies	By SCVCG <i>April 2023</i>
	Cllr. Gill German	2.	Elective Home Education [Education]	To examine the Authority's policies and procedures in relation to supporting and monitoring the delivery of Elective Home Education	Ensuring that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities with regards to pupils who elect to be educated at home, whilst also ensuring they are	<i>Geraint Davies/Joe Earl</i>	<i>By SCVCG April 2023</i>

Meeting	Lead Member(s)	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
				appropriately supported and safeguarded.		
18 April	Cllr. Julie Matthews	1. Corporate Risk Register: February 2024 Review	To seek the Committee to review the risks facing the Council and the Council's risk appetite statement.	Determination of whether the Committee is satisfied with risk management within the Council and is assured that all identified risks are appropriately managed.	<i>Iolo McGregor/Nicola Kneale/Heidi Barton-Price</i>	<i>February 2023</i>
6 June	Cllr. Elen Heaton	1. Cefndy Performance Report 2023/24	To consider Cefndy's annual performance report for the 2023/24 financial year, including the delivery of its financial, business and social well-being objectives	To ensure the future financial and business sustainability of Cefndy in order that it effectively supports the delivery of the Council's corporate themes of learning and growing; healthier and happier, caring; and prosperous Denbighshire	Ann Lloyd/Nick Bowles	January 2023
	Cllr. Gwyneth Ellis	2. Council Performance Self-Assessment Update (Q4 & Annual)	To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Identification of areas for improvement and potential future scrutiny	Emma Horan/Nicola Kneale	June 2023
18 July	Cllrs. Gill German & Elen Heaton	3. Draft Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023/24	To scrutinise the content of the draft annual report to ensure it provides a fair and clear evaluation of performance and clearly articulates future plans	Identification of any specific performance issues which require further scrutiny by the committee in future	Nicola Stubbins/Ann Lloyd/Rhiain Morelle/David Soley	June 2023
26 September						
28 November						

Future Issues

Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Expected Outcomes	Author	Date Entered
<p><i>Learner Travel Measure (Wales)</i></p> <p>[Education]</p> <p>TBC – once outcome of WG Review available (review autumn 2023)</p>	<p><i>To outline the conclusions of the recent Welsh Government consultation on the Measure and its implications for Denbighshire schools and pupils</i></p>	<p><i>Identification of potential changes to the Council's learner travel policy and any associated costs and budget implications</i></p>	<p><i>Geraint Davies/Ian Land</i></p>	<p><i>January 2021 (rescheduled Sept 2022 & Jan & May 2023)</i></p>
<p>Denbigh Health and Social Care and the Rebalancing of Social Care Agenda (<i>now widened was Dolwen Residential Care Home (now to be considered as part of the future vision for health and social care services in the Denbigh area)</i>)</p> <p><i>Sometime during 2024/25 (tbc)</i></p>	<p>To review the future provision of services at Dolwen to meet the growing demand and complexity of need, whilst supporting people to live in a home that meets their needs and allows them to live an independent and resilient life.</p>	<p><i>Pre-decision scrutiny of the task and finish group's findings and the formulation of recommendations for presentation to Cabinet with respect of the future provision of services at Dolwen with a view to ensuring that everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs and are able to live independent and resilient lives</i></p>	<p><i>Task and Finish Group/Ann Lloyd/Katie Newe</i></p>	<p><i>July 2018 (delayed due to COVID-19)</i></p>
<p>Post 16 provision at Rhyl College (suggested for scrutiny during service challenge)</p> <p>Date tbc following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions</p>	<p><i>To examine the post 16 provision at Rhyl College</i></p>	<p><i>The development of an effective working relationship between the College and the Council to secure the delivery of courses required to support the delivery of the North Wales Growth Deal and improve the future prospects of the area's students</i></p>	<p>Rhyl College (and invite Geraint Davies & John Evans – post 16 officer from DCC)</p>	<p><i>By SCVCG July 2020</i></p>

Information/Consultation Reports

Date	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Author	Date Entered
<p>September 2023 & March 2024 [Information]</p>	<p>Council Performance Self-Assessment Update Q1 & Q3</p>	<p>To present an update on the Council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives</p>	<p>Emma Horan/Nicola Kneale</p>	<p>September 2018</p>
<p>Feb/May/Sept/November each year [Information]</p>	<p>Quarterly 'Your Voice' complaints performance to include social services complaints</p>	<p>To scrutinise Services' performance in complying with the Council's complaints and identify areas of poor performance with a view to the development of recommendations to address weaknesses. The report to include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (i) a comprehensive explanation on why targets have not been met when dealing with specific complaints, reasons for non-compliance, and measures taken to rectify the failures and to ensure that future complaints will be dealt with within the specified timeframe; (ii) how services encourage feedback and use it to redesign or change the way they deliver services; and (iii) details of complaints which have been upheld or partially upheld and the lessons learnt from them. <p>Report to include example(s) of complaints and compliment(s) received.</p> <p><i>Consideration of the information provided will assist the Committee to determine whether any issues merit detailed scrutiny</i></p>	<p>Kevin Roberts/Ann Lloyd</p>	<p>November 2018</p>
<p>Information Report (July 2023)</p>	<p>Cefndy Performance Report 2022/23</p>	<p>To receive Cefndy's final annual performance report for the 2022/23 financial year, including the delivery of its financial, business and social well-being objectives</p>	<p>Ann Lloyd/Nick Bowles</p>	<p>January 2023</p>

Information Report (March 2024)	Management of the Council's Housing Stock	To review the effectiveness of practices in place to manage the Council's Housing stock, incl. dealing with complaints, reports of mould & condensation, provision of personal advice and support to tenants including those who reside in older persons schemes, the new working model for Housing Officers and the development of new ways of working with residents from the lessons learnt through COVID-19	Liz Grieve/Geoff Davies	March 2023
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Note for officers – Committee Report Deadlines

Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline	Meeting	Deadline
28 September	14 September	30 November	16 November	25 January 2024	11 January

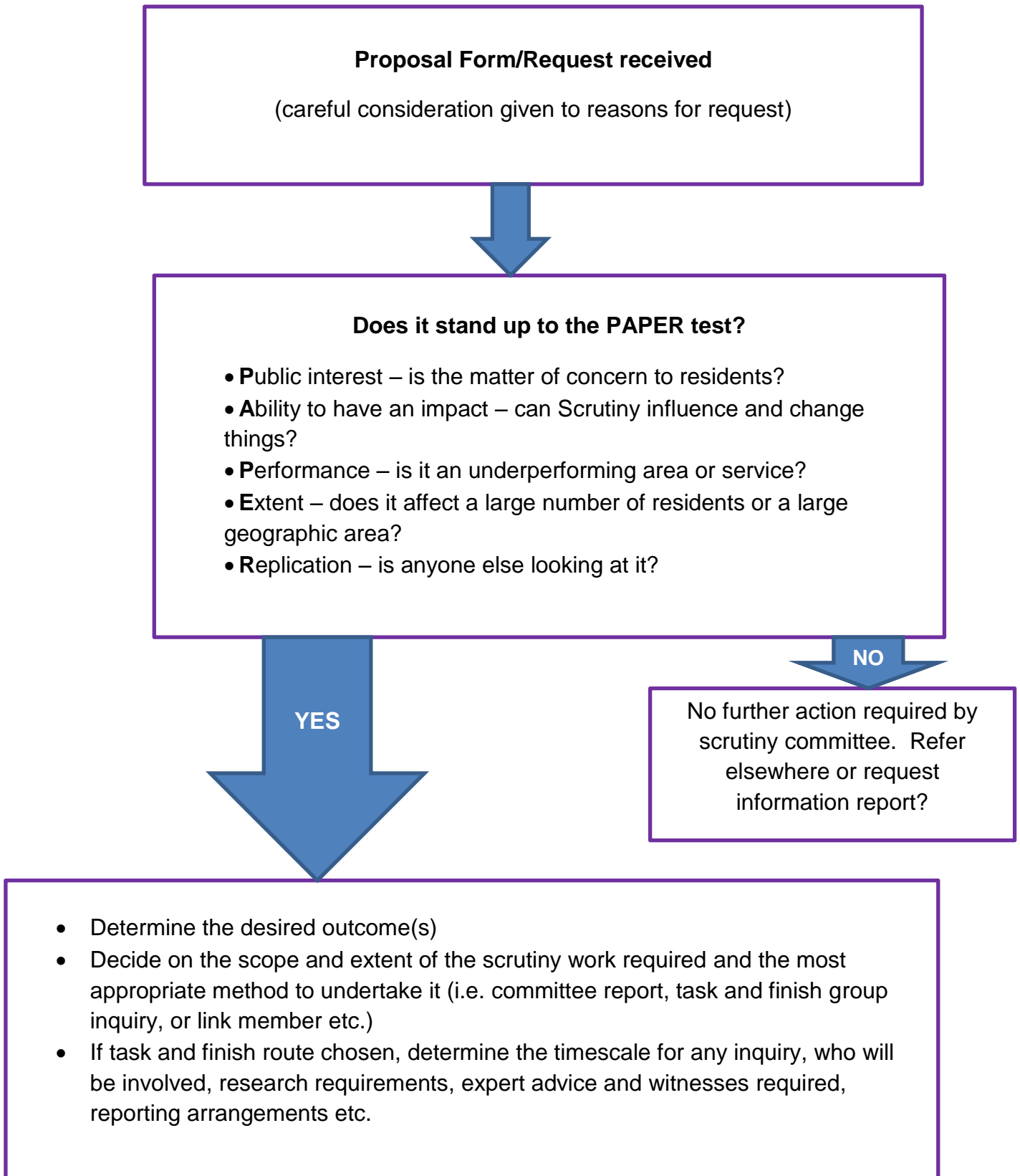
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Member Proposal Form for Scrutiny Forward Work Programme	
NAME OF SCRUTINY COMMITTEE	
TIMESCALE FOR CONSIDERATION	
TOPIC	
What needs to be scrutinised (and why)?	
Is the matter one of concern to residents/local businesses?	YES/NO
Can Scrutiny influence and change things? (if 'yes' please state how you think scrutiny can influence or change things)	YES/NO
Does the matter relate to an underperforming service or area?	YES/NO
Does the matter affect a large number of residents or a large geographical area of the County (if 'yes' please give an indication of the size of the affected group or area)	YES/NO
Is the matter linked to the Council's Corporate themes? (if 'yes' please state which theme(s))	YES/NO
To your knowledge is anyone else looking at this matter? (If 'yes', please say who is looking at it)	YES/NO
If the topic is accepted for scrutiny who would you want to invite to attend e.g. Lead Member, officers, external experts, service-users?	
Name of Councillor/Co-opted Member	
Date	

Consideration of a topic's suitability for scrutiny



Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
19 September	1	Rhyl Business Improvement District (BID): ballot for 2 nd 5-year term	To request a decision on whether DCC should vote “yes” or “no” in the ballot to determine whether there should be a 2 nd 5-year term for the Rhyl BID	Yes	Cllr Jason McLellan Lead Officer – Tony Ward
	2	Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn – New Build Project	To seek Cabinet endorsement of the preferred site for the progression of the new build project for Ysgol Plas Brondyffryn	Yes	Cllr Gill German Lead Officer – Geraint Davies Report Author – James Curran / Lisa Walchester
	3	North Wales Velodrome Business Case	To consider the business case for the North Wales Velodrome Project	Tbc	Cllr Rhys Thomas Gary Williams / Jamie Groves
	4	North East Wales Archive project	To provide Cabinet with an update, to review the options appraisal and seek authorisation to submit a National Lottery Heritage Fund grant application, noting the required match funding contribution if successful	Yes	Cllr Emrys Wynne Lead Officer – Liz Grieve Report Author – Craig Berry / Sian Price
	5	Gypsy and Traveller	To seek approval for re-	Yes	Cllr Win Mullen-James

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting		Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
		Accommodation Assessment (GTAA)	submission of the draft amended GTAA to the Welsh Government		Lead Officer – Tony Ward Report Author – Angela Loftus / Kimberley Mason
	6	Annual Treasury Management Review Report 2022/23	To give a review of the Treasury Management activities over the previous financial year (2022/23)	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer – Steve Gadd Report Author – Rhys Ifor Jones
	7	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Steve Gadd
	8	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinator
24 October	1	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Steve Gadd
	2	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinator
21 November	1	Care Home Fee Setting 2024/25	To brief Cabinet on the outcome of the Regional	Yes	Cllr Elen Heaton Lead Officer / Report Author –

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)		Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
			2024/25 Care Home Fee Setting process and seek approval for Denbighshire's response to its recommendation		Nicola Stubbins / David Soley
	2	Council Performance Self-Assessment Update – July to September	To present an update on the council's performance against its functions, including Corporate Plan and Strategic Equality objectives	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer – Nicola Kneale Report Author – Emma Horan
	3	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Steve Gadd
	4	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet's attention	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny Coordinator
19 December	1	North Wales Construction Framework (NWCF) Phase 3	To approve the NWCF following the procurement exercise	Yes	Cllr Julie Matthews Lead Officer – Lisa Jones Report Author – Karen Bellis
	2	Finance Report	To update Cabinet on the current financial position of the Council	Tbc	Cllr Gwyneth Ellis Lead Officer/Report Author Steve Gadd
	3	Items from Scrutiny Committees	To consider any issues	Tbc	Lead Officer – Scrutiny

Cabinet Forward Work Plan

Meeting	Item (description / title)	Purpose of report	Cabinet Decision required (yes/no)	Author – Lead member and contact officer
		raised by Scrutiny for Cabinet’s attention		Coordinator

Note for officers – Cabinet Report Deadlines

<i>Meeting</i>	Deadline	<i>Meeting</i>	Deadline	<i>Meeting</i>	Deadline
<i>18 July</i>	4 July	<i>19 Sept</i>	5 Sept	<i>24 October</i>	10 October

Updated 12/07/2023 – KEJ

Cabinet Forward Work Programme.doc

Progress with Committee Resolutions

Date of Meeting	Item number and title	Resolution	Progress
8 June 2023	6. Poor Internet Connectivity in Denbighshire	<u>Resolved:</u> <i>subject to the above observations and with a view to supporting the vision of a better connected Denbighshire, that a further progress report on internet connectivity, future upgrading and roll-out plans, along with information on schemes or support available for hard to reach communities and properties in the county, be presented to the Committee in six months' time.</i>	Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's recommendation. A progress report/discussion has been scheduled into the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting on 25 January 2024 (see Appendix 1)
	7. Council Performance Self-Assessment 2022 to 2023	<u>Resolved:</u> - <i>subject to the above observations -</i> <i>(i) to receive the report and its contents;</i> <i>(ii) to encourage all elected members to utilise the report as one of the tools to be used to inform future Scrutiny work programmes;</i> <i>(iii) to note the Council's progress in developing its performance objectives along with its initial performance in delivering its new Corporate Plan; and</i> <i>(iv) request that enquiries be made to establish the current position with regards to the development of a Sustainable Transport Plan for Denbighshire, with a view to determining whether Scrutiny could help progress its development and support its future delivery.</i>	Lead Member and officers advised of the Committee's recommendations ahead of the report's presentation to Cabinet and County Council in June and July respectively. Enquiries initiated in respect of the development of a Sustainable Travel Plan for the county.

	8. Review and Refresh of Denbighshire County Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy (2021/22 – 2029/30)	<p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>(i) <i>subject to the above observations to support the commencement of the review and refresh of the Council's Climate and Ecological Change Strategy to be conducted during 2023/24; and</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>to support the approach that will be taken when reviewing the Strategy and for adopting a refreshed Strategy in early 2024, including pre-decision engagement with Performance Scrutiny Committee ahead of presenting the refreshed Strategy to Cabinet and County Council for adoption.</i></p>	<p>Lead Member and officers informed of the Committee's recommendations. Pre-decision scrutiny of the refreshed Strategy programmed into the Committee's forward work programme for its meeting on 25 January 2024.</p>
	9. Scrutiny Work Programme	<p><u>Resolved:</u></p> <p>(i) <i>subject to the amendments and additions outlined in the report and agreed during the course of the meeting, to confirm the Committee's Forward Work Programme as set out in Appendix 1 to the report; and</i></p> <p>(ii) <i>to appoint Councillor Paul Keddie as the Committee's representative on the Corporate Support Service: Performance, Digital and Assets Service Challenge Group, and to appoint Councillor Martyn Hogg to replace Councillor Jon Harland as the Committee's representative on the Corporate Support Service: People Service Challenge Group.</i></p>	<p>Work programme amended as per the Committee's instructions. Officers servicing the Service Challenge process informed of the Committee's revised list of representatives on the Service Challenge Groups.</p>