

Options for Cysgod y Gaer

1. Introduction

This document provides an analysis of the options for Cysgod y Gaer in Corwen. This means the two distinct options put forward by the council, and also any other options put forward during the consultation process (Option 3).

2. The current provision in the Corwen area

There are no independent sector, 24-hour care facilities of any registration type in the immediate area around Corwen. The nearest towns with such provision are Llangollen and Ruthin. There are no Extra Care Housing facilities in the area either.

3. The options for Cysgod y Gaer

Taking into account the current provision, or the lack of alternative provision, available in the Corwen area (highlighted above), the council developed 3 options in relation to Cysgod y Gaer which became the subject of the formal public consultation:

Option 1 (the council's preferred option): The council would enter into a partnership with relevant stakeholders (including BCU and the 3rd sector) to develop the site into a 'support hub' offering both residential and extra care type facilities as well as an outreach domiciliary care and support service to the tenants of local Sheltered Housing Schemes and the wider population of Corwen and the surrounding area.

Option 2: The council would stop new admissions and work with the individuals and their families at their own pace to move them to suitable alternatives as appropriate and to enter into a negotiations with registered social landlords to develop Extra Care apartments on the whole site.

Option 3: The council is open to any other alternative option you wish to put forward that would meet the demands for residential and day care places within the available resources.

- No alternative options were presented during the consultation period. However, the UNISON response (Appendix K) expressed a desire for further detail in relation to Option 1, and stressed that:
 - a) "The council should retain ownership and control of the Cysgod y Gaer site while working with other providers to make the best of the facilities".
 - b) "It is also key that the well trained public sector work force is retained as direct employees of Denbighshire County Council".
- However, Option 1 does already assume that the council will retain ownership and control of Cysgod y Gaer, and that the current employees would remain as employees of Denbighshire County Council. Therefore, it can be concluded that no potential alternatives were presented under Option 3 during the consultation.

4. Consequences of Option 1:

- Individuals currently living in Cysgod y Gaer could continue to do so.
- This option develops services that support independence and improved outcomes for others in the local area.
- While this would result in no immediate saving, it would bring together elements of external domiciliary care with residential services, creating a holistic support offer to a low demand area much more cost effectively. This may result in savings on the current costs of external domiciliary care.

5. Consequences of Option 2:

- The council accepts that this option would mean disruption for the residents and their families. As stated earlier, there are no independent sector, 24-hour care facilities of any registration type in the immediate area around Corwen. This means that people would have to move a long way out of the area to find alternative provisions which, given the poor transport links, means that they would potentially be adversely affected by losing touch with friends and relatives. However, we would ensure that individuals living in Cysgod y Gaer would have plenty of time to find appropriate alternative provision. Furthermore, the council has already agreed that no individual service user will be required to move from their current home unless they wish to do so (as long as their current home is still able to meet their needs). Cysgod y Gaer would not close until all the service users' needs had been fully reviewed and suitable alternative provision found.
- There would be an annual revenue saving of £287,241 on the cost of care (based on current occupancy levels, i.e. 16 beds)¹ because, from April 2016, it will cost the council £483.46 per person per week to commission standard residential care from the independent sector, whereas it will cost £828.70 per week (from April 2016) to support one person in Cysgod y Gaer (see tables below).
- Even if Cysgod y Gaer was at full capacity (i.e. 23 beds), the council would still save £111,263 on the cost of care by buying residential care from the independent sector.

Unit cost to the council of providing care in Cysgod y Gaer:

<i>Residential home:</i>	Employee Costs	Premises Costs	Transport	Supplies and other services	GROSS TOTAL	Full Occupancy (Beds)	Gross Unit Cost Per Week	Current Occupancy (29/02/16)	Gross Unit Cost Per Week
	£	£	£	£	£		£		£
Cysgod y Gaer	574,509.57	79,115.41	2,150.00	33,705.00	689,479.98	23	576.49	16	828.70

Calculation of potential savings on the cost of care:

¹ The number of permanent residents in Cysgod y Gaer on 29th February 2016.

Unit weekly cost of purchasing standard residential care from independent sector	£483.46
Unit annual cost of purchasing standard residential care from independent sector	£25,139.92
Total annual cost of purchasing standard residential care from independent sector for 23 people	£578,218.16
Total annual cost of purchasing standard residential care from independent sector for 16 people	£402,238.72
Total cost of running Cysgod y Gaer	£689,479.98
Annual saving on cost of care for 23 people (compared to cost of running Cysgod y Gaer)	£111,263
Annual saving on cost of care for 16 people (compared to cost of running Cysgod y Gaer)	£287,241

- It would enable the demand for additional Extra Care to be met if a registered social landlord would agree to develop such a provision.
- There would be a requirement for the landlord to ensure that the community activities currently provided at Cysgod y Gaer would continue.
- Existing staff would be at risk of redundancy, but would be able to have a planned progression from working for the Council due to the likely timescales involved. A closure plan would be agreed, subject to consultation and approval, and statutory consultation with staff would take place.

6. Consequences of Option 3:

- Since no alternative proposals were put forward, there is no Option 3 to consider.

7. Summary of the consultation responses relating to Cysgod y Gaer

51 consultation questionnaires returned	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 on-line response • 11 responses submitted via Customer Connections team
Other submissions from individuals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 e-mail • 1 letter • 7 submissions as part of a separate Cysgod y Gaer questionnaire
Public meetings	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 public meetings (42 attendees in total)
Meetings / focus groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 meeting with Dee Valley Member Area Group • 1 meeting with Corwen Town Council • 1 meeting with Dee Valley Hubbub, arranged through Age Connects • 4 Community Support Services staff engagement events
Petitions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 petition specifically opposed to the closure of Cysgod y Gaer: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 via Plaid Cymru (1076 signatures) • 2 petitions against closure of all residential homes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ 1 with approx. 5000 signatures ➤ 30 identical letters • Total of c.6390 signatures opposing the closure of Cysgod y Gaer
Union responses	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One formal report from Unison

7.1 Responses from consultation forms

Option	Number of people expressing a preference for this option
1	24
2	0
3	0

As with all 4 consultations, only a small percentage of those who responded indicated specifically which option they would prefer. Only 24 people specifically selected Option 1 as their preferred option, with nobody selecting Option 2 or Option 3. However, a total of 51 consultation responses were received in relation to Cysgod y Gaer, and all 51 seemed to be in favour of Option 1 in one way or another. Even where no preference was specifically indicated, the comments suggested that they would also prefer option 1.

In answer to the question: 'Do you have any further comments about our future vision for adult social care in Denbighshire?' one person writes:

"...Vision could be further enhanced if the services offered were made available to the adjoining areas of Gwynedd and Conwy where there is also a great need for these facilities given the nature of the rural area. This could also increase its financial viability. Contractual arrangements could be made across LA boundaries as they have previously in some areas."

Whilst this suggestion does not have a direct bearing on the choice of options, it will be taken into account.

7.2 Summary of other submissions from individuals

All the feedback we had about Cysgod y Gaer emphasised what a valuable service it provides to the local community and how important it is to keep it open. Many respondents were enthusiastic about the potential for developing it further as a hub for support of older people, working in collaboration with the health service and other agencies. Many refer to issues relating to the relative isolation of Corwen with few other services nearby and several refer to the culture and importance of the Welsh speaking staff.

A family member of one of the current care home residents writes:

"If the outcome of the review regarding CYG resulted in change I feel option 1 would be more favourable - the idea of creating a holistic support offer to a low demand area seems realistic, Following 19 weeks in hospital, (G) was a shadow of her former self. She had very limited mobility and was very anxious when entering CYG. The facility currently offered provides a happy environment where residents are stimulated by positive staff. If (G) had to go back to more isolated living I think we would see deterioration in her general wellbeing as she has thrived in the environment CYG provides." (Respondent)

A relative of another current resident writes:

“For the elderly who can no longer live an independent life but do not need nursing care, there is a need for a residential home where they can feel safe and secure, enjoy companionship and receive the 24 hour care they need. CYG, in offering a warm, secure, supportive and friendly home with a strong family atmosphere fulfils this need in a way Extra Care apartments or other homes locally could not do. To find similar provision would necessitate a removal some distance from family and friends at a time when they need them most. We would strongly support any option which allows Cysgod to continue to offer the excellent service and care that it currently supplies.” (Respondent)

Another person, who lives in Edeirion, expresses the following views about the future of Cysgod y Gaer:

“I wish to register my support for the first recommendation in the document...Indeed, I believe that this is the type of plan that should also be developed for Awelon and Dolwen. I’m confident that such a plan can be a breakthrough in care for elderly people in Wales and set a bench-mark for providers and other authorities.

Firstly it is very important to keep Cysgod-y-Gaer open. The home provides a Welsh medium service to residents of a Welsh speaking area. There is no expectation on the private sector to provide care in the mother tongue of the residents that live in their homes’ We know that a provision in your mother tongue makes a person feel more at home and comfortable.

Secondly, the majority of the current staff come from Corwen’s cultural circles, and the residents there knew a number of them before going to live there. This consistency gives assurance and peace of mind for care home residents that cannot be obtained in other homes.

Thirdly there is no other home care within a reasonable distance to the communities of Corwen and Edeirion. By closing Cysgod-y-Gaer people will be expected to travel much further to live and visit their loved ones. This will increase isolation, which is the biggest challenge that faces older people.” (Respondent).

7.3 Summary of views from the public meetings

A number of those who attended the public meetings lived in sheltered accommodation in Corwen, or had friends or relatives living there. They were keen to hear what the implications might be for Llygadog and other sheltered schemes in the area. They seemed pleased to hear that, if Option 1 was to go ahead, as well as being a residential care home, Cysgod y Gaer would become a hub which could provide support to tenants at Llygadog as well as to other residents in the area. A fair time was spent discussing services for sheltered housing tenants and recent changes in this area.

As in other public meetings, the rumours that Cysgod Y Gaer has turned away referrals was discussed. As mentioned in other appendices, this is something that came up repeatedly during the public consultation meetings, prompting to council to issue a press release in December 2015 (Appendix E), which contained the following response:

“Is it true that the real reason why there are vacancies in your three care homes is that the council has had a deliberate policy to block or reduce admissions? No, the council does not have a policy of stopping people from moving into our care homes. The reason we have vacancies is simply that the demand for standard residential care has been reducing for several years. Generally speaking, people do not want to live in residential care homes when they get older. They want to be supported to remain independent within their own homes or within alternative settings, like extra care housing”.

Officers were asked to provide some clarification regarding the costs of extra care housing and residential care and the difference between the two. Officers also explained the differences between standard residential care and nursing care.

In answer to a question about whether Cysgod y Gaer could provide services for people who have been discharged from hospital...i.e. people who need more (non-nursing) care than a home help, but not enough for being in hospital. Officers explained that this type of provision is already provided from Cysgod Y Gaer, and would continue.

A number of those who attended expressed a preference for Option 1, but asked for assurance that individuals currently living at Cysgod y Gaer would be able to continue doing so. Officers confirmed that this would be the case, as long as Cysgod y Gaer is still able to meet their needs.

One person was concerned that if we chose Option 1, we might we need to empty the site to rebuild. We explained that we cannot begin to look into the detail of the next steps until the consultation had finished and Cabinet has made a decision about which options to pursue. Whilst no guarantees were given this stage, officers did state that they were confident that it would be possible to deliver Option 1 without emptying the site. Officers explained how this had occurred when Llys Awelon was being developed.

Another person who expressed approval for Option 1, asked: *“...I understood that the vision of the council was to be commissioners not providers. If you are going to invest in Cysgod Y Gaer, is this is a long term investment or will we have to revisit, needing to commission the services?”*. Officers explained that the proposed vision does not necessarily mean that we would always look externally to deliver all services. Officers clarified that whilst the intention is that the vast majority of services will be provided by the independent sector (as is already the case), Option 1 recognises that this geographical area is different to the rest of the county, and there sometimes needs to be flexibility.

A number of those who attended the public meetings expressed a hope that Option 1 would help address what they noted as previous lack of collaboration with the health board. They asked for any evidence of joint working with health to reassure them. Officers explained that health are represented on the steering group and that the expectation is that there will be more collaboration with health, in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

Some people came to the meeting under the impression that Cysgod Y Gaer was going to be closed. They were most relieved to hear that this is not the council's preferred option.

Officers were asked about the process we would need to go through if the council was to decide on Option 1. Officers explained this, and clarified that the development of extra care housing would probably require us to find a partner to work with.

One attendee reflected on how the Dee Valley is a unique space, with services not coming down to Corwen and surrounding areas regularly, and asked how we would address this. We explained that Option 1 had been specifically designed for this area and that this acknowledged that Corwen (and surrounding area) has specific needs which Option 1 would help to address.

7.4 Summary of views from other meetings & focus groups

The views expressed at the meetings and focus groups echoed those noted in the rest of this report. Option 1 was universally welcomed, and time was generally spent discussing the potential detail of how that would work. For example, ways in which Option 1 could offer support to vulnerable older people in the area, particularly those in sheltered housing schemes. Time was also spent in describing how extra care housing works.

Those in the town council were somewhat concerned as to whether this was a 'stand-alone' consultation or whether it would be affected by the results of the other three consultations. Officers confirmed that options for each of the four sites would be considered separately, and decisions about other sites should not impact on the decision about Cysgod y Gaer.

Staff at Cysgod y Gaer, and those who work with them, were instrumental in helping to develop the preferred option (Option 1) for this site. It is therefore not surprising that a strong preference for Option 1 has been expressed during meetings with Cysgod Y Gaer staff and also in the staff engagement events for Community Support Services staff. Some staff have also suggested that within Option 1, Cysgod y Gaer should offer hot meal delivery again, that domiciliary care should cover all outlying areas and possibly involve working with the community, developing support and relationships across age groups. The value of day care and reablement service has been stressed as well as the importance of working closely with the health service. It has been recommended that any future Extra Care Housing facility should maintain beds for respite care. Staff have also suggested that we look at out of county protocols in terms of taking referrals from other counties.

7.5 Summary of petitions relating to Cysgod y Gaer

Early in 2015, Plaid Cymru organised a public meeting on the future of Cysgod y Gaer.

1076 people signed a petition, submitted in July, by Age Connects entitled 'Keep Cysgod y Gaer open'. 79 left letters and comments ranging from simply 'keep open!', to long, moving accounts of the importance of the home in the community and the excellent quality of care provided there. 104 people left name and contact details but no comments, while 82 people signed a photocopied letter giving reasons to keep the home open. In general, responses suggest that they would be in favour of Option 1 in the consultation.

In July 2015 we received 30 identical copies of letters from people saying:

“DCC intends to close Awelon, ‘privatise’ Dolwen & develop Cysgod y Gaer as I ‘support hub’. I am utterly opposed to the plans to change the current status of the above named care homes. This means that I am opposed to the closure of Awelon, I am opposed to the transfer of Dolwen to an external organisation and I’m opposed to Cysgod y Gaer being changed from its current status”.

In addition, a petition relating to all three residential care homes, opposing any changes, was submitted in November 2014, containing nearly 5000 signatures.

7.6 Summary of UNISON response relating to Cysgod y Gaer

The full response submitted by UNISON is attached at Appendix K, and this is an important document because it does set out a genuine alternative to the council’s preferred options. It is a difficult document to summarise, and doing so may do the document an injustice, so we would strongly recommend that the document is examined thoroughly by Members. However, in general terms, UNISON set out a case for keeping all of the existing services under council control. UNISON (on Page 5) argues that:

“The retention of in house options within a broad range of providers allows us the flexibility we need to offer sustainable solutions”.

UNISON describes Option 1 for Cysgod y Gaer as *“...the closest to the vision Unison has for the development of residential and day services.”* (page 16). The only reservation it makes are that *“.. the proposed partnership arrangements with Health and the third sector are not fleshed out in detail.”*

They also stress the importance of adding the following further points to the proposals in Option 1 for Cysgod y Gaer:

- 1. The council should retain ownership and control of the Cysgod y Gaer site while working with other providers to make the best of the facilities.*
- 2. It is also key that the well trained public sector work force is retained as direct employees of Denbighshire County Council.*

However, as noted in section 2 of this appendix, Option 1 does already assume that the council will retain ownership and control of Cysgod y Gaer, and that the current employees would remain as employees of Denbighshire County Council.