

Summary of political submissions

Details of the consultation were sent to all AMs, MPs and MEPs, and we have received written responses from Ann Jones (AM, Labour); James Davies (AM, Conservative); and Mabon ap Gwynfor (Plaid Cymru candidate for Clwyd South). These responses are provided in full below):

Response from Ann Jones

I wish to submit my response to the consultation on the future of Denbighshire County Council's in house care services. In doing so, can I start by saying I believe the consultation document lacks firm evidence and information in which to make any decision on the options put forward in this consultation. Following on from the document and having listened to views from my constituents, my comments will focus on the future of in house care services at **Hafan Deg**, Rhyl and **Dolwen**, Denbigh, yet I feel that my comments could be taken into further consideration with regard to Awelon, Ruthin and Cysgod y Gaer, Corwen, although these are not in my constituency.

Looking at the Council's reasons, there are many questions that stem from why the Council feel this review is necessary. The disastrous closure and the handling of the closure at Aberwheeler Nurseries leads me to ask why the Authority feels that denying choice to residents using that facility assists the Authority with "squaring a circle" around Independent Living. Great play is made in this document that there is need to have various options open to them, yet this was not seen as a priority for those using Aberwheeler Nurseries who may be likely in later life to need a different care package.

- What lessons have the Authority gleaned from the procedure that led to the closure of Aberwheeler Nurseries and therefore the removal of a choice?
- What lessons have the authority learned from the decision sometime previous to remove all in-house residential care in North of the County e.g. Rhyl, Prestatyn, St Asaph area, and allow private firms to run all of the Authorities needs for residents needing either day care or full time residential care.
- What monitoring and evaluation has been done of the use of public funding to the private care sector?
- How does the Authority intend to deal with any closure of homes or the removal of day care services from the private sector?
- What consideration, if any, has been given to subsequent CSSIW reports on those homes transferred to the private sector?
- The generalisation that older people do not wish to move into residential care anymore, seems to be used as the need for a review, yet what evidence does the Authority have of those who would at some stage want to avail themselves of residential care.

The paragraph at the foot of page 3 seems to be a contradiction but shows contrary to the points made in the document that even with changes, the decrease over 3 years is 80 places less.

- How many people are waiting either in other care settings such as Community Hospitals for a residential care placement and how many more will wait during that 3 year period mentioned in the document?
- What adjustment could there be to the Adult Service budget of the Social Services following the better than expected settlement for the financial year 2016/7?
- The Equality Impact Assessment should be carried out against all the options in order that those wishing to comment do so with all available facts before them.

Hafan Deg

Background:

- Is 24 the correct number of people using the Centre?
- How many could the centre truly accommodate?
- Many have told me over the period of this consultation that agencies have been deterred from referring potential people to have services provided at Hafan Deg. Is this the reason that you assert demand is falling?
- Turning to the options cited:

Option 1 appears to accept that there is very much a need for the services at Hafan Deg to be maintained and also enhanced. This is certainly the views of the residents that have contacted me. If this is the case, then I see no rational reason for the Authority to look to off load this to others and this approach serves to reinforce the views of the community that this is a financial decision and not based on any other firm foundation.

- How has the Authority arrived at the saving of £100k and it must be pointed out this is a one off saving?
- What lessons have been learned from the recent decision to stop providing Welfare Rights and how does the Authority now deal with this and the TUPE arrangements for staff.

Option 2:

- How does this option provide the same savings?
- The Authority make the statement that they can still provide day care. How will this be achieved and who will deliver this?
- The Authority state that they recognise the disruption this may cause, so again the question has to be asked what has been learned from the closure of Aberwheeler Nurseries?
- The views of those attending Aberwheeler seemed not to be taken into account.

Further Options:

How do you intend to evaluate any other suggestions or other delivery models arising from this consultation and place into the public domain the evaluation of such suggestions?

Dolwen

I have earlier stated that the need for residential care is still very much apparent and there are those who feel they would benefit from this care.

Option 1 is a clear indication that there is a feeling that the service can be run by the Independent Sector, yet there is no evaluation or monitoring of how the Authority deals with the consequences of the Private Sector deciding to withdraw its services. This option cannot be analysed without the authorities plan for dealing with a reduction in residential care from the Private Sector.

There needs to be a real understanding of how the Authority will manage any reduction of residential places and the option for Dolwen cannot be considered as viable with the scant amount of information surrounding the decisions contained within this document.

Conclusion:

The Authority should not look to make its financial savings by selling off the assets of Hafan Deg or Dolwen. There needs to be further evaluation and monitoring of the services provided and how the Authority can enhance the services for the benefit of all those who would benefit from these services. There is no advantage to either those using the services provided at Hafan Deg and Dolwen or the Authority of a knee jerk reaction to the difficult financial challenges facing budget holders.

There is no evidence that the consequences of the options in the paper have been fully explored.

I believe the authority should look to enhance and develop services for those adults needing them and to find additional ways to offer respite care for many of the carers who currently struggle to find the appropriate placements.

There is no evidence that there is any desire or willingness in the private sector to take over the running of both care homes. Indeed the report itself identifies that there is no capacity locally in the private sector to take over the running of Hafan Deg and Dolwen.

There needs to be a review of the way referrals are made, advertised and dealt with and I feel that there is a need for good public placement in Adult Services including a full range of Day Care settings and I would urge the Authority to provide more evidence to back up their statements contained in this document.

Response from James Davies

I am aware that the consultation period relating to the future of in-house care services is now drawing to a close and with this in mind, I write to set out my views and concerns. I would thank you for meeting me to discuss these issues and for your helpful responses to queries raised in correspondence over recent months.

I will restrict my comments to the facilities within my own constituency, namely **Dolwen** Residential Care Home and Day Care Centre in Denbigh and **Hafan Deg** Day Centre in Rhyl.

It is clear that **Dolwen** is a much-loved facility, having been located in Denbigh for many decades. I accept however that demand for residential care home beds is not as great as it once was, with a greater preference for independent living which has partly been made possible by the development of extra care housing and domiciliary care. Your consultation documentation indicates that there are currently empty beds at Dolwen with consequent costs to the council. There is also reference to the fact that there is no Elderly Mental Health care home facility in the Denbigh area and yet this is an increasing need. In light of these facts, the concept of transforming Dolwen into an EMH nursing home is understood. You advised me that the capital needed to develop such a facility and the requirement to minimise running costs implies the need to enter into a partnership with an external organisation. A change of ownership would oblige the facility, which does not currently meet CCSIW standards, to do so. I am advised that such organisations often function with leaner management structures and are subject to lesser pension costs than councils, hence are in a position to reduce revenue implications with respect to councils. My comments are as follows:

(a) A transfer is far preferable to closure.

(b) Any such transfer should, as promised, be open to any appropriate external organisation i.e. not-for-profit including social enterprises, in addition to established private sector players.

(c) There should be no undue pressure applied on existing residents to move so as to allow the plans to progress more quickly.

(d) If anticipated third party interest does not materialise, the council should fully reconsider the decision.

(e) I welcome the council's decision to take on an additional two contract monitoring officers. It is important that the team of four ensure the highest of standards are being met at any future EMH care model operating at Dolwen.

(f) You advised me that the current intention is to lease the building to the external organisation rather than to sell the freehold. This would be welcome as it would ensure the council can retain more control over the destiny of the building and future provision of services, in the public interest.

(g) While you advised that existing staff would benefit from TUPE arrangements and retain their current Terms and Conditions, safeguards would be preferred so as to ensure these could not be eroded over time.

(h) Further to the acquisition of the Middle Lane school site, proposals for a new extra care facility here or elsewhere in the town, as per local wishes, should be pursued. The council should consider the need to progress such a development before removing residential care beds from Dolwen.

(i) The council should liaise with third party residential home providers such as to ensure that this model of provision remains as accessible as possible to those who still seek it and that local people are aware of and satisfied with the location and quality and Welsh language provision of this.

(j) The consultation documentation is limited in its discussion of how the provision of day care services will be protected and developed and this needs to be clearly articulated.

Hafan Deg is also a popular facility and it is understandable that any proposal to change how it operates will be met with concern. I understand you have been approached by a number of organisations about their possible involvement in the future however, and this is positive.

My comments are as follows:

(a) The consultation documents refer to a reduction in the demand for local day care services over recent years. While this may be true, I would suggest that any such statistics be treated with caution as the remaining local authority day care services have over that time also become less easy to access.

(b) Continuation of service provision in the existing building is far preferable to closure.

(c) If anticipated third party interest does not materialise, the council should fully reconsider the decision.

(d) It would be preferable for the council to retain the freehold of the building so as to enjoy greater control of the building and future provision of services.

(e) Nearby residents eg.in War Memorial Court need assurances that the use of the Hafan Deg building will not change so as to result in inconvenience.

(f) Any existing staff benefiting from TUPE arrangements and therefore retaining their current Terms and Conditions would also benefit from safeguards so as to ensure these could not be eroded over time.

Response from Mabon ap Gwynfor

(English translation follows)

Ygrifef atoch i gyflwyno fy marn parthed eich ymgynghoriad ar ddyfodol Gwasanaethau Gofal Mewnol y Sir.

Fel rhywun sy'n byw yn Edeirnion, fy mhryder uniongyrchol yw dyfodol Cysgod y Gaer.

Hoffwn gofrestru fy nghefnogaeth i'r argymhelliad cyntaf yn y ddogfen, sef i "ffurfio partneriaeth gyda'r budd-ddeiliaid perthnasol (gan gynnwys PBC a'r trydydd sector) i ddatblygu'r safle yn 'ganolfan gefnogaeth' gan gynnwys cyfleusterau gofal preswyl a gofal ychwanegol ynghyd â gofal yn y cartref allanol a gwasanaeth cefnogaeth i denantiaid Cynlluniau Tai Gwarchod lleol a phoblogaeth ehangach Corwen a'r ardal gyfagos."

Yn wir, rwyf o'r farn mai dyma'r math o gynllun y dylid hefyd eu datblygu ar gyfer Awelon a Dolwen. Hyderaf y gall cynllun o'r fath dorri tir newydd mewn gofal i bobl mewn oedran yng Nghymru a gosod mainc-nod i ddarprawyr ac awdurdodau eraill.

Yn gyntaf mae'n hynod bwysig cadw Cysgod-y-Gaer yn agored. Mae'r cartref yn darparu gwasanaeth Cymraeg i drigolion ardal sydd yn Gymraeg ei hiaith. Does dim disgwyl i'r sector breifat ddarparu gofal ym mamiaith y trigolion sy'n byw yn eu cartrefi. Gwyddom fod darpariaeth yn eich mamiaith yn gwneud person i deimlo yn fwy cartrefol a chyfforddus.

Yn ail daw'r rhelyw o'r staff presenol o gylchoedd diwyllianol Corwen, ac mae'r trigolion yno yn adnabod nifer ohonynt ers cyn mynd i fyw yno. Mae'r cysondeb yma yn rhoi sicrwydd a thawelwch meddwl i drigolion cartref gofal na ellir ei gael mewn cartrefi eraill.

Yn drydydd does yna ddim cartref gofal arall o fewn pellter rhesymol i Gorwen a chymunedau Edeirnion. O gau Cysgod-y-Gaer bydd disgwyl i bobl deithio llawer pellach i fyw ac i ymweld a'u hannwyliaid. Bydd hyn yn cynyddu unigrwydd, sef yr her mwyaf sy'n wynebu pobl mewn oed.

Mae yna alw am gartref gofal. Mae gan gartrefi cysgodol yn ogystal a medru byw yn annibynol eu rhinweddau, ond mae yna ganrhan o'r boblogaeth sydd angen gofal mewn awyrgylch cartref gofal, lle y medr y staff yno sicrhau fod pawb yn cael digon o fwyd, yn cadw'n gynnes, yn cael hylif ac mewn achosion achlysurol pan fo'r angen yn codi yn cymryd meddyginiaeth. Nid yw'r ddarpariaeth yma o ofal ar gael mewn awyrgylch tai cysgodol.

Ar y cwestiwn ehangach o ddyfodol Awelon a Dolwen, hoffwn gofrestru fy nghefnogaeth i opsiynau 3, sef unrhyw opsiwn arall. Yr opsiwn yr hoffwn i chi ei hystryied yw cyflwyno'r un datblygiad i Dolwen ac Awelon a'r hyn yr ydych yn ei gynnig i Gysgod-y-Gaer.

Yn gyntaf, mae'r un ddadl ynghylch darpariaeth ieithyddol, unigrwydd teithio ac adnabyddiaeth staff yn perthyn i'r ddwy gartref yma, o'r hyn a ddeallaf ar ol siarad gyda thrigolion y ddwy dref a'r cartrefi.

Serch hynny mae datblygiadau diweddar yn y sector Cartrefi Gofal wedi mynd i ddangos pa mor fregus ydy'r sector (neu'r 'diwydiant' yn ol rhai - nid diwydiant mo gofal). Rydym wedi derbyn rhybydd gan arweinwyr busnesau preifat sy'n darparu gofal yn ddiweddar; wedi gweld un cartref yn cau; a dyfodol un arall yn ansicr. Mae'r ansicrwydd yma, ynghyd a'r

anallu i sicrhau darpariaeth ym mamiaith y trigolion yn golygu na ddylid crebachu ar ddarpariaeth yr Awdurdo o ofal i'n henoed. Gwn y dywed swyddogion a deulydd portffolio'r adran hon yn y Sir fod y sector breifat eisioes yn darparu 90%+ o'r gofal i henoed y sir. Ond nid yw hyn yn reswm yn ei hun dros gyfiawnhau i'r Sir ddarparu hyd yn oed yn llai o ofal.

Mae swyddogion y Sir eisioes wedi dweud mai, yn ei tyb hwy, termau ac amodau ydy'r gwahaniaeth pennaf dros y gwahaniaeth mewn pris mewn gofal yn y sector breifat a gofal yng nghartrefi'r Sir. Ar bapur felly mae'n anodd cystadlu yn arianol. Serch hynny mae sicrhau termau ac amodau gwell i'r gweithwyr yn golygu gweithlu gwell, mwy dedwydd a bodlon yn darparu gwasanaeth gwell. Yn hytrach rydym yn mynd am ras i'r gwaelod - pwy fedrith gostio lleiaf, ac yn ei dro cael staff anfodlon sydd yn methu bod yn llwyr ymroddedig i'r gwaith am nad ydyn nhw'n cael eu parchu. Yn ogystal a hyn bydd lefel cyflogau newydd yn dod i rym i weithlu y sector breifat ymhen rhai misoedd, gyda'r Cyflog Byw newydd. Ydy hyn wedi cael ei ystyried gyda hyfywedd cartrefi gofal preifat y sir? Faint o gartrefi fydd yn parhau y tu hwnt i 2016? Byddai'n dda cael dogfen yn dangos ystyriaeth o hyn.

Diolch i chi am eich amser, a gobeithio y gwnewch chi'r penderfyniad cywir.

I am writing to relay my opinion regarding your consultation on the future of the County's Internal Care Services.

As someone who lives in Edeirnion, my immediate concern is the future of Cysgod y Gaer.

I wish to register my support for the first recommendation in the document, which is to "form a partnership with the relevant stakeholders (including BCU and the third sector) to develop the site as a 'support centre' including residential care and extra care facilities as well as external home care and support services to local Sheltered Housing Scheme tenants and Corwen and the surrounding area's wider population."

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 Edeirnion. 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.

There is a demand for a care home. As well as being able to live independently, sheltered homes do have their merits, but there is a percentage of the population that require care in a care home environment, where the staff there can ensure that everyone has enough food, keeps warm, has a drink and in sporadic cases, when the need arises, takes their medication. This care provision is not available in a sheltered housing environment.

On the wider question of Awelon and Dolwen's future, I would like to register my support for option 3, which is any other option. The option that I would like you to consider is to introduce the same development in Dolwen and Awelon as you're proposing for Cysgod-y-Gaer.

Firstly, the same argument about the language provision, isolation, travel and knowing staff is relative to both these homes too, from what I understand after talking with residents from the town and homes.

However, recent developments in the Care Home sector have shown how vulnerable the sector is (or 'industry' according to some - care is not an industry). We've received notice from private business leaders who provide care recently; one home has closed; and another's future is uncertain. This uncertainty, along with the inability to ensure the provision in the residents' mother means that the Authority's provision of care for the elderly should not be compromised. I know that officers and the County's portfolio holder will say that the private sector already provides 90%+ of care to the elderly in the county. But this is not a reason in itself to justify the County providing even less care.

County officials have already said that, in their opinion, terms and conditions are the main reasons for the difference in price for care in the private sector and care in the County homes. On paper therefore, it is difficult to compete financially. Nevertheless, ensuring better terms and conditions for the workforce means a better, happier and contented workforce that provide a better service. Instead we go for a race to the bottom - who can cost the least, and in turn having dissatisfied staff who fail to be fully committed to work because they are not being respected. In addition to this, the new pay level will come into effect for the private sector workforce in a few months, with the new living wage. Has this been considered with the viability of private care homes in the county? How many homes will survive beyond 2016? It would be good to see a document showing consideration of this.

Thank you for your time and I hope you make the right decision.

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Note:

Ann Jones and Mabon ap Gwynfor also attended and contributed to the public consultation meetings (in Rhyl and Corwen respectively).

Ann Jones requested that the Consultation period be extended a week to take into account the date of the public meetings in Denbigh. We extended the period a further week to meet this request.

Mabon ap Gwynfor also attended a meeting with Denbighshire Voice with the Head of Service and Lead Member.