



**DENBIGHSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL
DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES
ANNUAL REPORT
2016 - 2017
DRAFT**

This document is also available in Welsh, and may be available in other formats on request.

Language Signpost

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this annual report is to set out the local authority's improvement journey in providing services to people in Denbighshire. Some people will access information, advice and assistance and will be able to manage their own needs and some individuals and carers will receive care and support under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. The report also demonstrates how Denbighshire has promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of the Welsh Government's six quality standards of well-being outcomes, which are:

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

The report will be of interest to:-

- Elected members and others involved in scrutiny processes
- People who are supported by Social Services
- The local authority's partners including both formal partners and others in the public, private and Third Sector who need to understand the local authority's programme and priority objectives
- Regulators (including the Wales Audit Office, CSSIW, Social Care Wales and the Statutory Commissioners)
- Welsh Government.

The report will also be of interest to the general public and people who have an interest in what their local authority is doing, how it is performing and how the money is being spent.

2. Director's Summary of Performance

I am pleased to present my Annual Report 2016-2017 for Denbighshire County Council. The purpose of this report is to outline how well we have delivered social services in the past year and what our priorities for improvement are for 2017-2018. The report provides a detailed assessment of how effective social services are for adults, children and families, and carers in Denbighshire. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act and the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act is shaping everything we are doing and this has continued through 2016-2017 and our key driver for this year has been to embed the requirements of these Acts.

I believe that we provide good quality social care services and this is demonstrated by evidence that we are improving outcomes for our citizens and communities.

We have continued to build upon our positive relationships working with partners in the statutory, independent and third sector on our journey to greater collaboration and integration.

Finally, I would like to thank all our staff and our partners for their continued hard-work, dedication and professionalism, and for the continued support from the political administration. Together I am confident that we are well placed to meet the challenges of 2017-2018 and the years ahead.

A summary of our priorities for next year:

- Review SPOA and Talking Points and further develop them with existing and new partners
- Design and implement a project to ensure the consideration of Support Budgets is integral to the assessment and support planning process
- Develop an intervention and prevention strategy
- Continue to improve the quality of and range of Information, Advice and Assistance
- Continue to develop our project 'capturing the voices of children, young people and families' through the innovative use of digital and social media
- Develop integrated Community Resource Teams
- Further integrate service provision for children and young people with complex needs
- Continue to support the emotional wellbeing needs of looked after children and ensure looked after children have positive placement experiences
- Implement revised processes and structures to support safeguarding arrangements for adults at risk of, or experiencing harm and undertake a further test of change in relation to adult safeguarding process and structure
- Focus on those children and young people who are identified as having adverse childhood experiences
- Restructure the Intake and Intervention Service

- Implement a review and reassessment project for all people who receive long term managed care and support
- Review information that is available to Carers and ensure Carers have access to a range of training opportunities
- Improve the co-ordination of commissioning and evaluation of Parenting Programmes
- Work with partners to further develop and adopt a national recognition process for 'Dementia Friendly' community and commercial businesses and organisations
- Finalise our Homelessness Strategy



Nicola Stubbins
Corporate Director Communities and Statutory Director of Social Services

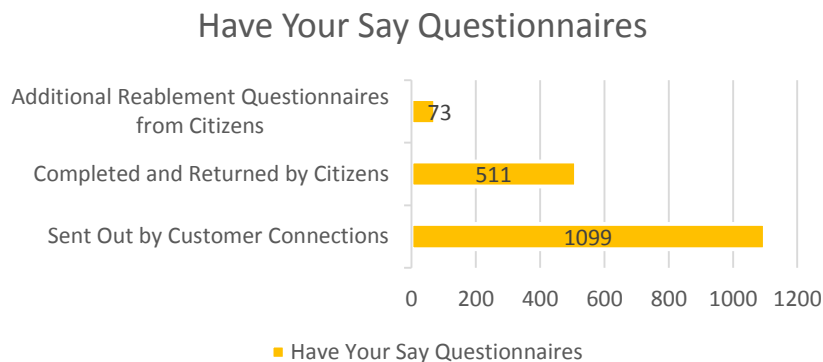
Denbighshire County Council Social Services Annual Report



3. How Are People Shaping our Services?

Community Support Services

People are shaping our services through participation in our Have Your Say – Citizen Satisfaction Survey.



1099 Have your Say questionnaires were sent out from the Customer Connection Team last year with **511** responses received. A return rate of **46%**.

The Reablement Service sent the same questionnaire out to people who received reablement support and this prompted a further **73** responses. Please see section 4a for examples of good practice, areas for improvement and examples from the feedback we received:

The Social Services Complaints process includes recording of compliments and praise and feedback from citizens is incorporated through the complaints process and applied to a lessons learnt action plan. The Social Services Complaints Officer produces a quarterly report for the management team and highlighting the views of service users and their families. Action plans are drawn up to address areas of concern with an identified officer tasked to ensure the specific actions are put in place. Please refer to section 5c for detail on our performance in the handling and investigation of complaints and representations.

We have planning forums which have service user and carer representation such as the:-

- Mental Health Planning Forum
- Learning Disability Strategic Planning Group
- Carers Strategy Group
- Older Person's Reference Group

We also provide funding to a wide range of Third Sector organisations who consult with citizens on our behalf on a range of issues and provide feedback. These include:

- Age Connects – Forums / Hubbubs / Speak-Up project
- British Red Cross
- North Wales Deaf Association
- Vision Support
- Denbighshire County Forum for People with Learning Disabilities

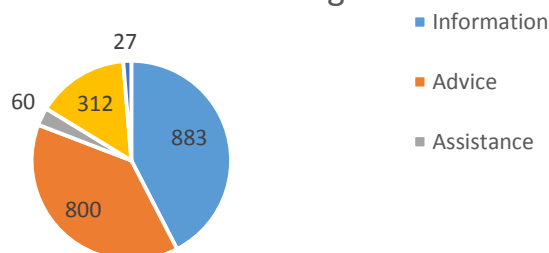
Citizens supported by Supporting People projects are invited to be interviewed as part of each strategic review. Citizens are additionally involved in the consultation on Supporting People’s plans for the coming year as captured in the Local Commissioning Plan.

Supporting People’s Service User Involvement Officer has undertaken numerous pieces of work to ensure that involvement is key to the decisions and directions the services takes. This has included developing a Service User Involvement Toolkit, which has been delivered bilingually to all providers for review, along with a feedback survey to allow for comments or suggestions.

In addition, **Talking Points** have been set up by staff to offer people a different way to find out what help and support might be available in their local community to improve their health and well-being. At Talking Points citizens have an opportunity to meet with someone who is knowledgeable about social care and well-being issues. They can also meet the new Community Navigators and find out what is going on in their area in a convenient, appropriate and welcoming venue. They can talk about the well-being outcomes they desire for themselves or others. The focus is to find out what is important to them so that they can live the life they choose in a safe and secure environment. Talking Points are also a place where people can volunteer to help their own communities. As a result of such engagement one citizen came to a meeting of Occupational Therapists, to give a personal account of their positive experience of using the service in Denbighshire and what a difference it has made to their lives.

Last year we reported that Talking Points were being established in our larger towns and communities and that we were working with people face to face to establish “what matters to them” as opposed to “what is the matter with them”. There are now nine established Talking Points which are going from strength to strength. Monthly Talking Points Performance Report Cards capture all activity.

No. of People Helped Through Talking Points Across Denbighshire



Over the last nine months we helped **1,011** citizens through **167** Talking Points across the county. We made **376** appointments with Social Services Staff. We received **634** drop-ins – people just calling in for some information or advice. We have prevented 699 citizens being referred into Social Services.

Citizens are involved in the early stage of commissioning services, in developing our **Commissioning Strategy** for Older People Services. We are actively seeking the views of Older People, to help us understand need, gaps and quality of our current service provision. We are also keen to hear what ideas citizens have.

Education & Children's Services

We continue to be committed to involving citizens in shaping the services we provide. Our ongoing project 'capturing the voices of children, young people and families' has continued to improve the engagement of children, young people and families in our service delivery and our processes for capturing and responding to their feedback.

Children, young people and families are actively involved in this project and have driven the increased use of mobile technology and social media in our approach to engagement and involvement. This project is also linked to a task group that was set up by the Regional Safeguarding Children's Board (RSCB) Local Service Delivery Group looking at strengthening the voices of children and young people in safeguarding processes and activities. The project has led to the creation of the Kids in Care Club (KiC) young people's forum and a closed Facebook group for Foster Carers. The Facebook site currently has 16 members and has provided another avenue to obtain feedback and improved accessibility to key information such as training, notification of events and access to form templates.

The KiC Club has been instrumental in improving the type and quality of information we provide to children and families that we work with. The content of our Website contains new Fact Sheets for children and their families' as well new methods of providing feedback. They have contributed to the creation of profiles of each of our Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) given to children when they come into care.

The Kids in Care Club also contributed to a session on ***What makes a good Foster Carer*** to gather their views and wishes about Foster Care Placements and defining the information that Foster Carers need to know about the children and young people who come to their homes. As part of this event the Group worked with a beat boxer to create a rap song emphasising what the children see as the essential characteristics of a good Foster Carers. This song is now used as part of our training and recruitment package for Foster Carers.

In October 2016 Denbighshire's Looked After Children Team were awarded a Certificate of Achievement at the British Association of Social Work Cymru (BASW) National Conference in recognition of their work with the KiC Club. The BASW Committee recognised that this enabled the Looked After Practice Group to hear the voice of the child and use this knowledge to influence practice. Councillor Bobby Feeley, Cabinet Lead Member for Social Care said *"Our Looked After Children's Team carry out some great work that has been recognised at a national level. We are proud of the Team's achievements and would like to wholeheartedly congratulate them on their success."*

The input from these children, young people and Foster Carers has changed our approach, resulting in an increase in feedback received from children, young people and their families. Our consultation documents for Looked After Children have become more focused on personal wellbeing outcomes which has strengthened relationships with the children, young people and families the Service works with.

The Service actively collects feedback from people who received support from Education & Children's Services through the use of several planned surveys; our 'Have Your Say' surveys, the Quality of Care survey and the annual Welsh Government qualitative survey. Feedback from the Have Your Say survey is collated and analysed every quarter in our Quality Assessment Framework Progress Report which is discussed at the Joint Management Team Meeting.

The Quality of Care survey is sent out in a number of different formats to Children, Young People, Parents, Foster Carers and Fostering Panel Members to gain their views on the quality of care provided by the Fostering Service. 34 surveys were completed and returned with the following feedback;

- The children and young people who responded were happy with the quality of care they receive, feel listened to and safe,
- Most of the Foster Carers are satisfied with the level of support they receive and find the training programme helpful to enable them to become more confident and informed, but some highlighted that they would like to see more emphasis on their development as Foster Carers and a review of the payment process,
- Panel Members recorded that of the quality of care offered to children and young people was of a high standard and that the level of knowledge and experience the Fostering Staff have of the Foster Carers is excellent.

In response to the feedback from Foster Carers an on-line training resource has been introduced for Foster Carers and the service has carried out an audit regarding the late recording on movement forms and how this impacts on the payment process. We are continuing to explore ways to further improve engagement with Foster Carers and adapt the bi-monthly Foster Care Forum to enable them make the most of development opportunities.

Last September we also circulated a new Welsh Government survey to those people who have received support from social services to ask for their views on how the services they received have helped them. We send surveys out to any child or young person aged 7 to 17 years old with a care and support plan, their parents and/or carers. A total number of 97 surveys were returned by parents/carers and 60 by children and young people. Some of the feedback from these surveys will be referenced later in this report under the relevant sections.

Over that last year we have been reviewing the support and activities available to children and young people with a disability. Our aim has been to engage with people using or contacting our services to identify barriers and develop solutions to overcoming them. Our Head of Service has engaged with parent support groups to improve the offer for children with Autism. Led by consultation we have enabled services for children with very complex

needs to be delivered from familiar school premises during the holidays, established SEN surgeries for parents of children with additional learning needs and created a specialist point of contact to help children and parents navigate the types of support available across Denbighshire. At the end of 2016 we commissioned a team of consultants to carry out engagement work with children and young people with complex needs, their parents and carers, relevant and interested community groups and our special schools to shape existing and new services to best benefit the outcomes of our community. One notable result of this consultation has been the creation of a group of engaged parents who can work closely with us to improve and develop new services in the community.

As with Community Support Services, the Social Services Complaints Process enables people to help shape Education & Children's Services. See the paragraph on Page 5 for details.

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

Community Support Services

Denbighshire's Single Point of Access (SPOA), is the first point of contact for information, advice and assistance. SPOA provides information about community based resources that support citizens to maintain independence and promote well-being. When access to Health and Social care services is needed SPOA ensures any referrals are directed for further assessment. It offers a coordinated response and has continued to deliver a solid 'first contact right response' service during 2016-2017.

20.78% of people were appropriately not referred to formal Health and Social Care Services by SPOA for 2016-2017 because of their information, advice and assistance. Talking Points will have made a significant contribution to this, directing citizens to community based organisations who can meet their current needs.

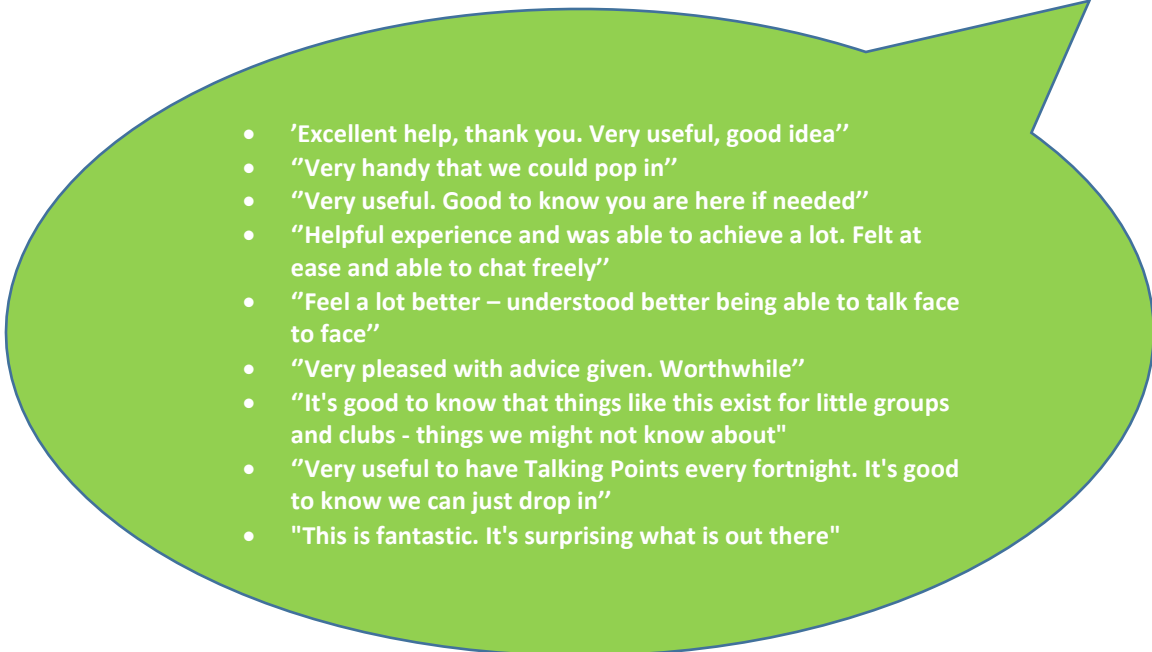
To see what difference our SPOA is making – please read about Doris' & Glenys' experiences in Section 6 - Key Documents at the end of this report.

The newly formed 'Step Down' cluster of social workers and occupational therapists proactively supports people to leave hospital as soon as they are able. The staff work closely with colleagues in hospital and the community and the team is already making a significant difference, as evidenced by 'delayed transfer of care for social care' (DTOC) data. There were 25 delayed transfers during the course of the year but monthly audit indicates this dropped to zero during 2 of the last 3 months of 2016-2017.

We are also changing our processes about how we arrange care. Anyone now who is eligible for care and support from adult social services will be offered a “Support Budget” which will enable them to have control over the planning and delivery of their care.

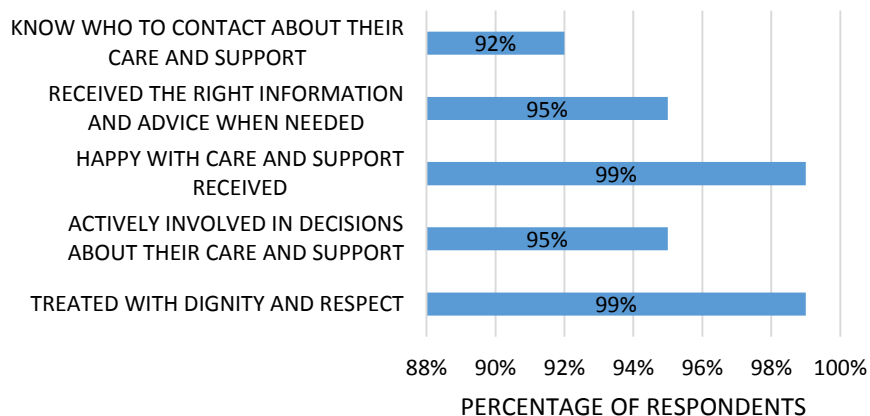
In the 2015-2016 report we talked about our work to progress Support Budgets in Denbighshire. Our promotional activity in this area has been increased and we now intend to organise our efforts into a project as this continues to be a key priority. 60 staff have undertaken training during this last year and with this greater awareness has come greater promotion to eligible citizens. As of 31st December 2016 (census day) we had 115 people across Adults & Children’s Social Services receiving continuous support budget / direct payment support. In addition, between the periods April 2016 to the end of December 2016, 53 one off payments were made which supported individuals and carers to meet their needs.

Feedback is also captured as part of the ongoing review of the Talking Points and the following feedback was received from citizens during the year:

- 
- ‘Excellent help, thank you. Very useful, good idea’
 - “Very handy that we could pop in”
 - “Very useful. Good to know you are here if needed”
 - “Helpful experience and was able to achieve a lot. Felt at ease and able to chat freely”
 - “Feel a lot better – understood better being able to talk face to face”
 - “Very pleased with advice given. Worthwhile”
 - “It's good to know that things like this exist for little groups and clubs - things we might not know about”
 - “Very useful to have Talking Points every fortnight. It's good to know we can just drop in”
 - "This is fantastic. It's surprising what is out there"

We have a well-established process of collecting feedback from adult citizens in line with Welsh Governments performance measures, which we use to improve services and inform our quality assurance processes. Several of the questions asked in our existing citizen questionnaires are relevant to Outcome 1, and the responses we received to these questions remained very positive during 2016-2017.

CITIZEN FEEDBACK 2016/17



Our priorities for next year:

- To review SPOA and Talking Points and further develop them with existing and new partners so they are effective, efficient and fit for purpose in a modernized world
- To design and implement a project to ensure the consideration of Support Budgets is integral to the assessment and support planning process which in turn promotes the well-being of the people we aim to help.

Education & Children's Services

What did we plan to do last year?

Our main objective over 2016-2017 has been to ensure that the merger of Education and Education Support, together with Children and Family Services was successfully implemented and consolidated. The merger was a major change in a sensitive and high-risk area so was carefully planned and the rationale for merging the service areas very clearly communicated. The new service has focused on capitalising on opportunities through the modernisation agenda and on restructuring to ensure the delivery of cohesive, effective and efficient services. The purpose of the merger was not simply to bring together two services under the management of one Head of Service, but to fully integrate the two services to ensure a cohesive and unified approach, to provide better services to children, young people and families.

The service merger has also helped us implement the Social Services and Wellbeing Act to deliver services that promote people's health and well-being and encourage more involvement from citizens in decisions about their personal care. Our focus on early intervention and prevention of escalating need will support people to maintain their own personal wellbeing and resilience and ensure that vulnerable people are protected by minimising the risk of them experiencing abuse or exploitation.

Over that last year we have continued to develop and improve our Children and Families Support Gateway service for children, young people, families and professionals. In May 2016 we launched a new set of processes to provide an information, advice and assistance service across both statutory and early intervention services within Denbighshire providing a range of advice and support in one place. The team has been developed and received training to hold effective conversations which enable us to have strengths-based, outcome focused conversations with those who contact our service.

People contact our service for a variety of reasons and while the majority of enquiries still relate to referrals to social services, regarding a concern for a child, more people are now contacting us with requests for information or help accessing support for wider issues impacting on their children's or families' well-being. During the first 11 months of operation, the information, advice and assistance team have responded to 2,175 requests for information and over 4,749 requests for advice and/or assistance.

Where families are sign-posted or referred to our Families First early intervention service we use the Joint Assessment Framework for Families (JAFF) which encourages the family and agencies to work together to assess the needs of the whole family and to consider the most effective way of addressing those needs. The benefit of this model is that it puts the whole family at the centre of our approach. It ensures a holistic assessment of the family's strengths and needs and promotes a greater sense of ownership and empowerment of families. The joint assessment forms the basis for Team Around the Family (TAF) model which delivers a co-ordinated multi-agency approach to addressing each family's assessed needs. The family are the core members of the Team Around the Family, their action plan is their own, they are actively involved in every multi-agency meeting, and each family member completes a distance travelled tool (measured at the beginning and end of involvement under a variety of domains e.g. emotional health and well-being, relationships and social lives, parenting skills, home environment).

In the last year, 249 families have engaged in a Joint Assessment for Families (JAF). During the same period 121 families left the service with a successful outcome in relation to their TAF Action Plan. As part of those action plans family members have accessed over 3,910 support interventions, for example; group work, parenting, and youth support.

The 'New Approaches to Practice' Project has engaged with each Welsh Region to develop new outcomes-focused assessment templates and policies which support the changes required by the Social Services and Wellbeing Act. These will build upon and embed our approach to recording personal wellbeing outcomes begun last year in our National Outcomes Framework pilot. A significant training programme has been delivered regionally to support the workforce in embedding these new approaches.

In our annual survey of children and young people receiving care and support from social services, 83% of children and young people who responded said that they are happy with the care and support they had received and 73% said that their views about their care and

support have been listened to. Also 63% of parents and carers said that they had been actively involved in all decisions about how their child or children's care and support was provided.

Our priorities for next year:

- We will restructure front-line services to ensure integrated operational delivery of the intervention and prevention strategy is in line with the principles of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act
- We will continue to improve the quality of and range of Information, Advice and Assistance by working in conjunction with the Family Information Service, Community Support Service and Corporate Customer Services to gain accreditation with the National Advice Network for Denbighshire County Council
- We will integrate the new assessment templates and guidance within our existing case management systems to help embed the New Approaches of Practice culture and ensure that assessments are proportional, strongly informed by the child or young person's views and reflect the personal wellbeing outcomes of those assessed
- We will continue to take advantage of opportunities to develop the scope of our project 'capturing the voices of children, young people and families through the innovative use of digital and social media

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

Community Support Services

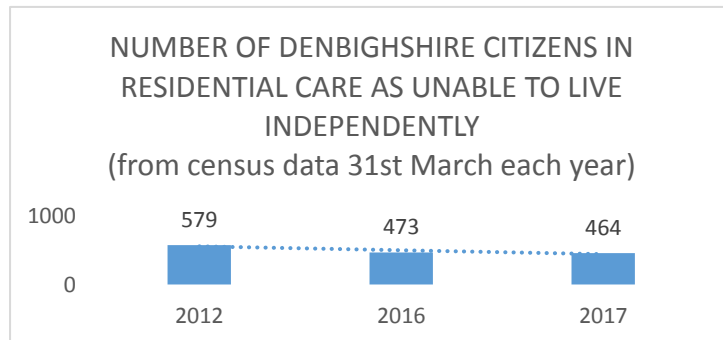
We know that we are stronger when working together to achieving the desired health and well-being outcomes for the people of Denbighshire, that is why, with BCU Health Board, during 2016-2017 we embarked on an ambitious plan to establish integrated **Community Resource Teams** across Denbighshire that will work closely with G.P practices.

Our joint vision is to provide comprehensive, flexible and responsive community services, available 24 hours a day. The expectation is that integrated teams, made up of District Nurses, Community Nurses, Specialist Nurses, Social Workers, Occupational Therapists, Physiotherapists, Social Care Practitioners, Health and Social Care Support Workers and Community Navigators will deliver services together to designated populations from shared bases. This will enable more care and support that is delivered in the community that promotes well-being and builds community resilience. Early intervention, the prevention or delay of dependency and timely and effective reablement will be key objectives of the teams, as will the provision of timely and quality end of life care in the setting of the person's choice.

We hope that the difference these integrated community resource teams will make is that citizens will only have to tell their story once and there will be fewer staff from the different agencies visiting people's homes with their different assessments processes. It is hoped that

the integrated service will be more flexible and responsive based on ‘what matters’ to individuals as communication between the different professionals involved gets better. The focus will be on promoting and maintaining independence and where possible people will be connected to a range of health and well-being advice services in their local community, supported by third sector and others. This should enable people to be better able to cope with crises and other situations which cause stress or anxiety.

Last year we reported on the progress being made in our plans to reduce the number of



older people in Denbighshire who need to live in residential care. This is being achieved by providing timely and appropriate support which enables people to continue living independent and fulfilled lives, whilst remaining within their own homes and communities.

One of the key factors in keeping people as independent as possible is the development of Extra Care Housing Schemes. Denbighshire has three and work began last year to progress the development of additional schemes including construction of a new 51-apartment scheme in Denbigh. In March 2017 Members of Denbighshire County Council’s Planning Committee approved the build of 70 extra care apartments.

The application was submitted by Grwp Cynefin, the housing association chosen by Denbighshire to draw up proposals for an extra care scheme in the town. The creation of 70 accommodation units will consist of 42 two bedroom and 28 one bedroom apartments for people with extra care and supported living needs and a community living space for four individuals who need more formal care and support. Communal facilities will also be provided in the main extra care building, including catering facilities in a café to assist those less able to prepare meals and to offer residents the chance to eat together.

It is important that we enable people to feel safe, as the perception of safety is often as important to an individual as safety itself. As part of our current satisfaction surveys of adult citizens, we ask whether they feel safe. The proportion of adult citizens responding positively to this question during 2016-2017 was 92% (401 out of 437). This is down slightly from 95% (396 out of 416) the previous year. It was noted that many responses highlight a fear of falling as the problem. This has been fed back to Welsh Government. We will continue to operate a Falls Prevention Service within Denbighshire.

Our priorities for next year:

- The first Community Resource Team in Denbighshire will cover the Rhyl area and will be a ‘spring board,’ to deliver the best possible service together. In April 2017 staff will be co-located in the Royal Alexandra Hospital. It will be important to consider the best way

to work together and our priority for 2017/2018 will be to establish integrated working practices and one team identity. In other parts of the County where co-location is not immediately possible, we will look to improve integrated working practices.

- We will continue with the externalisation of our in-house provision and progress the formal tendering processes in the respect of services to be provided the Hafan Deg, Awelon, and Dolwen sites; whilst further exploring and developing the possibilities of an extension build to create some supported living apartments at Cysgod Y Gaer.

Education & Children's Services

In response to a significant number of enquiries received by the Children and Families Support Gateway relating to support for children with additional needs we have created a specialist post, the **Disability Wellbeing Co-ordinator**, to work across statutory and early intervention services providing bespoke advice and assistance to children, young people, parents and carers to help them meet their personal wellbeing outcomes.

The Disability Wellbeing Co-ordinator has spent time visiting local community groups, clubs and charities able to provide support to children with disabilities and used that information to advise and assist people to access the things that matter to them. She has also engaged with groups of parents to create the beginnings of an advisory network so we can continue to work collaboratively to develop services within the community.

The feedback from parents and children during the first three months of the Disability Wellbeing Coordinator being in post have been very positive. Following our first Parent Advisory Group meeting a parent of one child commented; *"It is good to know that Denbighshire want to find ways to support children with additional learning needs to participate in activities... I want to thank you for starting a process. I think it is the beginning of a journey."*

The Health and Wellbeing in Schools Group is a multi-agency partnership providing a coordinated and consistent approach in schools to improve the health and well-being outcomes of children and young people in Denbighshire; in particular focusing on independence and resilience. The group is a forum for discussing new health and well-being interventions and reviewing their effectiveness and values. It makes use of health and well-being intelligence and evidence-based practice to inform service delivery, including; resource provision, training, practice and policy development. The group has addressed and contributed to the development of policy and processes across a number of health and well-being themes including; mental and emotional health, self-harm, bullying, e-safety, sexual exploitation, tobacco, substance misuse, obesity, nutrition, physical activity, sexual health and support for young carers.

A joint agency self-harm pathway has been developed and implemented between Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) specialist CAMHS and Denbighshire Local Authority Education Services to provide a safe and supported response to helping young people who self-harm. The pathway clearly defines what needs to be done and when, who

should do it and who is responsible for what, at each step. It ensures that on first disclosure of self-harm, a trained Self-Harm Link Officer will listen to the young person with compassion, gather initial information about what has happened, how the young person is feeling and contact a CAMHS specialist to discuss and agree an initial risk management plan. Organisational managers more widely are meeting to develop a multi agency training programme for all professionals to respond to children and young people's disclosures of self-harm.

Support provided to Young Carers has continued to grow over the past year. We have been working closely with Wrexham Conwy Denbighshire Young Carers/Credu Service (our sub-regionally commissioned provision for young carers) to deliver support, including; information and advice, social activities and events, support with personal resilience and well-being, transport, counselling, advocacy and liaison with education services, community services, and health professionals. The main aims of the service are to mitigate the impact of the caring role on the child/young person. The most common needs of young carers identified are the need for respite and opportunities to socialise (giving them time to be a child); building resilience, emotional wellbeing and self-esteem; need for peer support networks with other young carers who understand; support with education and learning; and, advocacy support to have their voices heard.

At the end of November 2016, the Young Carers service was supporting 174 children and young people in Denbighshire. The identified number of young carers has grown in the last few years due to an increase in referrals through successful awareness raising with partner agencies and following a pilot project aiming to improve the health and emotional wellbeing of young carers. Our Specialist Nurse for Looked After Children continues to champion the health needs of this cohort of children and endeavours to establish a shared understanding with our colleagues in health of the importance of this work and the collation and recording of information. The specialist nurse undertakes some assessment work with the cohort of young people who are non-attenders for scheduled appointments, including offering information about sexual health, both individually or in agreed groups.

Our relationship with our colleagues in CAMHS continues to be strong, with a management and practitioner group meeting monthly to discuss specific cases and concerns, to share information on general themes and to ensure close working relationships and speedy consultations. Members of the Therapeutic Service also work one day per week with colleagues from CAMHS, a working arrangement that benefits both agencies. Whilst waiting lists remain high we are able to fast track some complex cases where both agencies have significant concerns.

Our priorities for next year:

- We will create a service-wide Intervention and Prevention Strategy to cover primary school low-level mental health agenda and working in partnership with BCUHB, Third Sector and Police

- We will further integrate service provision for children and young people with complex needs to deliver services that are co-ordinated and working together throughout the year
- We will develop our processes and services to better support the emotional wellbeing needs of looked after children
- We will build on our offer to ensure children with complex additional needs are provided with a range of opportunities to maximise their potential and meet their social needs

c) Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

A corporate safeguarding programme has been established, with lead designated safeguarding managers for all council departments, and a rolling programme of awareness raising for front-line council staff about their responsibilities to report concerns about children and adults at risk and safeguarding concerns. On-line training for all staff on safeguarding is planned and being implemented. Robust monitoring of compliance with safer recruitment is in place, and levels of safe recruitment are increasing across all departments.

Community Support Services

Last year we reviewed the operation of our Protection of Vulnerable Adults (PoVA) processes and the composition of the Adult Safeguarding Team to ensure that the revised processes had been fully implemented to address concerns raised by CSSIW and also to comply with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act.

In June 2016, a Test of Change project was established to focus on the enquiry stage of the safeguarding process, with a senior practitioner seconded from a locality team to undertake the task. This proved to be very successful as the process for the enquiry stage was much clearer and performance against the 7 working day response timescale was good – 75% of enquiries were completed within this timescale. This change of practice meant more efficient working in the other Teams. 67% of the enquiries related to cases that would have previously been dealt with by locality and other teams. There was also positive feedback from partner organisations mainly health and police. This process has now been adopted within the mainstream safeguarding process.

Other activity has included:

- Actions from Internal audit action plan were completed.
- A detailed action plan in response to CSSIW concerns was created and implemented
- A Senior Practitioner post relocated permanently to the Safeguarding Team as a result of the success of the Test of Change project
- A reporting framework has been developed which will be monitored by the Senior Management Team as well as the Conwy and Denbighshire Safeguarding Adults Delivery Group. This will be finalised when the new Welsh Government reporting framework (data set) has been agreed.

- Workshop held with Gwynedd Local Authority and CSSIW which assisted in understanding elements of best practice in relation to managing processes.

Our priorities for next year:

- Our Adult Safeguarding priorities for next year are to implement revised processes and structures to support the safeguarding arrangements for adults at risk of, or experiencing harm. This will include an additional Social Work post and a new audit form.
- We will further develop confident and competent practitioners in safeguarding practice by undertaking a further training needs analysis and implementing a coaching and mentoring development plan for safeguarding practices. We will also undertake a further test of change in relation to safeguarding process and structure.
- We will do this in order to co-ordinate and facilitate the process of safeguarding adults at risk, as described by the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and in achieving this aim to promote the wellbeing of adults in Denbighshire through multi-agency working.

Education & Children's Services

The establishment of the new Education and Children's Services included a review of the management structure, and new roles were established with a remit across both parts of the service. The Safeguarding and Reviewing Manager is part of the Joint Senior Management Team and contributes to the overall safeguarding agenda across the wholeService.

The Safeguarding Unit has improved and consolidated performance on holding child protection conferences and Looked After Children (LAC) reviews within clear timescales, and there is a steady increase in the number of children and young people attending. Safeguarding and Reviewing Officers have continued to extend the range of tools used to consult with children and young people and thereby increase the impact their views have on outcomes. In addition to this, the use of feedback forms after Conference is continuing to be used to collate information from families and partner agencies on how we can improve Conferences.

We continue to use the Signs of Safety approach to risk in child protection conferences. Evaluations of the impact of this, including those from service users, suggest the approach is helping to clarify concerns and strengths on which to base effective protection plans and achieve improved outcomes for families with children on the Child Protection Register. A comprehensive quality assurance audit programme has been introduced across children's services, and this includes looking in detail at a random selection of case files and independent reviewing officers observing front line practice. A review of this audit programme is set for the end of the year and will assist in strengthening good practice across the service.

The Extended Child Practice Review agenda is now well established within the authority and the action plan further to the most recent review ECPR 2 is being implemented across the Service. An update of this action plan will be shared at the North Wales Safeguarding CPR Group in December.

The service successfully introduced an **outcomes focused** pilot in working with vulnerable families who needed care and support or were on the Child Protection Register. This involved an approach of listening and negotiating “what matters” with families and creating packages of support that were more effective. The service intends to extend this approach to working with all families in future.

The Safeguarding Unit continue to actively encourage young people (where appropriate) to attend LAC reviews and conferences and talk first-hand about their experiences and be really involved in shaping their care and protection plans. In the circumstances giving rise to a Child Practice Review under the Regional Safeguarding Children Board, parents are active participants in providing their perspective on what happened and what we can learn for the future. The Manager of the Safeguarding Unit attends and contributes to North Wales Safeguarding Children Board Groups including Policy and Procedures Group as well as Child Practice Reviews Group and the focus of this work is to ensure that Denbighshire are active members of the work of the Board and information is passed down to practitioners.

The effectiveness of our early intervention activity in preventing the escalation of cases to statutory services may be seen in the low number of cases that are referred to Children’s Social Services from the Team Around the Family. In the last year only 18 of the 249 cases (7%) closed by the Team Around the Family were escalated to social services.

This year all members of staff in the Team Around the Family service have received *Signs of Safety* training organised by our Safeguarding Unit. This has strengthened their ability to recognise both issues of concern and protective factors present within a family to provide a much more rounded approach to how we manage and address identified concerns.

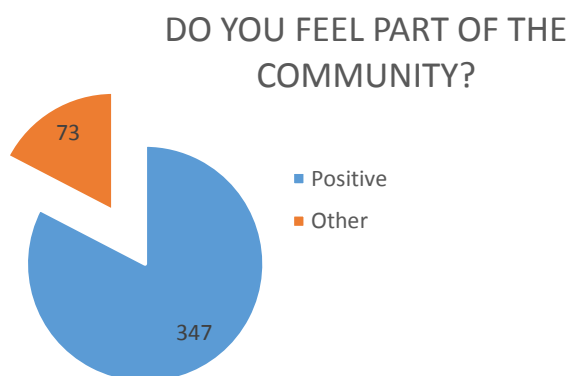
Our priorities for next year:

- We will focus care, support and protection for those children and young people who are vulnerable and are identified as having adverse childhood experiences
- Restructure the Intake and Intervention Service to strengthen the interface between early intervention and statutory social services
- Ensure that all Child Protection Plans are child focussed and have achievable outcomes
- We will conduct an audit of all Child Protection Plans across the Service
- Ensure that Looked After Children’s Care and Support Plans are appropriate to meet their individual needs and continue to be reviewed in a timely manner. We will audit of the LAC Plans will take place to ensure that there is compliance.
- Manager of Safeguarding Unit to continue to Chair monthly CSE Panel and contribute towards the CSE Action Plan as set out by NWSCB.

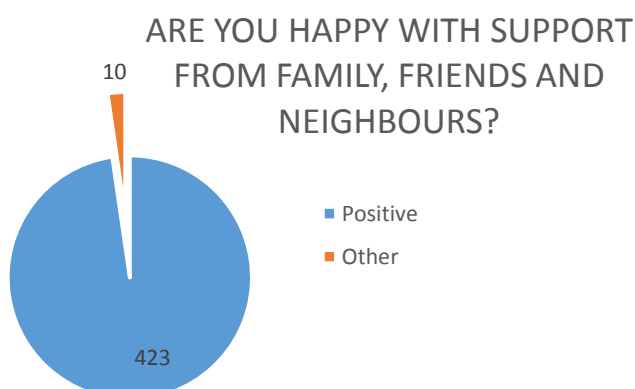
d) Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

Community Support Services

A number of new performance measures have been established by Welsh Government to help local authorities evaluate their success in relation to this Quality Standard. For example, as part of our current satisfaction surveys of adult citizens, we ask:



Comments in relation to this question highlighted that some citizens have friends and neighbours within their local community which they share their time with and seek support from when needed. Others stated they did not want to be part of their community as they chose to socialise with family or keep to themselves.



However, one of the things we recognised in last year's report was that social isolation can often be a big problem for older people. We were therefore looking for ways to promote and encourage people to be more socially active.

The North Wales VISION for Information, Advice and Assistance (IAA) is that *“citizens and staff across North Wales will have access to easily accessible, quality information about wellbeing topics and resources that citizens and staff can use to support the maintenance and improvement of wellbeing”*.

Denbighshire County Council recognises the importance of ensuring that people have access to the information they need to support their well-being, and they have demonstrated their commitment to Dewis Cymru as the place to get it from.

Denbighshire Senior Leadership Team has supported corporate engagement and leadership of Dewis Cymru and a Denbighshire Information Network (DIN) has been established to bring together and share well-being information, advice and assistance from across a wide range of providers, including community groups, third sector organisations, independent organisations and health and social care organisations.

- 
- "With meeting Alex I feel that I have someone to go to for support and I feel safe as I know the team here have good links within the community"
 - "I didn't realise there was quite so many organisations out there to help"

In parallel to this we developed a successful Community Navigator Service with our Third Sector Partners offering a different way for people to find out what help might be available or what they can contribute in their community to support their health and wellbeing.

Citizens have told us:

"The community navigator service is a fundamental link between the practice and the community, the navigators not only have the knowledge but have the expertise to tailor the referral to the individual making it a more personal and engaging experience. We have a number of projects and research that we are keen to do with the community navigators this year around patient experience and community working" Gwyn Hughes, Patient Services Manager, Clarence Medical Centre, Rhyl.

Recorded outcomes tell us that people feel happier, better informed, they feel they belong, have a social life, are more independent and feel safe and secure.

Our priorities for next year:

- To implement a review and reassessment project which applies an asset based and reablement approach to meeting wellbeing outcomes for all people who receive long term managed care and support.
- We will be working with our partners to ensure the principles of the Denbighshire Well-being Plan impact on the way we deliver our services. By focusing on a main theme Independence and Resilience we will strive to ensure that people:
 - are active, connected and contribute to their community
 - take notice of what is going on around them, and in doing so, keep learning about their world
 - prioritise their wellbeing and actively plan to maintain their independence

Education & Children's Services

Looked after children often struggle with academic attainment, and this puts them at a disadvantage to other children in terms of future life chances. We complete Personal Education Plans (PEP) for every Looked After Child to ensure that everyone involved with the care and support of the child is actively prioritising the education of the Young Person. Our performance in this area continues to be high with 100% of PEPs completed within the statutory timescale.

Our Education Liaison Officer for Looked After Children hosts a forum for LAC Designated Teachers designed to both share good practice across the school and provide training and support to teachers on issues that affect Looked After Children. Over the past year the designated teachers' forum has provided training on Person Centred Planning techniques, social services referral pathways, health promotion, homelessness prevention and personal resilience. The forum has also conducted learning events involving key stakeholders from across the service on topics such as; Theraplay, a child and family therapy for building and enhancing attachment, self-esteem, and trust in others and charities, such as The Letterbox Club who provide enjoyable educational support for looked after children.

Educational stability for Looked After Children continues to be high. The number of children experiencing one or more changes of school, which were not due to transitional arrangements, stood at 24, with 16 of these being for positive reasons such as children moving to permanent foster placements, adoption, placement with family outside our area, or a return to parents.

Education and Children's Services also use the **Family Link Worker** model within our early intervention response. The Family Link Worker works with families with pre-school and primary age children to create the foundation of a relationship for continuing engagement with education. The workers build mini-communities around primary schools, through the provision of baby and toddler groups which promotes attendance and engagement with the overall outcome of higher educational attainment for children. This model is held up as good practice.

The Tackling Poverty Leads Group is a cross programme group including the leads of Communities First, Supporting People, Families First and Flying Start. This year the group have pooled resources to increase training for front line staff in areas of Employability and compiled a Training and Employment Matrix of Services for frontline staff to use to provide higher quality consistent information, signposting and advice to support individuals working with any of the four Tackling Poverty programmes.

Our priorities for next year:

- We aim to build capacity to deliver efficient and effective support for schools in order to ensure that the offer we make to children and young people will enable them to lead happy, successful and healthy lives

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

Community Support Services

With the introduction of the new Act, performance measures in relation to outcomes for Carers have changed. Work is still ongoing to develop reports based on these changes, subject to further guidance expected from Welsh Government, therefore we are unable to report confidently and accurately on the new performance indicators.

However, in response to the Act, Denbighshire has applied an asset based approach equally to Carers as to all other citizens, and provides Information, Advice and Assistance to Carers irrespective of the level of care they provide. Again, through our Talking Points and the Single Point of Access, Carers are engaged in conversations about what matters to them, and how they can be supported to achieve their own individual well-being outcomes. During 2016-17 **535** Carers accessed information and advice via the Talking Points and Single Point of Access, and **406** were referred on and offered a fuller assessment of their support needs. The provision of statutory assistance from the local authority can be in the form of short breaks and/or 'one off' grants to meet identified well-being outcomes.

During 2016-2017 a new Denbighshire Carers Strategy was developed in partnership with health, the third sector and Carers. The Strategy focuses on the requirements of the new Social Services & Well Being (Wales) Act 2014, and sets out actions to ensure that we are meeting our statutory duty in regard to the enhanced rights of Carers under the Act.

During the year, we have introduced a process to offer Carers an assessment appointment and this has worked well for Carers who are able to get out and have a conversation about their needs in a more neutral setting. Throughout the last year we have worked in partnership with Third Sector organisations who support Carers, such as NEWCIS and Alzheimer’s Society, to ensure that their officers are on hand to provide more specialist information and advice to Carers at the Talking Points.

We currently send our ‘Have your say’ carers questionnaire to those people who have received a carer’s assessment.



We contacted carers who gave any negative responses (where they gave permission to do so) to gather further details of the issues they were facing. Their comments were then passed on to the Carers Commissioning Officer for appropriate individual actions, including the offer of a re-assessment.

Our priorities for next year:

- Ensure Carers understand the ethos and provisions of the new SSWBA. We need to review our current information that is available to Carers to ensure it fits with the principles of the Act and Denbighshire's approach.
- Ensure involvement of the carer in the assessment of the person with care needs, and consider the appropriateness of joint assessments. We will review our policy and procedures in line with this requirement from the Act.
- Ensure Carers have access to a range of training opportunities to support the caring role by agreeing a more joined up approach with workforce development, Health, Carers Commissioning Officer and the Third Sector.
- Explore the benefits and feasibility of adopting a family conference model to situations within adult services where appropriate.

Education & Children's Services

Placement stability is important for looked after children, and we do everything we can to minimise the number of changes. Last year, we saw an increase in the percentage and number of looked after children who had three or more placements during the year, from 8% (14 children) during 2015-2016 to 11% (26 children) during 2016-2017. We strive to maintain stable placements for all children and young people, and aim to minimise the number of moves they experience. However, this is not always possible, and changes can often be for positive reasons, such as returning to the family, adoption, etc. We monitor placement moves closely and, where there is a concern about movements, these are considered at the Intensive Intervention Panel to make sure we maximise stability.

We are always seeking to improve our foster carer recruitment activity to ensure we have high quality resources and matching processes. We have engaged in a regional advertising campaign and continue to work with our corporate marketing team to ensure that Fostering remains a high profile issue through the county. Recently this has included the Fostering Team and a Foster Carer appearing on a local television programme to promote the benefits of fostering.

We continue to strive to recruit a variety of foster carers to meet the demands of our Looked After Children population, and have engaged in local recruitment drives alongside working with our partner authorities in North Wales on joint recruitment activities. It is important to recognise that the opportunity to remain within wider family is also important and as such we also currently support 21 Friends and Family Foster Carers, who are caring for 30 children. These foster carers have a unique role, being both Local Authority approved Foster Carers and family members and we recognise the additional support and training needs that this will bring. The Fostering Service have two Supervising Social workers that

predominantly concentrate on support to Friends and Family Foster Carers, this is in addition to offering access to all training opportunities that are offered to our general Foster Carers.

In our annual survey of children and young people receiving care and support from social services, 78% said that they were happy with the people that they live with and 75% said that they are happy with their family, friends and neighbours.

Our Families First and Flying Start early intervention and prevention programmes continue to provide a range of support to families experiencing issues around parenting, the management of children's behaviour or parental relationships. Our support includes the delivery of 1-2-1 support, parenting programmes including some issue specific programmes, for example; autism spectrum and parenting teenagers, as well as support in the home from Family Support Workers, who can provide bespoke support to help parents use evidence-based methods to set routines and boundaries to help manage children's behaviour and limit the strain on parent relationships. In the last year across both programmes 267 parents have attended our parenting programmes and 329 families have received support from our Family Support Service.

Our priorities for next year:

- We will develop and deliver an effective training programme for 'all staff' around providing stability for vulnerable families and reduce the risk of family breakdown
- We will improve the co-ordination of commissioning and evaluation of Parenting Programmes across programmes to avoiding duplication and ensuring qualitative services which are value for money

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

Community Support Services

A lot of work has been undertaken in this area over the last year. We started work on implementing a mixed tenure strategy which would offer a range of solutions to enable the Council to safely meet the diverse needs of the people who present as homeless. An 'in principle' agreement has now been reached between the Housing Solutions Team (HST) and Community Housing, whereby the HST will have access to 5 properties per year to accommodate people who present as homeless.

Reducing the level of homelessness within the county through effective implementation of the statutory "prevention" duty was a key priority. During 2015-2016 there were a total of 147 outcomes in the prevention duty, compared to 287 in 2016-2017 which shows there has been a 95% increase in the number of prevention duty outcomes.

This was the second year that the legislation introduced by the Housing Act (Wales) 2014 has been implemented and we can see the effectiveness of the prevention duty by doing a comparison of the first 2 years that we have data. Below shows the percentage of outcomes for the prevention duty that were successful and unsuccessful.

	Successful Prevention	Unsuccessful Prevention	Other outcomes
2015-2016	55% (81 people)	19% (28 people)	26% (38 people)
2016-2017	54% (155 people)	9% (27 people)	37% (105 people)

Other outcomes recorded to make up the 100% are; application withdrawn, application withdrawn due to loss of contact, non-cooperation by the service user, assistance refused and mistake of fact.

With unsuccessful prevention duty outcomes this means that the applicant becomes homeless and moves into the homeless relief duty. In 2015-2016 there were 28 unsuccessful prevention duties compared to 27 in 2016-2017. Although this is only a reduction of one case there is in fact just under 10% reduction in unsuccessful cases in 2016-2017.

Improvements were required in the management of existing interim accommodation provision to facilitate quicker “move on” into permanent housing reducing the length of time spent in emergency accommodation. A new management structure has been implemented within the homelessness prevention team and a new manager appointed to manage the temporary and emergency accommodation provision. We have also appointed a new temporary accommodation officer.

Working with key partners, a Homelessness Review has been completed and is out for consultation. Once the consultation closes, the draft homelessness strategy will be developed and implemented along with a comprehensive action plan. A protocol for effective joint working between Housing Solutions and Planning and Public Protection has been established and is working well. In addition we have developed a more joined up approach with Supporting People to consolidate and make best use of our resources for addressing homelessness. As a result the Supporting People and Housing Solutions Team have been merged and collocated, with one management structure for the two teams. Moving forward this will be called the Homelessness Prevention Team.

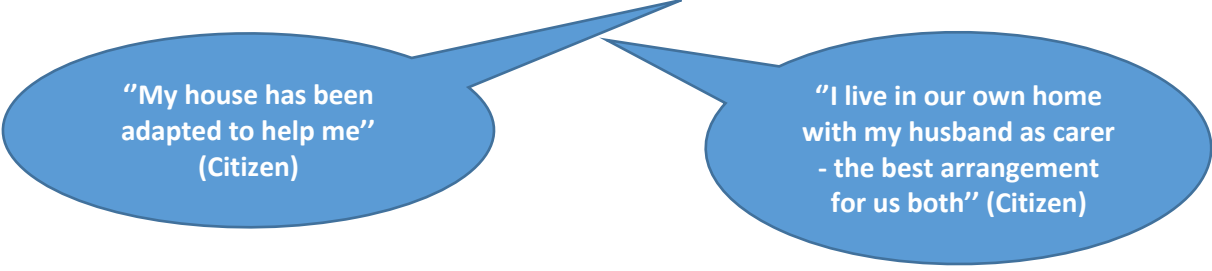
Community Support Services are part of a regional project, OPUS, to increase the employability of Economically Inactive and Long Term Unemployed people aged 25 years and over, who have complex barriers to employment. The specific outcomes of the project;

- Enter employment including self-employment upon leaving the project
- Engage in job search upon leaving the project
- Gain a qualification or work relevant certification upon leaving the project
- Increase employability through completing work experience placement or volunteering

During 2016, we merged the Supported Independent Living Service with the Reablement Service and Health and Social Care Support Workers which means easier access for people to a continuum of support from health care to personal care and ultimately to opportunities for learning, developing and participating in society.

During 2016-2017, we trialled changing the pathway for access to adaptations to people's homes for 4 months, by moving the responsibility for assessment for adaptations to a preventative service, coordinated within our SPOA by an experience occupational therapist and moving two Social Care Practitioners from Localities to focus on this work. This was in line with recommendations attached to the Enable Grant. Amongst the aims of the enhanced system were the simplification and standardisation of approval mechanisms and the process for delivering adaptations as quickly as possible and to significantly raise awareness amongst public, professionals and practitioners of the help available and how to access it. Waiting lists were reduced by 38 and in total 71 citizens were assessed in this way. The resulting outcomes were positive with most citizens having their goals or outcomes met with simple preventative measures.

In terms of people reporting that they live in a home that best supports their wellbeing, 96% of the responses received during 2016-2017 stated that they felt their home best supported their wellbeing. Although this has seen a slight decline from the previous year, many of the responses highlighted that the current living situation wasn't suitable due to mobility issues. However, options were being explored with citizens to ensure their wellbeing was being maintained. Comment below relate to the suitable housing:



"My house has been adapted to help me"
(Citizen)

"I live in our own home with my husband as carer - the best arrangement for us both" (Citizen)

We know that it is essential for people to be able to discuss and receive care and support in their language of choice. We also know that this becomes even more important for people suffering from dementia-related conditions, because many people then revert back to their mother-tongue and struggle to communicate at all unless they are able to do so using their language of choice. One of the questions we include in our 'Have your say' questionnaires which we send to citizens is whether they were 'able to communicate in their preferred language'. Of the people who responded to this question (421), 99% stated that they were able to communicate in the language of their choice.

Our priorities for next year:

- With a particular emphasis of having the importance of Age-Friendly Communities and Dementia friendly communities being recognised at all levels throughout Denbighshire,

we will work with partners to further develop and adopt a national recognition process for 'Dementia Friendly' community and commercial businesses and organisations.

- We will also aim to ensure that the experiences of older people in Denbighshire are optimised through continued learning and employment for example maximising the opportunities for participation in volunteering, helping to increase the number of older people continuing their learning and skill development before and after retirement and identifying and developing successful community models for older people's participation
- To reduce levels of loneliness and isolation and their negative impact on health and wellbeing as experienced by older people, we will support raising loneliness and isolation as a public health issue and we will aim to ensure that health and social care information and advice services address the impact of loneliness and isolation on older people's wellbeing. We will aim to empower older people to be aware of the risks of loneliness and isolation to their wellbeing and arrange a Learning Exchange on Loneliness between older people, front line staff and other professionals to identify the key causes of loneliness and isolation amongst older people
- We will finalise our Homelessness Strategy and commence work on the action plan whilst developing the newly created Homelessness Prevention Team into a holistic preventative service. We aim to reducing the length of time people spend in emergency accommodation and facilitate quicker "move on" into permanent housing. Thereby, implementing a mixed tenure strategy which offers a range of solutions that will safely meet the diverse needs of people who present as homeless.

Education & Children's Services

Our survey of children and young people receiving care and support from social services in September asked for feedback on their feelings about their home life and belonging. 75% of children and young people said that they were living in a home where they are happy and 72% said that they feel they belong in the area where they live.

We commission Barnardos Cymru to deliver our Personal Advisor Service for care leavers. Personal Advisors work with the young people to prepare them for independence, offering practical advice and support, as a parent would, to make a smooth transition to adulthood.

At the end of March 2017 the service was supporting 73 care leavers. In the last year the focus of the service has been to improve their engagement and empowering them to participate more in creating their Pathway plans and in statutory reviews. The majority of the young people accessing the services have achieved improvements or maintained stability in a number of areas. The primary focus of the Personal Advisors continues to be on supporting young people enter and sustain education, training or employment and ensuring that young people have safe and secure accommodation.

We recognise the importance of supporting families to build and create financial resilience and self-reliance. Interventions which support these principles are more likely to lead to improved longer-term outcomes for and children. Denbighshire's Families First programme works with vulnerable families often facing; financial difficulties, housing disruption, have

mental or physical health problems and experience social isolation. Under the Families First banner we have commissioned several consortia to work in partnership to deliver services to address these needs.

The Family Resilience Consortium has supported 540 individual in the last year providing services that focus on supporting the emotional health of families. The services forming the consortium provide support regarding relationships, bereavement, post-natal depression, self-confidence and emotional health and wellbeing. They also provide family group conferencing, mediation for families, that empowers families to make decisions and put plans in place themselves to safeguard and protect children.

In addition to this 784 individuals have received support from our Income Maximisation Consortium as part of a co-ordinated response to reducing financial pressures on the whole family. The Income Maximisation Consortium provides information and support to access state benefits and tax credits, advice on managing money and reducing debt and also information and support on housing and employment rights, financial inclusion and affordable energy schemes.

Young Person Homelessness Positive Pathway Model

Welsh Government commissioned a review of young people being placed in Bed and Breakfast accommodation and this review highlighted Denbighshire as one of the highest users of B&B accommodation for young people. Denbighshire invited the independent review author, Anna Whelan, to work with us with a view to introducing the Positive Pathway Model. We responded readily and positively with senior managers and elected members taking lead roles in ensuring the model was implemented in Denbighshire.

The project places a specific emphasis on support for young people at the point of homeless presentation to the Local Authority, with close joint working with the Housing Solutions Team, Children's Services, and the Youth Justice Service, and other relevant agencies (e.g.

Child & Adolescent Mental Health Service). Dedicated Support Workers from this project complete a comprehensive assessment with any young person between the age of 16 and 25 presenting to the Local Authority as homeless or at risk of becoming homeless. As part of the assessment, the Support Worker will identify the support needs of the young person, and the steps needed to be taken to prevent/address homelessness.

Young Person Homelessness Positive Pathway Model

- Aims to address housing need **BEFORE** homelessness
- Whole systems approach – no one agency/public sector body has the solution
- Outcome-based - what is the desired impact of all the investment?
- Linkage between housing and employment
- Concept of 'progression' for many young people
- Other agencies – Third Sector, public sector, housing associations play key roles locally
- Based on what works well – what do young people say?

Our pilot which commenced in 2016 has evidenced that it leads to significant improvements to strategic and collaborative approaches to youth homelessness and financial saving, dramatic reduction in use of B&B. It has been a catalyst for better collaborative working between housing authorities, children's social care and young people, and has impacted on prevention success rates. However we still face challenges such as housing options/supply, and young people with very complex/multiple needs

Outcomes between November 2016 & March 2017:

- 28 young people avoided temporary accommodation
- 7 young people returned home following mediation
- 11 young people placed in supported housing
- 10 young people provided with floating support

Our priorities for next year:

- Ensure looked after children have positive placement experiences within permanent, stable, secure and loving families that promote and encourage them to achieve their potential and have a smooth transition into adulthood
- We will re-commissioning Denbighshire's Families First and Flying Start programmes for 2018/19 onwards using available needs assessments, stakeholder engagement and supplier development to ensure we have a robust early intervention and prevention service that delivers effective outcomes for vulnerable children, young people and families

5. How We Do What We Do

a) Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

In preparing our workforce to meet the expectations of the SSWB (Wales) Act and to achieve an appropriate skill mix to ensure the Service is financially viable and sustainable, a review of social work roles and responsibilities was completed in July 2016. The opportunity was also taken to modernise social work career progression in line with the Care Council for Wales' - Continued Professional Education & Learning (CPEL) Career Framework. New job descriptions were drawn up and aligned with pay grades, removing bars that had been historically in place that restricted social workers reaching the top of scale. The framework is premised upon the principle of professional progression and social workers are able to develop their careers and engage with the CPEL appropriate programmes, thereby enhancing and extending their professional knowledge, skills and expertise. This review also gave us the opportunity to agree a desired establishment of posts at each social work level to ensure the Service can operate safely and effectively within financial constraints; whilst establishing clear roles and responsibilities in relation to social work grades.

Each Social Work practitioner was supported through an individual training plan to map out and undertake the necessary post qualifying qualifications relevant to their grade over a 3 – 5 years training plan. This incorporated the Consolidation of Social Work Practice, Experienced Practitioner, Senior Practitioner, Team Manager, Practice Teacher Award, Approved Mental Health Practitioner and Best Interest Assessor qualifications or programmes.

The Royal College of Occupational Therapist in conjunction with Welsh Government have proposed a post registration framework for Occupational Therapists in Social Services which has been designed to align with all the other existing frameworks, including the new NHS AHP framework (Modernising Allied Health Professional Careers in Wales) the CPEL framework for social workers and the forthcoming college of occupational therapists career framework.

Intended outcomes of the framework are to enable occupational therapists in social care services to access support and development opportunities that enable them to provide the highest possible quality of services for the people of Denbighshire (and Wales); meet their registration requirements and to continue to improve service delivery and strategic development of high quality professional services whilst also being able to follow a national social care career pathway in Denbighshire.

It will also create a career framework which supports multi-professional team working alongside other social care worker colleagues within social care employment and across employing agencies to facilitate integrated services.

All of the occupational therapist working for Denbighshire contributed to a Royal College of Occupational Therapist consultation regarding the implementation of the framework and returned a joint response wholeheartedly in favour of the proposals. By the end of 2017, progression of Occupational Therapists within Denbighshire County Council will be linked to the CPEL framework, which is premised upon the principle of professional progression. Occupational therapists will be able to develop their careers and engage with the appropriate programme, thereby enhancing and extending professional knowledge, skills and expertise. This means the competencies of the current occupational therapists will be assessed and a Training Needs Analysis undertaken in readiness for implementation.

In 2016-2017 Denbighshire successfully delivered it's element of the North Wales SSWB (Wales) Act Training Plan. 37 courses, totalling 828 places, were made available to staff, and a very positive 99% attendance rate was achieved. Whole sector regional training events co-ordinated by the Care Council for Wales were delivered for Independent and Third Sector providers including 'Training my Organisation' and 'SSWB Act Awareness Training' with attracted 110 whole sector provider attendances for Denbighshire.

In the latter half of 2017 the focus has been to deliver 'Expert Class' training, targeted at appropriate managers and practitioners to enable them to incorporate and embed the principles and requirements of the Act into their daily work. Expert classes were arranged for Service Managers, Team Managers, Practice Leaders & Senior Practitioners by way of 2 'Organisational Development' workshops - Changing Cultures and Measuring Performance and 'Child Care Law – The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and the Children Act 1989'.

Throughout 2016 and into early 2017 we invested in a management and leadership development programme for Team Managers / Practice Leaders and (Adult) Senior Practitioners which focused on enabling this group of staff to manage more proactively and effectively during turbulent times, develop a more emotionally intelligent approach to managing people and outcomes, and maximising their personal impact in a wide range of workplace situations..

All staff are encouraged and reminded of the need to comply with the requirements of 'Mwy na geiriau / More than just words' and the new corporate Welsh Language Standards. This includes up-dates about compliance with different aspects of the Council's work such as correspondence, telephone greetings, out of office messages, meetings etc. In addition there have been corporate drop in surgeries held for Community Support Services and Education & Children's Services staff, regular updates on the intranet and Welsh language grammar / spell checkers installed on the laptops of all Welsh speakers and learners within the Service. There is also a nominated individuals from both Community Support Services and Education & Children's' Services who are **Welsh Language Champions**.

In the coming months our priority will be to prepare the domiciliary care workforce in Denbighshire for the implementation of registration under the Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act in respect of mandatory registration and the possible regulation of qualifications.

b) Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

Financial Planning and Budget Monitoring

Monthly financial outturn reports are presented to the executive forecasting the year-end position. Exceptions or pressures are referenced in the reports, with mitigating actions. The annual budget is set following a lengthy process of reviewing of pressures and savings across all services and engaging with elected members and others as part of that process. In the medium term, the council has a rolling three-year Medium term Financial Plan which sets out the council's estimated funding position over the period and, working with services, builds in estimates of required savings or additional funding requirements. As part of this process, analysis of historic and forecast client and cost data is used.

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 officer also meets regularly with Heads of Service and the Management Executive Team.

c) Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

The council has very robust internal governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of social services. Reports are taken to various Scrutiny Committees throughout the year to enable Elected Member to scrutinise policy and performance in relation to social services, including reports to monitor the progress of any actions required in response to the Director's annual report or the CSSIW'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 the Care & Social Services 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 to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT); Scrutiny; and Cabinet, and various reports being presented to scrutiny periodically on service specific issues, such as the Protection of Vulnerable Adults.

North Wales Regional Partnership Board Annual Report March 2017

Denbighshire is fully committed to participating in and actively contributing to the work of the new Regional Partnership Board and is represented by the Lead Member for Social Care and the Corporate Director Communities. The Corporate Director communities is the

Regional Lead for the Integrated Care Fund and chairs the newly formed Pooled Budget Group. The council's Chief Finance Officer is also a co-opted member supporting the Pooled Budget Group.

The Regional Partnership Board's priorities are to:

- 1 Move services towards a preventative model that promotes good health and well-being. Prevention is better than cure.
- 2 Deliver 'joined-up' services centred around people's needs, preferences and social assets.
- 3 Help people use their skills and confidence to live independently, backed-up by high-quality, community-based services and facilities.
- 4 Make sure people and communities are involved in shaping local services.
- 5 Recognise and understand the broad range of factors that influence health and well-being, including education, housing, welfare, homelessness, economic growth, regeneration, leisure and the environment.

Performance in the handling and investigation of complaints and representations.

A larger number of social services complaints were received during 2016-2017 compared to the previous year. A total of 62 valid social services complaints were dealt with in the year, compared with 37 during 2015-2016. The 62 complaints resulted in 54 Stage 1 investigations and 8 Stage 2 investigations.

- 90% of complaints were dealt with and responded to within timescale. This is a drop from 97% the previous year.
- There was a marked decrease in the number of complaints upheld or partly upheld this year, from 62% in 2015-2016, to 50% in 2016-2017.

Complaints that are resolved by the close of the next working day, to the satisfaction of the complainant should not be recorded as a complaint. Such complaints are instead recorded as concerns. 13 out of 75 valid complaints were dealt with in this manner, which reduce the number of complaints needing to be managed according to the formal process by 17%.

Many of the complaints received this year were regarding involvement, possibly due to our continuing changing practice. Practitioners are now fully adopting practice as per the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, however complaints received would suggest that our citizens are still getting used to how services are now being delivered in partnership.

Here are some examples of Service Improvements/Lessons Learned following complaints:

- Improvements have been made within our Reablement service. Keyworkers are now allocated to cover individual citizens. The keyworkers are to work on opposite shifts

to each other (dependent on how many calls per day), and this has allowed us to limit the number of different staff visiting a citizen and to ensure consistency.

- A new Community Support Services case recording procedure is now in place. Complaints around case recording greatly helped shape and improve our policy in this area.
- There has been a new protocol produced for the paediatric equipment board following a complaint regarding delays in ordering specialist equipment.
- A full suite of informative literature has been produced to provide advice and guidance to parents, carers and young people about Children's Services. This has been achieved in response to feedback from parents about not fully understanding the services and the processes involved.

The Welsh language skills of the workforce and Denbighshire's Welsh language Community Profile

The Council has already responding positively to the Welsh Language Standards and has already implemented many of the agreed actions. It has also responded positively to the Mwy na geiriau / More than just words framework, specifically the need for the 'Active Offer'. Making an 'Active Offer' means not making assumptions that all Welsh speakers speak English anyway. It's also about creating a change in culture that takes the responsibility off the individual to have to ask for a service through the medium of Welsh.

The Welsh Language Standards have been created by the Welsh Government to ensure that the Welsh Language is treated no less favourably than the English language. The set of standards have been created to ensure that people across Wales can access services provided by the public sector in the language of their choice. The Standards relate to a wide range of issues, including correspondence, advertising, publicity, meetings, telephone greetings, creation of policies and recruitment. It also looks at the linguistic skills level of the workforce

End of Year Performance Data Summary

As a result of the implementation of the Social Services and Well Being Act (2014), we have been required to collate a new performance dataset for the Welsh Government for the 2016/17 year. Given the scale of the changes required in terms of recording and reporting tools, we were unable to report on all the revised indicators at the end of the year, which is consistent with most other Local Authorities in Wales.

6. Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

a) SPOA Case Studies – The difference we are making – (Section 4a)

b) Support Budgets Case Study (Section 4)

- c) Occupational Therapy Case Study (Section 4)
- d) Community Navigator Case Study (Section 4b or 4d)
- e) Denbighshire Young Homelessness Positive Pathway - Presentation (Section 4f)
- f) Performance in the handling and investigation of complaints and representations - Annual Report 2016 /2017 (Section5)
- g) Denbighshire Welsh Language Community Profile (Section 5)
- h) End of Year Performance Data (Section 5)

7. Glossary

Community Equipment Service Integration

The Community Equipment Service Integration incorporates certain Health and Social Care Services secured for people through the Health Board's NHS Health Care Functions and the Council's Health Related Social Care Functions. It is provided and arranged for by the Council. The service integration is achieved by having a pooled budget arrangement as defined under the Health Flexibilities Act (Section 33).

Commissioning Strategy

A commissioning strategy is a long-term plan which outlines the services and the range of support that currently exists, considers current and future need, and reaches conclusions about how those needs can be met effectively. It gives direction for the future.

Extra Care Housing

Extra Care Housing is a specialist type of housing designed primarily with older people in mind. People who live in Extra Care Housing have their own self-contained homes but with access to care and support available on site. It allows people to live independently while getting the care and support they need. Denbighshire County Council regards Extra Care Housing as an enabling alternative to residential care.

Safeguarding

Everybody has the right to be safe, no matter who they are or what their circumstances are. Safeguarding is about protecting children, young people and vulnerable adults from abuse or neglect. We are all responsible for the safety of the most vulnerable members of our society.

Single Point of Access

Denbighshire's first point of contact for information, advice and assistance about services that support citizens to maintain independence and promote well-being, and when access to health and Social care services is needed.

Supporting People

Supporting People is a Welsh Government programme which provides housing related support services to vulnerable people over the age of 16. It enables them to live independently in the community and avoid the risk of becoming homeless. Housing related support is provided to help vulnerable people develop or maintain the skills and confidence necessary to live as independently as possible.

Talking Points

The main purpose of a Talking Point is to enable individuals who either have difficulties themselves or who are caring for /concerned about somebody else to have an opportunity to have a person centred conversation about what matters to them to improve their health and well-being with someone face to face.

Talking Points are a joint venture with health and 3rd Sector colleagues, with the focus on supporting people to manage their wellbeing; remain independent; and prevent or delay their need for care and support.

Test of Change

Small-scale tests of change help determine whether an idea could result in sustainable improvement. Changes should be tested under multiple conditions and with a variety of staff before being implemented. Similar to a pilot study.