

**1. Background.**

A review of DCC Work Opportunities and day activity services has been undertaken. The review focussed primarily on what is provided “in-house” and how well the services are meeting the needs of the people, in line with current legislation, and regional and local approaches. DCC provide these services to approximately 215 people with complex disabilities (mostly adults with learning disabilities). The review considered changes in expectation and demand, and the challenges faced by services. The review also includes a detailed analysis and comparison to external provision within the county.

**2. The Challenges.**

DCC operate six of these services and most were established many years ago with few changes since. DCC purchase similar services from six external providers within Denbighshire.

These services are not currently regulated by CIW.

The social enterprise service provided by Cooptions and Crest were tendered in 2007. The contracts held with them have now expired. The other externally provided services have not been tendered.

Cynnig provided relief staff in the Denbighshire services. This was also tendered in 2007. The contract with them has expired.

Cynnig also provide most of the 1:1 support at a higher rate. This service has not been tendered.

**3. The Recommendations/Opportunities.**

That we consider restructuring and externalising the DCC provided services in the following ways:

**Meifod** – To be operated as a social enterprise which will enable them to grow and develop as a business in its own right.

**Popty** – Working in conjunction with DCC Leisure Services, develop Popty into a work experience placement service. To explore the viability of retaining the sandwich provision service within Leisure Services.

**Job Finding** – Transfer to DCC “Working Denbighshire” service. This would be an ideal place for this service to sit, capitalising on the connections and experience of a dedicated employment support service. It will mean that they would have the opportunity to exploit the corporate employment resources and expertise.

**Y Bont & Golden Group** – Services to be joined and provided from County Hall.

**Garden Control** – To be operated as a social enterprise which will enable them to grow and develop as a business in its own right.

That we identify providers who can deliver these services externally to maximise quality and cost effectiveness of services.

That we review the use of relief staff currently provided and the 1:1 support provided by Cynnig and consider carrying out a competitive tender process for this support moving forwards.

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**Key:**

DCC - Denbighshire County Council  
CSS - Community Support Services  
WODAS - Work Opportunity and Day Activity services,  
In-house services - services run and managed by Denbighshire County Council  
SSWB Act - Social Services and Well-being Act

## 1. Background (why do we provide and arrange work opportunities and day activities?)

1.1 **The national picture:** Nationally, the Welsh Government sets out the legal duties and makes recommendations for Local Authorities. In relation to support for adults with learning disabilities, the relevant legal duties and recommendations include:

- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: The Act aims to improve the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support. The Act has changed the way people's needs are assessed and the way services are delivered – people have more of a say in the care and support they receive, and the law also promotes a range of help available within the community to reduce the need for formal, planned support.
- The Learning Disability Improving Lives Programme: The Welsh Government Improving Lives programme has developed recommendations in the areas of early years, housing, social care, health and well-being and education, employment and skills for people with learning disabilities.
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015: The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 requires us to think about the long-term impact of our decisions, work better with people, communities and each other and to prevent persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
- Equality and human rights: The Equality Act 2010 introduced a public sector equality duty which requires all public bodies including the council to tackle discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and promote good relations. The Human Rights Act 1998 sets out the basic rights we all have because we are human. They help protect people by giving public services, including health and social care services, a legal duty to treat people with fairness, equality, dignity, respect and autonomy
- The Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018: The Act will introduce a series of changes focused on the additional learning needs of children and young adults (up to the age of 25 years) across Wales.
- Healthier Wales: A long term plan for health and social care. This provides a blueprint to build and strengthen services for people with a learning disability and their families and carers, ensuring the seamless delivery of services focused around the needs of the individual and encouraging good practice to be shared consistently across Wales.

These all influence and shape the way in which we provide or arrange support and services for adults with learning disabilities both now and in the future.

1.2 **The regional picture:** The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 includes a legal duty for Regional Partnership Boards to prioritise the integration of services in relation to people with learning disabilities. Regionally, the North Wales Social Care & Well-being Improvement Collaborative have co-produced a North Wales Learning Disability Strategy, which sets out a vision for North Wales with a focus on how health and social care services can work better together. This includes looking at support to enable people to have something meaningful to do, to maintain and develop friendships and relationships, to be safe and healthy and to have the right support. The North Wales Transformation Project will help to drive forward this vision.

1.3 **The local picture:** Locally, Denbighshire CSS has responded to the national legislation and recommendations by developing an assets based approach to assessing and supporting people with learning disabilities. We are now much more focused on finding out about what matters to people, what people can do, rather than what they can't, and on support that will have an impact

and help them to achieve positive outcomes. It is important that WODAS reflect this approach, and that the services we provide support people to develop, to learn new skills and to progress, and to be valued integral citizens in their local communities.

**1.4 Purpose of the review:** This review focus primarily on what is being provided 'in-house' and how well the services are meeting the needs of the people being supported, in line with current legislation and regional and local approaches. It will also consider changes in expectations and demand, and the challenges faced by services. Where appropriate, it will also make recommendations for change. It will include an analysis of, reference to, and comparison with external provision.

## **2. Summary of current provision (what are we providing?)**

**2.1 overview:** There are circa 450 adults with learning disabilities currently supported by Denbighshire CSS. Not all of these individuals will need (or want) formal services to support them during the day – less than half of the individuals supported by Denbighshire CSS receive a formal work opportunity or day service. The establishment of an assets based approach (and the implementation of the 'resource wheel', the 'what matters' conversations and 'peer forums') across Denbighshire has resulted in an increasing proportion of people with learning disabilities accessing community based activities that are not provided or funded by Denbighshire Community Support Services – see 4.1 below.

Within Denbighshire, there is a mix of both in-house and contracted out work opportunities and day activity services (WODAS), providing day time support and activities for approximately 215 people with complex disabilities (mostly adults with learning disabilities). Most of these services are long established and were set up circa 20 years ago with the aim of providing work based experiences for small to medium sized groups of individuals – to enable them to learn new skills, and to develop friendships.

**2.2 Contracted out services:** The contracted out services are mainly located in the north of the county. The largest independent provider is Cooptions. They support 73 people in a number of business and leisure based settings. These include

- The harbour hub café (Rhyl)
- The bike hub (Rhyl)
- Derwen Cornel farm (Rhuallt)
- Resources re-cycling (Rhyl)
- Mosaic personalised gifts (Prestatyn)

Cooptions also provide leisure activities from a base in Rhyl – these are mainly aimed at individuals who might struggle in a work based setting. In addition, they offer a supported employment service and more recently have established a registered domiciliary care agency.

Cooptions is a collection of social enterprises. The Social Services and Well-being Wales Act places a duty on Local Authorities to promote how social enterprises, co-operative organisations, co-operative arrangements and third sector organisations provide care, support and preventative services in their area. Running independent social enterprises that sell goods and services to the public not only provides work based experiences for people but also reduces the net cost of providing support. As a collection of social enterprises, Cooptions are able to apply for external funding. Over the years their enterprises have changed and adapted – to reflect changing consumer demands. They are also founded on social aims and have a clear mission around creating businesses and locating employment and training opportunities that include people with learning disabilities. As such, they are seen as a valuable addition to the local provider market.

Other independent providers include:

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- Glyndwr Centre (Highbury) in Prestatyn supporting 38 people with community based activities
- Crest (Social Enterprise) in Conwy county who support 3 individuals in work based settings (social enterprise)
- Woodland Skills (Social Enterprise) in Bodfari providing wood based activities to 6-8 people (social enterprise)
- Cynnig in Denbigh who support individuals mainly in DCC work and day opportunity settings
- Clock-tower in Flintshire who support 2 individuals with community based activities
- Hi-Jinx Theatre (Prestatyn) who provide performance training to actors with learning disabilities from across North Wales

Having a number of external providers means that there is a good range of activities for people across the county and also means that the Local Authority is not completely reliant on just one provider. Each of these has different contractual arrangements however, some of which have not been reviewed since the introduction of the SSWB Act and the development of new approaches. The findings from this review will help to inform next steps with external provision.

It is important to note that some of these external providers are social enterprises, with a proportion of their income generated by running enterprises. This helps to keep the net cost of their services relatively low.

*2.3 In-house services:* Denbighshire CSS also provides 'in-house' services – these are services which are largely run and managed by DCC staff. In the mid and south of the county there are 3 in-house settings

- Meifod (supporting 31 people with woodwork based activities)
- Popty (supporting 12 people with catering activities)
- Y Bont / Taskforce (previously a printing and photocopying service, but now more focused on general skill development, supporting 24 people)
- 

Other DCC managed services include

- Garden Control (a gardening service in the north of the county, which provides work opportunities for 8 people).
- The county wide 'Job-finding' service (which supports 48 people across Denbighshire to find and sustain work experience).
- The Golden Group (providing gentle leisure based activities for up to 11 people)

Although all are managed by DCC, support staff in Garden Control and Golden Group are provided via an agency, Cynnig. In the other settings there is a mix of DCC and Cynnig staff.

Notes:

- Most individuals attend different settings on different days so there is overlap in the numbers detailed above - the total number of in-house 'service users' is actually around 100.
- The number of individuals accessing each of these services can vary from week to week.
- Referrals tend to come from Denbighshire Complex Disability Team (CDT). Those individuals who have a Support Budget have often been signposted to the in-house services via the CDT

*2.4 Costs:* The estimated cost of providing or procuring services varies from setting to setting. External provision is generally procured at an all-inclusive hourly or daily rate so costs (ie. The unit cost in terms of hourly rates per person) are easy to see. The all-inclusive unit cost of running and managing a service 'in-house' is more difficult to ascertain.

A detailed analysis of the annual net budget for each in-house setting has been carried out and compared with the total number of hours of support provided per annum so as to estimate the 'hourly rate' per person.

The table below shows the estimated hourly rate for each setting, along with a comparison to external services.

**It is important to note that this is commercially sensitive information and is not to be shared**

Unit costs: comparison

Setting - 19/20 Rates	Hourly Rate (Gross Expenditure)	Hourly Income Rate	Hourly Rate (net of income)
Co-options (social enterprises)			
Co-options (@yourleisure)			
Highbury / glyndwr			
Crest			
Clock tower			
Hi-jinx			
Woodland skills			
Meifod *			
Popty'r garn *			
Job finding *			
Y bont *			
Garden control *			
Golden Group			

**Commercially Sensitive - Redacted**

Notes:

\* The unit costs listed for the DCC managed services are *estimated* unit costs, based on the level of spend within each service, and the estimated annual outputs (support sessions per citizen). The costs vary between each setting. There are a number of reasons for this. These include: -

- The level (ratio) of staffing
- The net income from the goods/services that are produced and sold
- The accommodation costs

The variation in unit costs between each of the DCC is explored in more detail in section 3, below.

As well as the costs above, there are additional charges for 1 to 1 support in our in-house settings, these hours are provided by Cynnig.

Setting	1:1 hours per week	Cost per per week £	Cost per per annum £
Meifod			
Popty			
Job Finding			
Y Bont			
Garden Control			

**Commercially Sensitive - Redacted**

Golden Group			
<b>Total</b>			

Individuals attending Garden Control tend to make their own way there. They do not have any 1:1 support, and because the staff member is employed by Cynnig, there are no back office costs

It is important to note that there is currently no 'at cost' fee / charge for individuals attending each of the in-house services (whether via direct referral from the CDT, via placements funded by neighbouring Authorities or procured via a Support Budget) – fees are charged at a flat rate across all settings. This means that in some instances it is costing more to provide the service than is being recouped. It also means that there is not a robust transactional relationship between referrer and provider.

*2.5 Examples of provision in other areas:* Across Wales and the UK there are examples of other work opportunity and day activity services – some are provided in-house and some are external, including social enterprise. There are also micro-businesses and community led activities.

Examples include:

- Social Enterprises such as Antur waenfawr, Seren, and Cooptions, who all provide work based activities in business settings, with a proportion of their income coming from business incomes and a proportion from Council contracts (for the work activity services they provide)
- Spin offs (see \* below), such as Double Click (a Flintshire Community Interest Company) and Dale Farm (which is run as a partnership with Wirral Council and the Dale Farm Trust)
- In-house services that have been transferred to external provision, for example HFT, a registered Charity, entered into a partnership with Flintshire in 2017, to deliver and develop what had been their in-house Day and Work opportunities for adults with a learning disability).

\* There are examples of services that have previously been Council run being developed as Social Enterprises, which ultimately stand-alone from the Council as independent enterprises with stated social aims – these are often called 'spin offs'. In 2016/7 Denbighshire CSS and Social Firms Wales explored the feasibility of developing one or more social enterprises from the existing in-house services.

Denbighshire has previously looked at examples of good practice and will continue to learn from other areas. It is difficult to define what makes an example good – but the ones we've seen all tend to include the following features:

- A range of meaningful activities - usually linked to a business or training facility
- A focus on learning and on skill development
- A supportive environment – where staff know and understand the people who access support
- An ability to adapt to changing demands – on the service and/or on the business
- Strong leadership – someone who can drive forward change where necessary
- Suitable, accessible accommodation – that can meet people's needs in the right location
- Close links to the local community – so that people are not isolated
- A good relationship between the commissioners (the people 'buying' the service), the citizens (the people accessing the services), their families, and the Provider (the organisation providing the service) – communication is key

Crucially, the North Wales Learning Disabilities Transformation Programme includes a work-stream around community and culture change, which encompasses access to work and day activities. Denbighshire CSS intends to work with the Program team over the coming 18 months to identify areas for development and improvement, linked to the findings from this review.

### 3. Detailed analysis

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Below is an overview and a brief analysis of each of the in-house settings. It is important to note that the number of people attending each setting can vary from day to day and month to month. Data has been captured and analysed at different points during 2018/19, so there will be some variations.

**3.1 MEIFOD:** Meifod is a garden furniture business located on the industrial park in Denbigh, which provides experience in manufacturing and assembly work, mainly to adults with learning disabilities, (although they also support people with acquired brain injury and / or autism). Meifod makes and sells garden furniture and wood products to the public and to businesses across the UK.

Data from 2018/19 for this service shows:

- Meifod supports 28 - 31 individuals (records vary)
- There is a mixed range of attendees in terms of age, ability and behavioural issues
- Some individuals need minimal support. Some have 2:1 support.
- There is an average of 69 hours pw of additional 1:1 support being provided in Meifod
- more than a third are aged 50+
- more than a third live with family
- On each day the number of people attending the service varies from 7 to 12
- Of the 28 individuals supported, the majority come from the mid (■■■■) and south (■■■■) of the county. There are also ■■■■ individuals who come from neighbouring counties.
- Meifod has a wide customer base for its' wood products from across the UK, and is often under pressure to fulfil orders
- Sales generated a gross income of circa £■■■■ in 2018/19
- Meifod made a net income from the goods that are produced and sold of circa £■■■■ in 2018/19. This amount does not include the cost of rent, which was circa £■■■■ in 2018/19. It doesn't include staffing.

*What does this tell us?*

- Meifod is supporting fewer people and there are fewer attendances than in previous years, but their needs are more complex
- Meifod has an aging user group
- Meifod is having to meet a wide range of needs in a relatively fast paced, industrial environment - more than half of the individuals who attend have an additional needs, including physical disabilities and challenging behaviours
- Meifod has to balance the needs of a busy business with a wide range of service user needs – there is a risk that this can sometimes compromise the user experience
- Meifod makes a relatively healthy net income (compared to the other in-house settings)

The net unit cost for this service is £■■■■ per person, per hour which is higher than the average hourly rate of the in-house providers, it should be noted that:

- The cost of the accommodation – the rent is high for Meifod, because it is an industrial unit
- The number of people being supported is limited because of the setting and the nature of the business

**3.2 POPTY'R GARN:** Popty is a catering business which provides food preparation and cooking experiences for people with learning disabilities. Food is prepared in a small commercial kitchen located in Canol y Dre, Ruthin, and then sold to the public and local businesses. Popty prepares and sells buffets for events, lunch time sandwiches and snacks, and celebration cakes, mince pies etc. Service users help to prepare and cook the food and are also involved in selling and distributing the produce.

Data from 2018/19 for this service shows:



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- Popty supports 12 people in total.
- There are usually 3 - 4 individuals supported per session. The limited size of the kitchen accommodation and the nature of the work makes it difficult to support more people.
- Of the [REDACTED] individuals supported, [REDACTED] are aged under 25, [REDACTED] are aged 25 – 49 years old, and [REDACTED] are aged 50 years or more.
- Half of the individuals [REDACTED] have additional mental, physical or emotional needs (eg ASD, epilepsy, diabetes, OCD)
- Of the [REDACTED] individuals supported, [REDACTED] lives in the north of the county, [REDACTED] live mid county (Denbigh), [REDACTED] live in the south of the county, and [REDACTED] from Conwy
- Of the [REDACTED] Denbighshire based individuals, [REDACTED] live alone, [REDACTED] live with their family, [REDACTED] lives in community living and [REDACTED] is living in college
- Sales income from Popty has reduced year on year for the past 5 years – in 2018/19 income from sales was circa £ [REDACTED]. In 2013/14 it was £ [REDACTED]
- Popty only generated a small income of less than £ [REDACTED] from producing and selling the goods (this does not include the cost of accommodation and staffing)

### *What does this tell us?*

- The accommodation and the nature of the business restricts provision - only up to 4 individuals can attend Popty. This has an impact on the staff to service user ratios – which means that there is a relatively high staffing ratio, because of the accommodation and the 'business' rather than the needs of the people accessing the service.
- Having to prepare and sell fresh food to deadlines puts pressure on staff and service users, which risks compromising their learning experience
- Most individuals who attend Popty are aged 25 – 49
- Most individuals come from mid/south of county (not clear why one is travelling from Prestatyn)
- The biggest proportion of individuals (almost half) are living alone – does this indicate that they are more independent?
- As a 'business' Popty is struggling – sales have reduced by circa 50% in 5 years, and the net income is minimal (circa £ [REDACTED]pw).

The average net unit cost for this service £ [REDACTED] per person, per hour which is higher than the average unit cost of the in-house services. Reasons for this include:

- The very minimal business income
- The staff: service user ratio is low because the kitchen limits the number of individuals who can attend

**3.3 Y BONT:** Previously known as Taskforce, Y Bont is now primarily a leisure based service for individuals who might struggle in a work based setting. Although individuals do some work (eg photocopying and packing boxes for Workplace Work-safe), there is less pressure to fulfil orders and meet urgent deadlines than there was when this was a printing and collating service. This has meant that Y Bont is now able to provide a wider range of activities and experiences each afternoon, including quizzes, board games, memory and sensory games, workshops, crafts, and visits from other organisations.

Data from 2018/19 for this service shows:

- Y Bont supports 23 - 24 people in total (records vary).
- There are usually 6 – 11 individuals supported per session, (including up to [REDACTED] individuals with 1:1 support per session), via 1 – 3 general support staff (excluding 1:1).
- Of the [REDACTED] individuals supported, [REDACTED] are aged 25 – 49 years old, and [REDACTED] are aged 50 years +
- [REDACTED] ([REDACTED]) of the individuals have additional mental, physical or emotional needs (eg physical or sensory impairment, or challenging behaviours)

- There are no changing facilities which limits access to the service for those individuals who need fulling changing facilities
- Of the ■■■ individuals supported, ■■■ live in the south of the county (Ruthin and the surrounding area)
- Of the ■■■ individuals supported, ■■■ live in community living, ■■■ live alone and ■■■ live with their family, (of the ■■■ living with their family, the majority are living with older parents)
- Individuals tend to spend the morning shredding or printing and then the afternoon on other activities
- A number of individuals have been helping to pack boxes for a private enterprise (Workplace Work-safe)

*What does this tell us?*

- Most people attending Y Bont have additional needs and would struggle in a pressurised work based environment – so diversifying has been a positive move in terms of the user experience
- Despite the needs of the individuals, there are lower staffing ratios (eg compared to Popty) – this is because there are no business demands, and the setting can accommodate more people per session than Popty
- Y Bont provides regular daily respite to a number of older parents (see feedback from carers in section 5.2)
- Ruthin is a good location, given the home addresses of the service users
- Although there is a small loss from the shredding and printing, feedback indicates that citizens enjoy the activity and it gives them a sense of usefulness / purpose to their day.
- The work with Workplace Work-safe has shown that some of the people in Y Bont have the potential to do some meaningful work. Could / should these individuals be supported to find work placements?

The average net unit cost for this service is £■■■ per person, per hour and is around the average unit cost of all of the in-house services. Reasons for this include:

- There is no business income, but
- There is a relatively low level of staffing

**3.4 GARDEN CONTROL:** This small team provide a gardening service to householders, charities and businesses across Denbighshire. The team is based in the Botanical Gardens in Rhyl, having previously been located in Bodfari. The move from Bodfari has not had a negative impact on their customer base and being based in Rhyl means that all bar one of the individuals can travel to work independently. The team charge £13 per hour for labour – this is for a service from the whole team not per worker. The service is popular and is usually fully booked in terms of customers – they have to allow for down time during inclement weather. Garden Control have to find alternative activities when the weather is too cold or wet to work outdoors. Although regarded as a Denbighshire service, the team is largely autonomous. There is one member of Cynnig staff who works with the individuals and who organises the work schedule, drives them to and from jobs, and helps them to complete their tasks.

Data from 2018/19 shows us:

- There are 8 individuals supported via Garden Control – all are male
- There are between ■■■ individuals supported in each session. There is no 1:1
- They are all supported by 1 staff member, who also coordinates the business
- ■■■ of the ■■■ individuals are aged 50 years+
- Most live in the north of the county
- ■■■ live in community living, ■■■ with family and ■■■ alone
- Garden Control has a good customer base
- Activities are weather dependent
- The hourly rate they charge to customers has not increased for a number of years

### *What does this tell us?*

- The service is largely reliant on one individual staff member, who is employed by Cynnig. Cynnig does provide a replacement staff member for sickness and annual leave.
- This is very physical work, given that ■■■ of the team are over 50 years old, planning for old age will need to be considered in the future
- The work would not be suitable for many of the individuals now being referred to WODAS – this may mean that GC needs to consider diversifying in terms of the needs of the people being supported in the future
- Garden Control may be undercharging for its service – it appears to be below market rates
- Although largely autonomous, income making, and popular with citizens and customers, Garden Control needs to consider how best to future proof the service, in terms of its' aging service users and reliance on one staff member.

The average net unit cost for this service £■■■ per person, per hour and is significantly lower than the average unit cost of all of the in-house services. Reasons for this include:

- Garden Control is able to sell its services, with relatively few overheads – there are some costs associated with an office base and running a van
- The individuals who access Garden Control need less support than individuals accessing other WODAS.

NB. The hourly rate charged to the garden service customers has not increased for a number of years

**3.5 JOB-FINDING (JF):** Based in Ruthin but covering the whole of Denbighshire, the Job-finding service helps people to secure work placements throughout the county. Job-finding staff carry out an initial assessment on all people who are new to the In-house services, to identify which area of the service would be most appropriate, and to consider the potential for a work placement. JF staff arrange 'tasters', with a view to assessing and identifying where and how each individual should be supported.

NB The title of this service is misleading as Job-finding staff provide a triage service to the other in-house services and tend to support people to secure unpaid work experience via placements, rather than gainful employment.

Within the Job-finding service there are increasing concerns about finding and sustaining work placements, primarily due to challenges in relation to health and safety, and the requirement to pay the national minimum wage to people classed as workers. These factors have had an impact on the number and range of organisations who are willing to provide work based experiences and opportunities to adults with learning disabilities.

Staffing levels within the JF team have reduced in recent years, from 2.5 FTE to 1.5 FTE (from 2018). In addition, until 2014/15 there was an additional team of 3 Job-finders employed by Cynnig and paid for via European funding. The JF team still feel the impact of this in that some of the individuals who were supported to find work experience by those additional staff still need occasional input and support from the team.

Although people in the Job-finding service tend to be the more 'able' there is still a mix of needs and abilities. Some individuals require 1 to1 support, and this is funded as part of their individual care package.

Denbighshire has established a strategic, integrated approach to tackling poverty through employment, via 'Working Denbighshire' (WD). This includes a single point of triage and an employment framework. Although there are some informal links operationally between WD and JF, it is not clear where or how Job-finding fits with the integrated strategic approach and the single point of triage. The JF team are managed and located separate to WD, although both based in Ruthin. It has recently been announced

that the OPUS project, which is one element of WD is to be wound down, and that no new referrals will be accepted from May 2019. The impact of this on JF will need to be considered.

Data from 2018/19 shows us:

- There are 45 - 48 individuals supported via JF (records vary)
- They are all supported by 1.5 FTE Job-finders
- The Job-finders ongoing caseloads have increased significantly, but this is not due to any increases in referrals, but due to staff leaving and the residual caseload from a previous EU funded project
- New referrals to JF have slowed down in the past 12 months and the number of people supported by JF has reduced
- There are JF work placements across the county, in external and DCC based organisations
- Some people have 1:1 in their work placement and some don't need any ongoing support

*What does this tell us?*

- Feedback from Social Workers indicates that the reduction in referrals is due to the application of the resource wheel and the support that can be provided via Working Denbighshire and/or other non-statutory job-finding services
- Concerns around the national minimum wage may be a deterrent to organisations considering hosting a work placement.
- Externally funded projects can have an impact on JF – when these projects come to an end it can put pressure on JF caseloads
- Despite being a conduit between work placements, other in-house work opportunity and day services and referrers, JF is isolated from WD, and from its main source of referrals, the Complex Disabilities Team

The average net unit cost for this service is £[redacted] per person, per hour and is much lower than the average unit cost of all of the in-house services. Reasons for this include:

- The cost of any additional long term 1:1 support that an individual requires is funded separately via the complex disabilities team budget – so this is not included in the average unit cost quoted above, and is difficult to ascertain.
- The level of staffing required is lower than other services. Individuals tend to be provided with an assessment and time limited support from the JF team, focused on assessing their needs, securing a placement and providing initial support, which fades out, so the ongoing staff input is less than in other in-house provision

**3.6 GOLDEN GROUP:** The golden group was originally set up in 2011, as a gap in provision had been identified for older people no longer able to continue in their work opportunity setting. Initially this service was coordinated by a DCC employed Day Services Coordinator. After that post was deleted, Cynnig took on the responsibility for coordinating the activities and providing the support staff.

Data from 2018/19 shows us:

- There are currently 14 individuals being supported.
- Golden Group activities run on a Tuesday afternoon, Wednesday (all day) and Friday (afternoon) of each week – there are usually [redacted] individuals attending on a Tuesday ([redacted] of whom have 1:1), [redacted] on a Wednesday ([redacted] with 1:1) and [redacted] on a Friday.
- There are 2 Cynnig support staff (and additional 1:1 - if an individual needs additional 1:1 support, this is arranged separately).
- Despite being established as an older persons service, the age range of people who access GG (33 years to 81 years) has increased in recent years, with younger people being accepted to the service
- GG members are supported to engage in a range of activities.

NB A recent request has been submitted for one additional Cynnig staff member on a Wednesday.

*What does this tell us? What do we need to consider?*

- The GG staff to service user ratios vary significantly – we need to understand why, and whether there is scope to review who attends on each day
- Although initially set up to meet the needs of those approaching old age, there are now a number of younger people attending (in their 30's, 40's and 50's) – is this changing the nature of the group, given its original purpose?
- Those 'older' individuals who joined the group in 2011 have now aged further, and their health needs are increasing.
- There is no clear remit for the GG and this should be reviewed.
- Given that Y Bont is now more leisure based, and that GG has extended beyond adults aged 60 years or more, is there a need for a distinct group like GG, or could Y Bont and GG be more closely aligned? – their clientele and activities are not totally dissimilar.

Note

- This is primarily a day service - there is no income from producing or selling goods or services which can be offset against service running costs
- Staff costs are lower because they are agency staff rather than DCC staff
- There is a relatively high staff to citizen ratio – especially on a Tuesday and Friday

The average net unit cost for this service is £■■■■ per person, per hour and is the highest hourly rate of all of the in-house services.

## 4. Summary of demand, and trends in activity

### 4.1 Referral patterns:

- In response to the Social Services and Well-being Act, Denbighshire has developed an assets based approach to assessing the needs of citizens. This has meant that wherever feasible, adults with learning disabilities are encouraged and supported to access community based (mainstream) activities, rather than being provided with statutory services.
- Interviews with Social Workers have shown that by using the resource wheel there is much less of a reliance on statutory services – they are now more likely to signpost citizens to non-statutory community based activities and projects. This has had an impact across all providers in all service areas – internal and external
- Even where individuals are referred, they don't always end up having a service
- At the same time, demographic change has meant that young people with severe learning disabilities and complex health needs are now more likely to survive into adulthood.
- These factors have had a direct impact on the number of people being referred to WODAS, and on the needs of the individuals being referred – referral numbers have decreased, but the complexity of the needs of those people being referred have increased. For example, in 2018 there were 12 referrals to in-house services. Only 6 of the individuals who were referred went on to receive 'in-house' services – see table below.

### Referrals to WODAS during 2018

Date	Where - Days	Days	Information
10/09/2018	Woodlands -	2	
16/09/2018	Garden Control	3	
25/06/2018	Y Bont		
18/06/2018	Meifod	2	
08/05/2018	Job Finding	?	
	Woodlands	3	
08/05/2018	Meifod		
04/05/2018	Y Bont	?	

06/04/2018	Meifod	2	
09/04/2018	Job Finding	1	
12/03/2018	Meifod	1	
22/01/2018	Popty	1	
21/01/2018	Job Finding		

4.2 *Trends in activity*: the number of people supported by in-house services, and the number of sessions they attend has changed over time. The table below shows trends in activity from 2009.

Number of people accessing each service

setting	2018 (June)	2012	2009	Trend since 2009
Meifod	28	29	29	+1
Popty	12	14	7	-5
Y bont (TF) & Outreach	23	33	31	-8
Job-finding	45	44	29	-16
Garden control	8	Part of Aberwheeler	Part of Aberwheeler	+8
Aberwheeler	Closed **	35	32	-24
Golden group	14	11	n/a – not established	-14
Total *	130	166	128	+2

\* This includes duplicates as some attend a number of different settings

\*\* When Aberwheeler closed, alternative services were offered – in other DCC settings and in external settings

Number of attendances (sessions being provided x people attending each session)

setting	2018	2012	2009	trend
Meifod	93	112	118	-25
Popty	39	41	35	+4
Y bont (TF) & Outreach	85	116	123	-38
Job-finding	130	179	119	+11
Garden control	32	Part of Aberwheeler	Part of Aberwheeler	n/a
Aberwheeler	Closed **	92	111	n/a
Golden group	25	unknown	n/a – not established	n/a
Total *	404	540	506	-102

*Support Budgets*: As part of the personalisation agenda, people who are eligible for services are offered a support budget (direct payment) with a view to them choosing and arranging their own support. There are 4 individuals accessing WODAS who are managing their own support budget, and additional people who have a Local Authority Managed support budget.

4.3 *What does this tell us?*

Demand is changing:

- Across Denbighshire, more people are using support budgets, & this can result in them not using in-house services
- Less people are being referred to statutory services than in the past and there are fewer attendances than there were in previous years, because of the assets based approach,
- Those who are being referred tend to have more complex needs and/or high levels of need

Activity is changing

- There has been a small overall increase in the number of people being supported since 2009 – this is mainly due to a significant increase in the number of people supported by Job-finding (linked to the EU funded project)
- There has been a significant overall decrease in the number of attendances – circa 20%
- The number of people being supported by Popty and Job-finding has increased.

- Meifod and Y Bont are supporting fewer attendances – This may be because more people are supported via Golden Group?

## 5. Stakeholder views on the services

A review of a service needs to be much more than data and budgets... A fundamental aspect of this review has been the views and opinions of the people who use the services, their carers, the staff who work in the services and the staff who refer people to the services. Over 150 people have told us what they think about the services – including what they think is good, and what could be better. Their responses have been analysed and used to inform the conclusions and recommendations. A summary of the feedback has been included below, along with some conclusions. Full transcripts of the responses are included as appendices.

5.1 **Citizen / Service User views:** 60 interviews were carried out with people who use the service. A copy of their responses can be found in the appendices.

Conclusion: what do the responses tell us?

- The attendance payments are important to most people. Some would like to have paid work
- The staff who work in WODAS know and understand people well, and are well respected
- People feel that some of the buildings are not fit for purpose
- More than half of the people want to stay where they are
- Everybody feels that the services has helped them to do more for themselves
- Working with their peers is very important to more than half of the people
- More than a third don't like working with a large group and some struggle with noise and compatibility
- Overall, people are happy with the service, they like going there, and are reluctant to think about a time when they are too old to attend
- It is not clear from the answers to question 1 on page 2 whether there are enough community based activities for people to access on their days off

5.2 **Carer Views:** Questionnaires were sent out to 90 Carers of people who use the services. There were 50 responses. A copy of the responses has been included in the appendices.

Conclusion: what do the responses tell us?

- Most Carers are happy with the services and feel they are right for the person they care for
- Most Carers don't have concerns about transport and travel
- The services are important for Carer respite and for helping the person they care for to do more for themselves
- Progression is relative to the individual
- The main areas for concern and improvement are in relation to the buildings, the payments, communication, the range of activities and lack of a final product, behaviour management and having more days
- Many carers still refer to the settings as work and the payments as wages

5.3 **Provider (staff) views:** The views of the DCC staff who work in the services were gathered using a 'what's working, what's not working' (person centred) approach.

Full details of their responses can be found in the appendices document.

Conclusion: what do the responses tell us?

- Staff feel that there is a good level of camaraderie, pride and loyalty to the service

- Staff feel isolated from other teams and from senior managers
- Staff are concerned about the accommodation and about the future
- The working relationship between staff as providers and the referrers in the CDT is strained and there is a lack of effective communication between the two teams and poor understanding of mutual roles
- Some staff do not have confidence in the assets based approach and in the person centred reviews. There was some criticism of the 'what matters' conversations.

**5.4 Referrer views:** The views of the staff who assess the social care needs of adults with learning disabilities, and in some cases subsequently refer people to WODAS services, were gathered using a 'what's working, what's not working' (person centred) approach.

Full details of their responses can be found in the appendices document.

Conclusion: what do the responses tell us?

- CDT staff recognise that WODAS staff have a good relationship with citizens and their families, and that they know them well
- CDT staff are concerned about the approach, processes and structures, relationships, meeting needs and achieving outcomes, transport and communication
- Fundamentally, the 2 teams have very different approaches, with CDT staff seeing the WODAS approach as off pace at times, particularly in relation to recent legislation and local responses to that legislation, and WODAS staff raising concerns about the application of the assets based approach

#### **5.5 Commissioner views:**

The provision and management of in-house WODAS poses a number of concerns from a commissioning perspective. These include

- The lack of any contractual or transactional relationship setting out what is expected from the service in terms of outputs and outcomes, and the unit cost of the service
- The poor relationship between referrer and provider
- There is little in the way of recording and demonstrating individual achievement of outcomes and/or progression
- The impact of running some of the settings as 'businesses' on the user experience, and ultimately on the achievement/non-achievement of their personal objectives and outcomes

## **6. Conclusions and recommendations**

### **6.1 What are we pleased about?**

- The feedback from the citizen and carer questionnaires has been overwhelmingly positive
- Individuals like going to DCC WODAS – they value the friendships and the routine and they enjoy the tasks they are assigned
- Their families really value the respite and it enables them to continue caring, especially as many Carers are elderly parents – they feel confident that the individual is well supported and that WODAS is right for them
- As well as activities, individuals receive support with their emotions and with managing relationships – staff know and understand them, often having supported with them for many years
- Most people don't mind travelling independently to DCC WODAS – the move towards independent travel has been approached positively
- DCC WODAS have a good reputation with the public. The staff working in the services are well regarded, with citizens, families, Elected Members and customers
- Staff support a range of needs and behaviours – they are faced with challenges on a daily basis



- There have been examples of good JF work experience placements with a range of organisations (internal and external)
- When Aberwheeler closed, many of the service users were able to transfer to other WODAS services
- Attending a number of different settings during the week means that most individuals have a varied range of experiences and get to meet with their friends and peers
- Staff recognise and respond to compatibility /incompatibility between service users

## **6.2 What are we concerned about?**

- Demand is changing – more people are using non statutory support, and the individuals being referred to DCC WODAS have more complex needs. WODAS need to adapt more quickly to changing demand
- There is no clear transactional relationship between provider (In-house provider unit) and purchaser (CDT).
- The relationship between referrers (CDT) and providers needs to be more effective – there is a clear strain between the 2 teams & a lack of understanding of professional roles and approaches
- DCC WODAS is physically and perceived by some as culturally separated and isolated from other DCC settings – in terms of the location of building and current approaches
- The estimated unit costs vary significantly from setting to setting and between in-house and contracted out services, and this is not always related to the level of complexity of citizen need
- Unit costs vary from setting to setting but fees for individuals and organisations buying a service directly are based on a flat rate. The cost of providing DCC WODAS is sometimes less than the price charged (eg to other counties and SB recipients), which means that Denbighshire is not recouping its costs. The unit cost methodology used in this review should be applied each year for each setting and the fees charged to other LA's and to individuals purchasing a service using their Support Budget should be based on the actual cost of providing a service in the relevant setting.
- Trying to run as a business may have a negative impact on the SU experience, especially in Meifod and Popty. Should service users be put under pressure to increase productivity?
- Acknowledging and recording progression or achievement by individuals is limited and ad hoc
- There is no 'reward' for achievement (e.g. promotion to new, more complex tasks)
- People regard work /day opps as 'businesses' or 'services' – there is little reference to training
- The accommodation at CYD is not fit for purpose, and is a barrier to access.
- There is a lack of public information about DCC WODAS and no examples showing activities and achievement for people considering accessing the services
- DCC WODAS have remained largely the same (with a few exceptions) – in terms of their setting, their activities, the staff and the business activity – could/should they be more dynamic?
- People want wages and real jobs, but these appear to be the exception not the norm (external attitudes?)
- Some people still see DCC WODAS as work and their attendance payment as a wage
- Not everyone can access DCC WODAS – e.g. those who need changing facilities. Given the changes in demand, this means that the services might struggle to meet the needs of the very people who are more likely to need their support in the future
- Some WODAS staff appear to be isolated from (and critical of) current approaches and practices, including the 'what matters' conversations, person centred planning, and assets based approaches – seeing these as a potential threat to statutory services by way of reduced referrals
- Areas for concern raised by the CDT included communication, approach, processes and structures, transport, meeting needs and achieving outcomes – as the main source of referral to the service, these concerns need to be taken on board
- In some areas the service is totally reliant on one or two key members of staff, and/or one agency to provide the staff – this could leave the service vulnerable in the event of staff sickness, maternity leave or retirement. There needs to be more focus on succession and contingency planning.

- It is estimated that 1:1 support in WODAS is costing CSS circa £100,000 per annum.
- Agency support is mainly provided by one agency, Cynnig. The contract with Cynnig expired some time ago, therefore the current arrangements are based on the same terms and conditions of the original tender and contract.

### **6.3 How can we move forward?**

- Accommodation – needs to be accessible, warm and fit for purpose. Consider co-location of JF, with either their referrers (Complex Disabilities Team) or their counterparts (Working Denbighshire).
- Approach – need to focus on an assets based approach and progression, with reviews to focus on the next steps
- Activities – need to reduce business pressures and focus on activities that promote skill development and opportunities to learn and to contribute to local communities
- Adapt – to changing legislation, demands, demography and expectations
- Attitudes – need to work with Working Denbighshire & others on changing employer attitudes, and championing good practice amongst employers
- Relationships – need to improve the working relationship between the referrers and the providers – especially at referral and review stage
- Achievement – need to track, acknowledge and reward achievement and make sure it has an impact
- Costs – need to understand the variation in unit costs and need to have a clear and up to date understanding of unit costs for each setting. Having an agreed costing methodology means annual spend and outputs can be analysed to provide a unit cost each year for each setting
- Identity – need to have an agreed clear identity around learning and progression and move away from the ‘business’ model and the potential links with wages
- Purpose – each setting needs to have an agreed and clear purpose. This needs to be made clear to staff working there, individuals attending (or considering attending), staff referring, and to families
- Links – need closer links with teams, with the council and with community based services and projects, so that individuals are less isolated from their communities
- Referrals and reviews – the outcome focused referral and review pro-forma should be used so as to identify, agree and monitor the achievement of outcomes
- Range of activity - the type of activity required and the level of support needed varies considerably. Although there is evidence of a range of service options to meet the different needs, this is not always clear and explicit. Each setting needs to have a clear statement of purpose, setting out what can be provided and to whom

### **6.4 Options moving forward:**

#### **6.4.1 Context and assumptions:**

*Context:* The options outlined below are set within the following context:

- Within the context of an assets based approach, it is crucial that citizens are encouraged and supported to make best use of their personal, social and community resources wherever possible. This approach has undoubtedly had an impact on demand for statutory and paid support, including WODAS, with the number of referrals reducing each year.
- There will always be some adults with learning disabilities who need some sort of paid support during the daytime, particularly those with more complex needs.
- Having a wide range of WODAS provides meaningful activity, social interaction and learning experiences for those individuals, and also reduces the need for paid and unpaid 1:1 care and support at home. This means that citizens are more able to share the support (in most cases) which ultimately reduces the cost to CSS.

- This review has been carried out at a time when corporately, Denbighshire is considering alternative delivery models (ADMs), and externalisation for some of its existing services.
- The LD transformation program includes a focus on work opportunities within the communities and culture change work-stream. The program provides an opportunity to learn from other examples across the region and to receive support with the transformation of services going forward

*Assumptions:* The options proposed below are based on the following assumptions:

- The application of the resource wheel will mean that some citizens who would previously have been supported via WODAS are now encouraged to access non-statutory community based activities
- Demand for WODAS will change to reflect changes in demography, i.e. children with more complex needs are surviving into adulthood and adults with learning disabilities are living longer
- WODAS exist to provide meaningful activity, to teach new skills, to identify and secure opportunities for work and to provide respite for carers
- WODAS reduces demand for daytime support in community living. If WODAS cease to operate the citizens who live in community living and who attend WODAS would need to be re-assessed. The knock on effect could be an increased demand in the number of hours of support provided across community living and lead to a significant increase in costs for CSS.
- WODAS also provide respite for family carers. If WODAS cease, there is a risk that some family carers would be unable to sustain their caring role
- The gap between the cost of providing services in-house and commissioning services externally is narrowing due to increased costs for external providers, linked to above inflation rises in NMW and the introduction of auto enrolment.
- Many providers are hesitant about taking on Council run services, because of the TUPE and building liabilities they would be responsible for.

**6.4.2 Meifod:** The Meifod accommodation is in a poor state of repair and costly to maintain. DCC has a 10 year lease with the landlord, which runs to 2025. Potential to develop Meifod as a social enterprise was explored as an option in 2015 by Social Firms Wales. At that time the Council did not consider Meifod as ready for such a development. This work could be revisited, informed by the experiences of other recent social care spin-offs (including Flintshire).

**Due to the nature of both the physical and business environment in which they have to operate it is recommended that Meifod become a Social Enterprise. This will enable them to access alternative funding streams which will, in turn, enable them to expand the services offered.**

**6.4.3 Popty:** Popty has a high unit cost and is more expensive than similar external provision. There is little income from the catering enterprise, and running as a business appears to be having a negative impact on learning for service users there, and on the number of individuals who can access the service at any one time. The building is unsuitable. It is recommended that Popty ceases trading as a catering enterprise and moves from CYD. There are a number of potential options that need to be considered for Popty. These are summarised below:

- Move to another building (with a large domestic style kitchen rather than a catering kitchen) and develop Popty as a learning academy, with the aim of supporting people to develop independent living skills, including cooking, and healthy eating. This could be co-located with Y Bont and Golden Group so as to share staffing and to offer a range of activities on site. See pages 20 -21 of the appendix below (Popty staff feedback and suggestions)
- Move towards a peripatetic training model, whereby there is no Popty accommodation, but citizens have time limited training placements or internships, possibly within DCC settings,

and linked to the ADM proposal for DCC Leisure Services, (this could be included in any service level agreements or other contractual arrangements with the ADMs). It may be possible that the sandwich delivery element of Popty could continue under any such arrangement. This option could also be linked to a Project Search model, which is a model for supported internships for people with a learning disability, (as in Flintshire), or to the JF team, with links to the local FE College, and a focus on throughput to employment

- Close Popty and re-assess the needs of Popty service users, with a view to offering them alternative placements in other settings and/or support via Job-finding. This could include looking to accommodate individuals in Y Bont.

**It is recommended that a combination of the first two options recorded above be pursued as follows. Popty to relocate to a vacant unit incorporated with DCC Leisure services. Working in conjunction with DCC Leisure Services, be developed into a work experience placement service. To explore the viability of retaining the sandwich provision service within Leisure Services.**

**6.4.4 Y Bont:** Y Bont has altered its focus in recent years to respond to changing demands, but is struggling to meet the needs of those who need changing facilities.

Finding an external provider able to secure suitable accommodation and who is willing to take on the service (including the liabilities) at a lower rate than this, in the south of the county could be challenging. Testing the market, in terms of provider engagement, would give an indication of external provider interest, (and possibly Golden Group – see below)

The accommodation at Y Bont is not fit for purpose and is unable to meet demand. In the short term Y Bont needs to move, regardless of the longer term future. As a minimum this needs to be like for like. Y Bont needs to move, but should be located in the Ruthin area. Crucially any new accommodation must include full changing facilities.

**6.4.5 Golden Group:** Given that the remit of the Golden Group seems to have changed so as to include younger adults. Consideration should be given to merging Y Bont with Golden Group. This would enable staff to be used more efficiently and effectively and support a smoother transition as people age.

**Therefore, it is recommended that the services Y Bont and Golden Group be combined and co-located. Given the physical needs of some of those accessing these services as outlined above, accommodation needs to be accessible and have the potential to adapt to changing needs. It may be that space can be made available in County Hall, Ruthin which would be suitable to safely and adequately accommodate this larger group, and so this option should be pursued.**

**6.4.6 Garden Control:** Garden Control provides meaningful work experience, and a valuable service within the community at a relatively low cost to CSS, but its suitability is limited in that the individuals need to be relatively fit and capable. GC needs to review its gardening fees, and to undertake a future proofing exercise so as to address its demographic issues (see 3.4 above) and its reliance on one member of staff.

**There are clear similarities between the restrictions to development being experienced by Garden Control and Meifod. Indications are that a business model could be developed which would allow access to funding streams which would enable this business to grow as both a business and a service. As with Meifod, it is recommended that Garden Control becomes a social enterprise.**

6.4.7 **Job-finding:** The JF team have established good links with employers and support a relatively large number of individuals, but there could be more effective links with other services and agencies, including the progression support project, Working Denbighshire, local colleges and other employment related projects and agencies. If Popty is to move towards a placement based service, then Popty and JF could be closely linked.

The Job-finding team appears to be an assessment and triage service, (in addition to the job-finding role). Consideration needs to be given to the role and purpose of JF, and how this fits with other services and teams and with current approaches. It is isolated structurally, culturally and geographically from referrers and from Working Denbighshire.

The remit for the Job-finding team is county wide. Consideration should be given to the line management and / or location of JF (with WD or with the CDT). Alternatively, arrangements should be made for JF staff to be more agile, to make regular use of the CDT offices in Caledfryn, and to attend CDT (and WD?) team meetings, with a view to improving mutual understanding of each teams' roles and responsibilities. The future direction of Popty may also help to inform how and where JF is developed moving forward.

**Emerging models, such as Project Search, could also inform the future direction for JF but, given the limited staff resource and the size of the 'client base', it is unlikely that the service will be able to grow to meet future demand. However, as their role seems closely related to the aims of Working Denbighshire, it seems logical that the infrastructure, expertise and resources already in existence for that part of the organisation be utilised to better support the occupation and employment needs of adults accessing the Job Finding service, both now and in the future. Therefore, it is recommended that Job Finding Instructors transfer to Working Denbighshire.**

6.4.8 **General:** There is a reliance on Agency staff in most of the WODAS settings, and for the 1:1 support. The majority of the Agency staff are provided via the expired contract with Cynnig. These arrangements should be reviewed within the context of the Councils contractual procedures, and, where services are remaining in-house, consideration should be given to reviewing these arrangements.

## **7. Appendices**