

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	15th July 2021
Lead Member / Officer	Bobby Feeley / Huw Hilditch-Roberts / Nicola Stubbins
Report author	Ann Lloyd, Principal Manager, Community Support Services
Title	Draft Director of Social Services Annual Reports 2019 - 2020 & 2020 - 2021

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. Every Statutory Director of Social Services in Wales is required to produce an annual report which summarises their view of the effectiveness of the authority's social care services and priorities for improvement.
- 1.2. The draft annual reports for 2019 – 2020 and 2020 – 2021 are attached at Appendices 1 & 2. The reports are intended to provide the public with an honest picture of services in Denbighshire and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges faced.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

- 2.1. To enable Members to scrutinise the draft annual reports prior to them being submitted to the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW).

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That Members consider whether the reports provide a clear account of performance in 2019 – 2020 and in 2020 – 2021
- 3.2. That Members consider whether the report raises any performance issues / concerns that require further scrutiny.

4. Report details

4.1. Overall both reports show that Denbighshire County Council continue to provide good quality social services for children, adults and carers, and that we achieved some excellent performance in areas that are important to our citizens at a time when we were also dealing with the Coronavirus pandemic.

2019 – 2020 Annual Report

4.2. In March 2020 Welsh Government suspended the requirement to produce an annual report due to the Covid 19 pandemic. However, they have since advised that all Local Authorities in Wales are required to publish their reports.

4.3. During 2019 / 2020 we continued to make good progress in transforming our social services and the integration of health and social care in line with the Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014. This was against a backdrop of continuing financial pressures due to reducing public sector funding and increased cost pressures as well as increased demand for services.

4.4. **Highlights and Key Achievements** include:-

- the roll-out of Pre-paid cards to citizens in receipt of Direct Payments
- Edge of Care Services were strengthened to provide intensive interventions for those families with complex safeguarding issues and family dynamics.
- The development of Community Resource Teams saw integration within Rhyl and Ruthin and progress made to secure accommodation in Denbigh and Prestatyn
- Within Mental Health Services we saw the development of the Learning Partnership
- In day and work opportunity services we began to implement the findings of the review that had been concluded
- We achieved a 23% increase in the completion of Adult Protection enquiries within statutory timescales
- The Moving with Dignity project was launched and staff training implemented
- Within the Complex Disability Service, the Hwb Siarad team now work together to ensure more complex Information Advice and Assistance, signposting or short term work is allocated and completed in a timely way.

- Plans were put in place for all children deemed as vulnerable to have contact over the 'lockdown' period that resulted in school closure, utilising staff from across Education and Children's Services and school staff.
- 4 Carer Assessors were recruited – one for each Community Resource Team
- The Dementia Friendly Council Project received recognition from the Alzheimer's Society

4.5. **Areas of work we need to focus on**, moving into 2020 – 2021 we will be undertaking further work on a range of areas including:-

- Ensuring Information, Advice and Assistance to support carers is available digitally as well as through other channels
- Developing a new integrated Early Years' Service and Pathway
- Introducing a peripatetic multi-agency team across Denbighshire and Conwy to work with families who are at risk of having children placed into long-term residential care
- Ensuring Safeguarding is embedded in everyone's practice, which includes lessons learned from Safeguarding audits of Adult Practice Reviews
- Implementing the Moving with Dignity Programme
- Reviewing the provision of childcare and respite for parents with children with additional and complex needs.
- Developing an improved and expanded Edge of Care Service, focused on supporting children to remain at home or return home as part of the strategy to reduce the number of Looked After Children
- Continue to develop work on Assistive Technologies

2020 – 2021 Annual Report

4.6. Throughout 2020 / 20201 the focus was on ensuring we kept our citizens safe and supported throughout the Covid 19 lockdowns and many of our plans had to be put on hold. However, the pandemic meant we had to be creative and innovative to meet the needs of our citizens and has allowed us to accelerate the use of digital and assistive technology. During this year staff worked extremely hard and were stretched to breaking point to provide services to our citizens, especially within our care settings.

4.7. **Highlights and Key Achievements** in 2020 – 2021 including:-

- Volunteers were recruited to support those citizens with lower level support needs during the pandemic
- Creating our Pre-School Outreach Team and Team around the Setting
- Complex Disability Service using various pieces of digital and assistive technology to reduce social isolation and keep citizens with learning disabilities engaged in services (albeit virtually).
- Primary Care services getting much more involved with Community Resource Teams across Denbighshire through virtual meetings
- Close working between a range of partners to ensure vulnerable children were supported during school closures as a result of the Covid 19 lockdown
- Safeguarding referrals within Children's Services have continued to be actioned within 24 hours despite the ongoing Covid 19 challenges
- The use of assistive technology within our care settings such as the Paro Seal and Pepper Robotics
- Bwthyn y Ddôl multi-agency team was established and work progresses on the development of the assessment centre.
- Dementia Social Care Practitioners are established in each of the Community Resource Teams
- Innovative solutions such as Push to Talk and Bridging the Gap were put in place for Carers

4.8. **Areas of work we need to focus on** in 2021 – 2022 includes:

- Moving with Dignity Programme was progressed in this year, but not as much as we planned, and this will gather momentum in the coming year.
- Reviewing opportunities for alternative services, sharing information from the Micro-Enterprises/Community Catalyst project, with carers and carers organisations
- Joining the Welsh Government's Early Integration Transformation Programme as a pathfinder authority, in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council.
- Ensuring effective implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards
- Sustaining and expanding the successful Volunteering Project that was set up in response to Covid 19. Embedding lessons learned and processes adopted to work with volunteers to improve and extend social care services.
- Developing our use of assistive technologies further to create independence

- Continuing our work to develop services for carers
- Continuing with the Bwthyn y Ddôl development and the multi-disciplinary approach to children on the edge of care
- Working with partners to focus on recruitment for care and career pathways for young people into social care.

5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Priorities?

5.1. The report specifically relates to our contribution to delivery on the following Corporate priorities:-

- Everyone is supported to live in homes that meet their needs
- The Council works with people and communities to build independence and resilience.

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

6.1. The development and publication of the annual reports does not cost anything other than officer time, and does not impact on other services. The future plans and actions identified for Community Support Services and Education & Children's Services within the report will be delivered within existing budgets, or through partnership funding, such as ICF (Integrated Care Fund).

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

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

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

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

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

9.1. The cost implications of any emerging issues in the annual reports must be considered within the context of the council's wider budget position and Medium Term Financial Plan.

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

10.1. There is a detailed risk register for both Community Support Services and Education and Children's Services. As these are reports about Social Services in Denbighshire, any risks associated with the issues covered in this report (and actions to mitigate and manage them) are captured in the service risk registers.

11. Power to make the decision

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

11.2. Scrutiny's powers are laid out in Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 whilst Section 7.4.2 of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's role in relation to performance monitoring and policy objectives.