

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg. This document is available in Welsh.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Contents

1.	Introduction	2
2.	Director's summary of performance	3
3.	How people help us to shape our services	6
4.	Promoting and improving the well-being of those we help	16
a)	Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve	16
b)	Working with people and partners to protect people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being.	23
c)	Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm	31
d)	Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society	34
e)	Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships	41
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	44
5.	How we do what we do	48
a)	Our workforce and how we support their professional roles	48
b)	Our financial resources and how we plan for the future	53
c)	Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability	54
	Accessing further information and key documents	58
	Glossary of terms	58

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

1. Introduction

Denbighshire County Council's Director of Social Services Annual Report demonstrates how we have promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

During the last 12 months, in common with lots of other industries, social care has been experiencing significant recruitment and retention issues. We have a number of vacancies that we have been unable to fill across our Adult and Children's Services. Predominantly these are professional roles such as Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, as well as a range of non-professional roles including support workers and care staff. This has impacted on waiting times, seen staff take on bigger workloads and meant that we have had to prioritise our statutory responsibilities ahead of developing new and innovative services.

However, through continued hard work and strong leadership, we have made progress against many of the aims that we had for this year and have seen innovation that we introduced during the Covid-19 pandemic, such as our Edge of Care Team in Adult Services, become embedded into service delivery. Projects that were started a couple of years ago, such as Bwthyn Y Ddol, have seen some setbacks but are continuing and progress is being made.

This report will provide an evaluation of Denbighshire County Council's performance in delivering social services functions over the last year. We will explain how we have achieved the Welsh Government's 6 quality standards for well-being outcomes:

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

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

2. Director's summary of performance

It is that time of year again when we provide an evaluation of the work both Adult and Children's Social Services have undertaken during the last year. Once again I am incredibly proud of the dedication, commitment and hard work that our Social Services and wider Social Care workforce teams have delivered at a time of increase in both demand and complexity of need of our citizens requiring care and support.

During 2022 we had 3 staff nominated in the Social Care Wales Accolades, one winning their category and 2 being finalists. These awards recognise outstanding staff and having 3 finalists from Denbighshire reflects our workforce who regularly go above and beyond their role to achieve the best outcomes for our citizens.

Like most other Local Authorities in Wales, we in Denbighshire have significant recruitment and retention issues across both professional and caring roles. There have been significant challenges within our Children's Service and resources are having to be redeployed to ensure we meet our statutory obligations and keep both adults and children safe. At a corporate level we are working closely with not only our managers and Human Resources Team, but regional and national colleagues to address the staffing issues in social care.

However, what we have seen is innovative and creative approaches being put in place to ensure our citizens get the right care and support. This includes the expansion of our Edge of Care Team in adult services, where volunteers are supporting people with lower level care and support needs.

We have also seen the Micro-Provider scheme expand during the last 12 months and these community-based providers are supporting people in their neighbourhoods / local communities. Whilst this is not a replacement for domiciliary care, Micro-Providers are providing care and support in rural areas and in those areas of the county where our domiciliary care providers are struggling to recruit staff.

Across both adults and children's services we have seen an expansion of the use of Direct Payments which give citizens and their families / carers more choice and control in meeting their care and support needs and achieving outcomes that matter to them.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

I was delighted to see the re-opening of Meifod and Popty, day and work services in Denbigh during the year. Popty has been developed into a learning academy with a focus on independent living skills development and has moved to new modern premises. The re-opening of Meifod took longer than anticipated but now provides a wider range of activities other than making wooden products and has seen the investment of laser and 3D printers.

Within Children's Services I am delighted that the Bwthyn-y-Ddol multi-disciplinary team are now in place and supporting those children and families who are at the edge of care and at risk of becoming looked after. Whilst it is frustrating that there have been a number of setbacks with the development of the regional assessment centre, work has now begun and we hope to see the completion of the centre in Spring 2024.

We have also enhanced the support offered to Special Guardians, kinship carers and the families of children formally looked after. I am also pleased to see the positive impact the Parent Participation Group has had on families and carers across Denbighshire.

A lot of work has been undertaken and will continue to develop our services for care experienced young people. There is a real partnership approach with Education and Children's Services, Youth Services, Working Denbighshire, our Homelessness Prevention Team and a range of partners to develop services within the county to support and offer the best opportunities for young people.

Over the last year we have seen good outcomes from our Children's Service's Edge of Care Team who provide intensive home-based interventions for the whole family where children are considered to be on the 'edge of care'.

We know that during the coming 12 months both adults and children's services are going to have further challenges in meeting the demands of the services they provide. This is due to the ongoing recruitment and retention issues, and the increase in complexity of need and demand for services. However, we will focus on ensuring we meet our statutory duties as social service departments and continue with much of the development work that has been brought forward from this financial year, such as the development of Bwthyn-Y Ddol, and the development of in-county short breaks and emergency respite provision for children with complex disabilities.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

In adult services we hope to see the extension on Llys Awelon Extra Care Housing in Ruthin completed and new residents moving in, and we will continue with our work to improve our reach and support to unpaid carers across the county, and work on the Welsh Government's Rebalancing Social Care agenda.



Nicola Stubbins

Corporate Director for Social Services and Education

DRAFT

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

3. How people help us to shape our services

Engaging with our citizens to help shape and co-produce our services is of paramount importance to us here in Denbighshire. It is critical we shape, commission and deliver services that meet the needs of our citizens now and in the future. There are many ways in which we do this across both Adult and Children's services, with examples below.

Older People's Services

Age Connects coordinate a number of older people's fora across the county. The members of each forum decide what topics they want to discuss in each meeting but are also open to having visitors who come to seek advice and gather views on a range of topics. Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) have attended in the past to ask for views on the services members receive and contracts officers from Denbighshire County Council sometimes attend to ask for help to shape the services they are procuring.

Members of the fora contribute to the regular Age Connects newsletter and relevant meetings. Many attended the Ageing Well in Denbighshire meeting in October 2022 where the Older Person's Commissioner for Wales was in attendance and reported their success in influencing the operation of the flexi bus. The changes to the flexi bus had caused significant alarm and forum members met with DCC officers to ask for further changes to be made. These further changes have now been implemented much to the satisfaction of the members.

Meetings are held with residents in care homes and information is fed back to the individual home's management team or, where appropriate, Adult Services staff in order to influence service development. As an example; we identified that many care home residents do not have family or friends visiting and when talking to them they commented that they sometimes feel lonely. This led to us supporting Book of You, who have received a grant from Age Friendly Communities. Book of You now arrange for visitors to those that request them in 4 homes in the south of Denbighshire.

Staff from the Community Resource Team in South Denbighshire participated in a community engagement meeting in Denbigh, called the Listening Campaign. Denbigh was the first town chosen in North Wales to host this and this forms part of the regional dementia work that is taking place.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

New Mental Health Volunteer Service

We currently have 6 individuals who are preparing to volunteer for our new mental health volunteer service, supporting citizens who have acute and enduring mental health conditions. They will be providing 1:1 support and assisting the delivery of our 'Well-being through Art' sessions in the south of the county. We will be looking to recruit more volunteers over the next 12 months.

Case study

A was referred for support because of her social anxiety and emotional dysregulation due to symptoms of Emotionally Unstable Personality Disorder (EUPD).

A spends most of her time in the house, feeling isolated and lonely. She will self-neglect and self-harm at times. On receiving the referral for support the volunteer coordinator spent time getting to know A, trying to establish what support she would benefit from and what personal goals she had. During their conversations A shared that she had always enjoyed art but did not have the confidence to link in to community groups. She also had some art materials at home but she had not used them for many years.

Over a number of weeks, the volunteer coordinator talked to A about the group sessions, reassuring her that they were specifically for individuals who struggled to join mainstream groups and that the sessions were delivered in a way that was person centred so she could complete her art work at her own pace. A started to attend the groups in January and has attended each session since then. She has also disclosed to staff that after starting the sessions she decided to convert her spare bedroom in to her 'art studio' so that she can do artwork at home on a daily basis.

A states, "The art group gives me structure. I look forward to bringing my artwork back each week and showing it to you. This group makes me want to stay well and strong so I can keep coming each week. You'll never believe this but I've been commissioned to do a canvas". "This is the highlight of my week". "I just love it. It's been a massive positive step in my life coming here to this group".

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Carers

The Edge of Care Team have been working in partnership with NEWCIS in order to rethink our carers' respite offers. Listening to carers and learning from research has greatly helped this work. Protected space to explore creative, innovative and bespoke solutions has been achieved through practitioner Think Tanks and reflective practice sessions.

Another example of people helping shape our services came recently when an unpaid carer joined the Voluntary Organisation Grant panel to help us decide which of the applicants should receive grant to deliver support for parent carers of adults with complex disabilities.

When re-commissioning the carers assessment service unpaid carers were involved from the outset. Meetings were held with local focus groups to discuss what was working well, what wasn't working so well (in their experiences) and to gain information to help identify areas for improvement. This informed and influenced the shape of the new service and service specification. A local unpaid carer was invited to be a member of the evaluation panel and her lived experience was really valuable in the scoring process and contract award.

Adults at Risk

In responding to allegations of abuse and neglect, the Safeguarding Team ensure that the personal outcomes of the adult at risk are informing the response and the solutions towards making them safe.

Global Resettlement Team

The Global Resettlement Team who work with refugees from Syria, Afghan and more recently Ukraine, is made up of a number of Ukrainian staff, which helps inform the delivery of services and provides additional support to families ensuring we can embrace and celebrate their culture.

People with Learning Disabilities

In response to citizen's feedback we are continuing to develop person centred talking points in Hwb Siarad, transition, long-term and Children's Occupational Therapy. Feedback has been that citizens and families prefer to engage via virtual appointments in the first instance.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Across the team we have developed ways to respond to this utilising technology; Owl camera, interactive white board, social media apps, Alexas and tablets provided by the transformation project and funded through Welsh Government grant funding. It was recognised by all (agencies, citizens, families, professionals) that person centred planning needed a review and rejuvenation.

The team appointed a person-centred coordinator for 6 months (funded via the Learning Disabilities Transformation Team) to look at the use of person-centred planning (PCP) work, as the team felt it had become outdated. Both practitioners and providers were less enthusiastic about it, although the approach is embedded into their work. The PCP coordinator consulted with providers and practitioners around improving PCP practice and bringing citizens, families and providers on board without increasing work demands. This is an ongoing piece of work with several training sessions arranged in 2023-4. We are hoping to ensure that PCP work is kept alive and is more personalised around each citizen with a choice of different tools in place to enable citizens to live the lives they choose, as independent and as safe as possible. The use of technology is also assisting with carbon reduction, since travel is less.

Global Resettlement Team

In response to the Ukrainian Refugee situation, The Global Resettlement Team was established in the summer of 2022. As we developed the team, we recruited a number of Ukrainian staff, who arrived into Wales through the Homes for Ukraine scheme. Utilising the skills and knowledge of the staff informs the delivery of services and provides support to families ensuring we can better understand their needs and also celebrate their culture. To ensure we were managing the expectations and meeting the needs of the families, weekly meetings were set up and encourage open communication and feedback.

Young Carers

What is important to Young Carers, the things they want done differently and why, is important to Denbighshire Children's Services not only as Commissioners but also working in partnership with our commissioned service, Credu (known as WCD Young Carers). WCD Young Carers have held small group sessions for some Young Carers as they said that large groups were not for them. Some of them are on the Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) Spectrum and others have anxiety and mental health issues that mean they would rather be in a smaller group environment.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

WCD Young Carers have provided an Art Therapy session and an Animal Therapy session which were both well attended and valued. Young Carers asked to have sessions with animals – our commissioned project applied for funding to be able to bring animals to groups (via animal experience parties).

Some of our harder to reach Young Carers have said they would rather have climbing, BMX biking, Mixed Martial Arts sessions and visit Zip World. We are able to provide them with these sessions to give them an alternative outlet for their Attention Deficit Hyperactivity Disorder (ADHD) and steer them away from anti-social behaviours.

WCD Young Carers have their own Young Carers' Forum where they highlight the things that matter to them locally and regionally. Young Carers recently visited The Senedd, where they were able to share their views with Members. It was an amazing opportunity for both Young Carers and Senedd Members to learn about each other. Our Young Carers shared these points;

1. It is important that Young Carers are connected with appropriate support from the outset, without being passed around different organisations before finding one that fits.
2. Bereavement support is needed for Young Carers and support for Young Carers with important transitions in their caring role.
3. Changes can be profound and mean changes to identity - for example when caring role is lessened when a loved one dies. Support should be more connected and accessible with better information about services. Young Carers may have to explain their story over and over again and this can be very difficult.
4. It should be mandatory that schools are aware and fully supportive of Young Carers. Some are excellent, but not all.
5. Social Services and Health should be including and involving Young Carers in key family information including safeguarding. Adult responsibilities are expected but Young Carers are not treated equally as adults.
6. More person-centred respite and wellbeing opportunities for Young Carers are needed.
7. More funding. Increased recognition of Young Carers needs to be followed with increased financial support for organisations supporting the rapidly growing numbers of Young Carers, as they are very stretched.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

We commission and work in partnership with the WCD Young Carers Service, through returns and quarterly meetings, to ensure the voice of our Young Carers is heard. The issues that are raised by them are highlighted either by our own attendance, or that of the commissioned service, at internal groups and by links with schools via our Education Service colleagues, regional and national meetings.

This is Millie. She is an incredible asset to WCD Peer Mentors and a fabulous fundraiser. She shaved her head to raise money, but perhaps more importantly, to raise awareness of Young Carers.



Some of our active forum members from across WCD and Ceredigion went to The Senedd to voice their views and in the hope of influencing policy and service changes. While in Cardiff, they managed to visit some attractions, as you can see from these photos.



Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Children's Services

Language that Cares – As professionals, we recognise that sometimes we don't use the same language as children and young people and we wanted to come up with a list of words they would like to change to make it clearer for them to understand when we talk to them about their day to day life. A survey was conducted with Children Looked After and we are currently consulting with this group of children and young people on the findings. We have already made changes to language used across the service and will implement further changes in the coming year.

What makes a good Foster Carer - the KIC (Kids in Care) Cub were asked for their views at their session on 21 February 2023 to capture young people's views on what makes a good Foster Carer, Social Worker and their views on current placements.

To help in raising awareness of fostering in Denbighshire, Foster Carers have been taking part in producing blogs, mailshots and videos sharing their experiences.

As part of Regulation 42 – Quality of Care of the Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2003, questionnaires were sent out to children / young people, Foster Carers, Fostering Panel Members and Children's Services staff to gain their views on the quality of care provided by the Foster Wales Denbighshire Service and how useful this service has been to them. The feedback assists the department to improve the service as well as recognising what has worked well.

Have Your Say Surveys - To gain views of children / young people and parents on the impact Education & Children Services has had on their lives and how useful the service received is or has been, a range of Have Your Say Feedback surveys have been designed. The results assist in improving the service as well as recognising what has worked well. Accompanying the surveys is a guidance sheet explaining the method and process for each survey and all forms are saved on the child's file.

End of Placements - These are completed by social workers, foster carers, parents and Children / young people at the end of a placement (regardless of the cause of the placement coming to an end). These reports provide important information about user and staff experiences of the placement and services they have received and thus provide an important source of information for identifying potential quality improvements.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Looked After Consultation Documents – Consultation forms which are outcome focussed have been devised in preparation for children and young people’s Looked After Care (LAC) Reviews. They are for completion by children / young people and parents / carers and tie in with the Social Services and Health & Well-being Act and National Outcomes.

Young Person’s Child Protection Pre-Conference Form - To capture voices of children and young people at Child Protection Conferences. Staff encourage the young people they work with to complete the consultation forms in advance of a Child Protection Conference, particularly if they do not want to attend. The consultation documents are available in both Welsh and English. Capturing the young people’s views enables conference members to hear things from the young person’s perspective - sometimes when discussing concerns, the voice of the young person can be missing.

Child Protection Conference Feedback Forms - Professionals, parents / carers and young people attending are asked to complete a feedback form and give their views.

Foster Carers are asked in their Annual Reviews how fostering has impacted them and their family.

Children / Young People whose parents foster are also asked for their opinions/views about what’s good about fostering as part of Foster Carers’ Self-Assessment.

Mind of My Own – Mind of My Own is an online platform that allows children and young people working with our Education and Children’s Services to engage with their worker and share their views about the care they receive, their concerns, worries and successes. Children and young people can use Mind of My Own to contribute to their wellbeing outcomes as part of their care and support plans. In 2022 Members of the KIC Club (Kids in Care – Young People’s Forum) were invited to join ‘Mind of My Own Challenges’ to promote use of Mind of My Own and ensuring their views were heard.

Communication and Involvement

We have recently appointed a Communication and Involvement Officer within Families First and Flying Start. We are consulting upon, developing and implementing a communication plan and framework for the engagement and involvement of children, young people and families in the design and delivery of our programmes.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

We collect, collate, analyse and summarise information from our Integrated Families First and Flying Start service users, in the form of narrative and qualitative reporting, case studies, and feedback to ensure that the perspectives and experiences of children, young people and families are appropriately reflected. We have been running Family Fun Time events across the authority to support engagement and interaction with our families. These have been very well attended and many of the Ukrainian families we work with have attended. Their engagement with us has been brilliant.



Compliments and Complaints

During the last year both Adult and Children's Social Services teams have received a total of 29 complaints between them. This is slightly higher than the previous year and although the number of Social Services complaints dealt with at Stage 1 were generally low during low during Quarters 2 and 3. All complaints were reviewed, with learning identified and implemented across services as appropriate.

Complaints in 2022/23 were in the most part related to communication issues and this is a common theme. Where there is poor communication from Social Services staff, we acknowledge this is our response and work to make improvements. We also try to work with citizens when there is a lack of understanding or unrealistic expectation. For example, where someone is unable to contact a particular member of staff they normally deal with, explaining that they are engaged in work that means they cannot respond immediately and offering for them to talk to someone else or providing a timescale as to when they will be able to get back to them.

9 Stage 2 complaints were received in 2022/23 which is the same number as received in the previous year. None of these were under the statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure Regulations (Wales) 2014 and only 1 was upheld.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

All but one Stage 2 complaints were dealt with within the required statutory timescales. Historically, as an authority Denbighshire has few statutory investigations at Stage 2 and this suggests satisfactory investigations at Stage 1 are taking place.

The Council's C360 complaints database enables services to record, where appropriate, any learning from complaints. Learning identified from the complaint is implemented within the team or Service and then, where appropriate, shared more widely across the Council.

Learning can come from complaints whether or not they are upheld and two examples are noted below;

A complaint relating to a death in a care home was not upheld but a Stage 2 investigation found learnings for the Council, highlighting areas in which we can change our practice to ensure there are more robust checks and balances in place. This involved Senior Care and Support Workers following up on any medication that has been changed or discontinued by health professionals and ensuring that all conversations and concerns are fully documented.

A complaint relating to equipment provided to a citizen through our Community Equipment Store was upheld. The complainant was unaware that the equipment was for short term use. The manager informed the complainant that he would ensure that lessons are learned and that in future, practitioners are fully aware of how the processes work and follow through with proper communication with families.

In the year April 2022 to end March 2023 Adult Social Services received 73 compliments and Children's Services received 74.

This is 10% more than the number received the previous year. Receiving positive feedback from our citizens gives staff great satisfaction and a boost to their morale and allows us to identify best practice, which will then be shared with other teams or services and specifically in relation to care homes will be shared with our independent providers too. Examples of compliments received include;

"I and my Mum just wanted to thank you for all the support you have given us over the past few weeks. My Mum is improving every day. The bed lever was installed on Monday and the steps are being installed on Friday. You should be very proud of the work that you do. I'm not easily pleased - but these thanks are certainly easily given."

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

“A grandmother shared that a staff member in Children’s Services has been very helpful and supportive throughout her intervention with the family. They are very appreciative of the time and effort she has put in to ensuring the safety and wellbeing of her grandchild. The mother also said she is “sad that F is not the worker anymore because she has always helped.”

A supervising social worker from Cumbria praised Denbighshire Children’s Services and a couple of staff. He shared that their agency has worked with numerous different professionals and Local Authorities across the UK but they were incredibly impressed with Denbighshire. They have not worked with a Local Authority before who have taken the time to travel across the country on a regular basis to offer support to a child and their carers, or who had offered such a high level of ongoing support via telephone calls / virtual meetings.

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

This is what we said we would do

- embed the work of the Independent Living Advisers across both adults and children’s services to support individuals and their families to have their care and support delivered through a direct payment and further develop use of Pre-paid Cards to increase efficiency
- continue to develop our provision for carers and reach out to engage with unpaid carers across Denbighshire

This is what we have done and achieved

2059 adults had a care and support plan in place during this year. There is no variation from 2021-22.
76.7% of assessments for children were completed within statutory timescales. This is on par with 76.59% in 2021-22. There was an increase of 13% in the number of assessments being carried out in 2022/23.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

People with Learning Disabilities

The Complex Disability Team's Talking Points has expanded this year. Every new referral accepted to the team is seen using their preferred method of communication and using an outcome focused citizen led discussion.

Talking points appointments take place in our drop in centre in Morfa Clwyd, Rhyl or in other locations depending on where that person lives - for example we may use a room in a library. It depends on the citizen's preference and virtual appointments are also offered. Talking Points appointments are offered once a new referral comes in to the team so we can have a 'What matters' conversation with the citizen and (if they wish) their family. We can offer information and advice and decide whether the Complex Disabilities team is the most appropriate team to provide support for the citizen.

Referrals are often closed before a social worker is allocated, because the support required has been identified and provided via Talking Points. Talking Points help support the citizen and their family to consider voluntary and third sector services and take control of their own lives, which reduces dependency on services and pressure on our workforce.

Case study

Mr A referred himself for support via SPOA as he had mental health problems and was looking for help. He has autism and lives alone.

The first contact our Complex Disability Team made to Mr A, as with all new referrals at Talking Points, included asking how he would prefer to have the first 'What Matters' conversation. We try to offer first appointments to suit the person's preferred method of communication. Mr A said that, due to his autism, trying to express himself verbally often left him for days afterwards with low mood, anxiety and insecurities. For the first 8 contacts we agreed to communicate by text message and e-mail only. He said he found this person-centred approach very useful and it took a lot of pressure off him. He also said it meant he could take time to process questions and think about what he wanted to say in response. It worked well and we were able to complete a picture of his needs (assessment) and agree a plan that he was happy with. He was able to say things that he would find difficult to say face to face.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Mr A shared his feelings of isolation and loneliness. After some time, he felt able to let me into his flat and share some of the problems he was having with managing his living space. Between us we were able to secure the services of a volunteer from the Edge of Care Team. I was also able to support Mr A to complete a self-referral to Integrated Autism Services and the community mental health service, where he enrolled on a short course around coping skills for resilience.

As outcomes were met Mr C did not require formal or paid care and support from social services and we agreed together to close his case to the team. I do keep in touch via the Edge of Care Team and Mr A is happy that he can contact me or SPOA in the future should his needs change

Current well-being projects the Complex Disability Team are involved in, are Just Enough Support (JES) and Progressional Approaches to Supported Housing (PASH). This has included developing different types of supported accommodation, such as own front door and us facilitating group activities and learning opportunities to develop individual's skills to help them live independently. JES is a time limited, progression focused, Support Worker service which involves the citizen and an Occupational Therapist co-producing a support plan based on the goals and outcomes the citizen would like to achieve.

The objectives of the service are:

- To encourage and support adults with learning disabilities to learn new skills and to be more independent
- To help prepare people for independent living and to support them to develop new friendships with other people in similar circumstances (peer support)
- To promote and encourage the appropriate use of technology as a means of people being active and connected and as a way of helping people to learn new skills
- To increase confidence and self-value using meaningful everyday activities
- To improve community participation and reduce social isolation to enable individuals to be active in their local area and to give people a sense of belonging and identity
- To reduce reliance on the family carer
- To reduce long term reliance on statutory services, by establishing an approach that focuses on progression and the achievement of agreed outcomes
- To link in with Active Support approaches and processes

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

PASH involves planning work with families and promoting more local, cost effective and person centred supported living placements as an alternative to residential placements. There is a focus on preventative working with specialist input at the planning stage. It is also intended to increase investment in social value models of delivering care and support in community settings.

The outcome of this work has been a self-sustaining network within the community, with citizens being involved with every part of the transition of moving into their own tenancy, including tendering the support they required. JES supported four citizens to move into an own front door project with an unexpected outcome of the moving in group sessions being that all four citizens now provide support to each other. Initially this arose from lack of availability of suitably trained staff, because we had a number of projects progressing at once. However, the benefits to the four individuals, who all moved in at the same time, became apparent and we hope to replicate this approach when a similar project comes along.

Citizen participation has been a cornerstone to this approach, but also involved a range of partners including Citizens Advice Denbighshire and Health colleagues who supported healthy eating, staying safe, telecare with the transformation team, learning about money management and cooking skills.

Contracts and Commissioning officers undertake regular monitoring visits to care homes across the county and as part of their visit will chat to residents about their experience. Any feedback received influences the monitoring reports and can lead to home being required to make changes or improve care services. Recently a resident commented that he wanted to live elsewhere and wasn't happy where he was placed and plans are now in progress, with help from an advocate, to arrange a move for him.

Carers

The Independent Living Advisors are supporting with Direct Payments including joint visits, in some instances, with carer assessors to help people set up accounts and pre-paid cards and providing information about rights and responsibilities in relation to having choice and control over their care and support. For example, a carer is now enjoying 'girl shopping' and coffee shop stops, in the knowledge that her husband is enjoying clay pigeon shooting, where he gets to enjoy 'male banter' and others who understand his particular set of needs.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Another example includes, a Micro Provider who enables a daughter to take a break from her caring role by taking her mother out to do the things she likes to do, with company she is really enjoying – chips or ice cream on the prom! Our volunteer service has also played a pivotal role in relation to careful matching of interests, hobbies and skills, in order to support carers and their loved ones to maintain or enjoy new experiences.

It's not all one way either – for example, one citizen has taught a volunteer to play Yahtzee and another has learned new skills in relation to supporting someone with a sensory need.



Older People

Community Resource Team staff in South Denbighshire undertake joint visits with the Independent Living Advisors to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes.

Staff also promote direct payments when conducting assessment of needs with citizens who require care and support.

Development of Special Guardianship Order (SGO) support & support to former Children Looked After (CLA) / their families

Education and Children's Services have, through the use of Welsh Government grant money, enhanced support offered to Special Guardians, kinship carers and the families of children formally looked after. Additional support staff have been recruited to work exclusively with these children, young people and their families, giving easy access to support and advice.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Collaborative Communication

Education and Children's Services have invested heavily in Collaborative Communication which is a strengths based, outcomes focused model of service delivery. Collaborative Communication aims to achieve outcome focused service delivery which works in partnership with children and families where personal outcomes are explored to overcome various life challenges.

Collaborative Communication also enhances and invests in the wider workforce through developing mentors and trainers to enable the model to be embedded into practice. Collaborative Communication focuses on a series of skilled, thoughtful conversations that aims to resolve the service user dilemmas. Collaboration in establishing sustainable outcomes whilst maximizing autonomy, independence and strengths is at the heart of the model. Collaborative Communication notices people for the problems they face not the problems they cause; notices the resources and strengths people have to overcome their personal obstacles and explores their strengths, values, hopes and aspirations.

By using this model of service delivery we aim to move away from the traditional problem focussed approach and task focussed plans. Our holistic approaches focus on the person and their networks/family whilst understanding the unique identity of each person / situation. The ultimate goal of the model is to enable people to live as fulfilled a life as possible and achieve a sense of wellbeing. Collaborative Communication has developed a number of mentors and trainers across both children's, adults and early help services with reflective groups forming the thrust of cultural change.

All new starters will be provided with Collaborative Communication skills ensuring it is embedded into practice as 'The Denbighshire Way'.

We have provided Collaborative Communication training for our Flying Start Health, and Childcare and Early Language Development Teams. Flying Start Health report that they are very enthusiastic about implementing and embedding this way of working within Denbighshire. We are currently seeking consultancy support to look at our paperwork, process and procedures to align this way of working collaboratively with our children, young people, and families.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

To embed this process further within child protection, Denbighshire are currently recruiting to the post of Effective Child Protection (ECP) Practice Mentor, who will lead on the ECP project and work within the Collaborative Communication model of service delivery.

Family Group Conference

The Therapeutic Service provide a Family Group Conference (FGC) Service which is a process led by family members to plan and make decisions for children about whom professionals have expressed concerns and who may be deemed to be at risk.

This risk can be from many quarters and may be a risk of significant harm towards the children and/or a risk of the children becoming or remaining looked after by someone other than family etc. The FGC is a process that aims to build on a family's strengths to empower them to understand the wider concerns and if necessary plan, with the support of professional services and community networks, to keep their children safe. The FGC is a voluntary process and families cannot be 'forced' to have one.

Family Group Conferences can be used in any serious situation where a plan and decision needs to be made about a vulnerable child. Family Group Conferences are mainly used in child welfare matters; particularly when a child is at risk of going to or remaining in care. A FGC is often effective in making safe plans for children, enabling many to stay within their family network as an alternative to going into or remaining in care and the allocated FGC coordinator remains independent of the family situation.

To ensure all families, including those receiving early intervention, are able to access this support, we commission a service which uses a variety of approaches to deliver flexible, bespoke support. Support may include options such as Family Group Conferences, Mediation, Relationship Advice and/or Counselling as appropriate to each family.

Lifelong Links

Lifelong Links aims to identify and engage relatives and other supportive adults, connected to a child in care, who are willing to make a lifelong commitment to that child. Research shows that the continuity and permanence of these relationships can offer young people ongoing support, provide an explanation of historical events, and reinforce their identity and sense of belonging.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

The Lifelong Links process provides the child or young person with supportive connections for the future.

The process is guided by the young person, parents and the Lifelong Links coordinator. However, the allocated social worker for the young person has specific responsibilities and expectations during the different stages of the Lifelong Links process.

If staff are considering a young person for Lifelong Links, they request a Therapeutic Consultation with the Therapeutic Service, to discuss the appropriateness of the referral. If it is decided that the Lifelong Links process is a good fit for the young person, their consent will be required before a Lifelong Links Coordinator can be allocated.

The allocated social worker and the Lifelong Links coordinator will discuss the process further and define the expectations.

Further consent is required, from the individual who has Parental Responsibility for the child or young person, to progress to a planning meeting which is arranged by the Lifelong Links Coordinator where all significant professionals are invited.

This is what we still have to do

Review the care and support provision provided across the county in line with Welsh Government's Rebalancing Social Care
Continue to embed Collaborative Communication across Adult, Children and Early Years Services

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

This is what we said we would do

- develop further care and support capacity across Denbighshire by continuing to support the Community Catalyst project to develop micro-enterprises.
- continue to work in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Conwy County Borough Council to develop and implement Bwthyn y Ddol

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

This is what we have done and achieved

During the last 3 months of 2022 – 2023 there were 25 people experiencing delayed transfers of care for social care reasons. The average over the full year was 26.

The average age of adults entering residential care homes in 2022 - 23 was 82. This is slightly younger than last year when the average age was 84.

People with Learning Disabilities

Our Complex Disability Team focus on encouraging citizens and their families to attend their annual health check-up for citizens who have a Learning Disability. The team has also been working closely with our health colleagues and Regional Transformation team to develop initiatives to support a range of well-being provision.

The team participated in Train the Trainer sessions with Bangor University, to be able to deliver mindfulness to citizens as part of their role.

Children's services

Bwthyn Y Ddol

The multi-disciplinary team continues to work with children and young people who are at the edge of care and are at risk of becoming looked after - their parent or carer, for a variety of reasons, is unable to manage a healthy family dynamic. The team initially focus on completing a holistic formulation of strengths and difficulties, risks and needs through a consultation process, in order to recommend a program of interventions.

The model of care has been developed through a multi-agency team with a focus on the requirements and specific needs of the children and young people within Denbighshire and Conwy. This innovative approach to an evidence based model of care, along with the reflective practice adopted by the team, has already seen very positive results with children / young people successfully completing the intervention and safely remaining at home with family.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Barnardo's Care Leaver Service

In 2022 we worked with Barnardo's Care Leaver Service (Personal Advisers) to ensure a co-produced Emergency Contacts list for Care Leavers, including Emergency Mental Health Support, was uploaded to Denbighshire's Leaving Care Webpage.

Parent Participation Group (PPG)

Parents and Carers are our first line of defence in keeping children safe from all forms of exploitation. Being aware of the changes that might indicate their child is being exploited means parents can seek the right support. Child exploitation has no place in our society and we need to come together as communities and have open conversations about how children are being hurt, so we can keep them safe.

PPG is a parent and carer led group which brings parents and carers together to share experiences in a safe space. Professionals from various sectors join the group session to share the purpose of their role and share education. The group provide feedback on things that go well and things that don't go so well.

Through this process of sharing information and both professionals and families learning from each other, the children in the community are able to be kept safer. The group is facilitated by Denbighshire Therapeutic Service and below are some of the things parents and carers have said about the group:

Being in the group "stop(s) you doubting your parenting"
It is "somewhere I can say anything and get support"
"So much information – easy to understand"
"I feel understood...I feel more capable in parenting"
"I am not alone...I feel more confident"
"I have a voice and people listen"
"Safe space Safe place"
"They all really genuinely care"
"I have learnt so much around Child Sexual Exploitation and now I understand"
"I've started to smile again thank you to everyone"
"And I thought it was only me, no longer alone / isolated"

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy - Connected Parent Group

The Therapeutic Service have delivered a well-respected therapeutic intervention Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) alongside their Connected Parent Program, focusing on how relationships / experiences between the child and their primary caregiver builds positive, healthy attachments that can act as a buffer against adverse childhood experiences.

This parenting group brings parents / carers of babies together for an 11-week DBT skills group that intertwines the Connected Parent Program. DBT is a skills based experience that allows individuals to develop core skills that help regulate strong emotions, manage stressful situations and experience a kinder relationship with themselves and others.

The Connected Parent Program incorporates the skills individuals are developing through DBT, to build an understanding of how parenting young children also enhances the development of their child's brains in a healthy way that will help them have strong emotional connections with their parent as their secure base.

Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF) – Team Around the Family Assessment

As part of the JAFF, undertaken with each member of the family including children and young people, the needs of each individual child / young person help shape the commissioning of our services, via our data analysis.

Consequently, when we re-commission new services from Autumn 2023, specialist support for children and young people around Mental Health and Wellbeing, Additional Needs, Domestic Abuse, & Family Relationships will be tendered.

My Voice

Our commissioned service Family Life Skills has provided the My Voice Service to offer creative and mindful interventions helping to encourage positive emotional well-being changes for children and young people aged 5 – 17. My Voice helps with Physical health, being safe, relationships, feelings and behaviour, friendships, confidence and self-esteem, worries about school or college.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Older People

Through the weekly complex case meetings that the Community Resource Teams hold, better outcomes are achieved.

The multi-disciplinary team approach, consisting of a range of health and social care professionals, ensure that citizens get the best care and support from the most appropriate professional. The case study below clearly demonstrates, that by working together hospital admission can be avoided and the wishes of the person are taken into account.

Case Study

Citizen lives alone in the community. Her outcome was to remain living in the community and to be safe. She has a supportive son who visits daily and domiciliary care in the community, with 4 single handed calls a day. Complex physical health issues and lack of mobility mean support is needed with all aspects of personal care and activities of daily living.

Physical and mental health was deteriorating, with citizen presenting as confused at times, lacking insight into her care and support needs and also presenting with difficult behaviours. Social Worker had previously completed mental capacity act assessment in relation to care and support needs and deemed in citizen's best interests to have care and support at home.

Citizen was nursed in bed and when trying to roll onto her side for toileting and personal care needs citizen would often push against carer, shouting out saying she was in pain. For this reason, care was increased to double handed care and GP reviewed pain management.

Moving and handling equipment was already in place - gantry hoist & Wendylett sheets with handles - which enabled the domiciliary care staff to complete care safely and effectively.

The citizen had a profiling bed with a pressure relieving mattress. However, the District Nurse advised a new mattress was required as citizen developed severe deteriorating wounds and new pressure ulcers were developing in citizen's spine, hip and sacrum.

Citizen had always expressed never wanting to be hoisted, and there was extremely high risk of skin being further damaged by use of sling. District Nurses requested ambulance support to transfer the lady out of bed and a new mattress was put in place without hoisting. As a result of the joint working the team prevented further deterioration to citizen's skin and avoided hospital admission. The citizen achieved her outcome to remain in her own home.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

The South Localities Community Resource Team attend ward round meetings in Denbigh and Ruthin Community Hospitals to strengthen relationships and facilitate timely discharges. As a result of this a compliment was received from Ruthin Hospital highlighting in a Delayed Transfer of Care (DTC) meeting how a Dementia Social Care Practitioner expedited an early hospital discharge. Working together through the multi-disciplinary approach supports timely discharge from hospital as demonstrated in this case study.

Case Study

Citizen 95 years of age was living alone and a referral for a ramp was received. She was placed on our Occupational Therapy waiting list. During this time, the citizen was admitted to hospital and on admission she tested positive for Covid-19.

The Community Resource Team (CRT) duty officer was asked to contact the hospital for an update as no information had been received that the citizen was medically fit for discharge. The Duty Officer was unable to contact the ward or BCU Progress Chaser. When Progress chaser returned call to CRT, confirming the citizen was medically fit for discharge and advised they were listed for transfer to Community Hospital, as it was identified she needed equipment at home.

Citizen had been working with Therapies in the hospital including Occupational Therapy and Physiotherapy to regain her functionally abilities. It was recommended that she was discharged with 2 calls a day, morning and evening, to support with personal care. The CRT contacted the local provider and they were able to provide the support needed to facilitate discharge. Further to a case discussion in the CRT, it was established that the identified equipment was available and could be delivered that afternoon to citizen's home.

Several attempts were made by the CRT to ring Progress Chaser to request ambulance transport destination be changed from the Community Hospital to the citizen's home, but again no answer. The citizen's son contacted the CRT to say that the ambulance transport had actually been cancelled. Several phone calls were made within the CRT and eventually transport was rebooked and citizen returned home.

A message was received from the son advising his mother was settled at home and thanked the team for all their hard work. She had also had a settled night and a shower in her own home the following morning.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Turn Only Once (TOO) is a personal care routine developed by Jo De Clercq, a Physiotherapist in Belgium for individuals with dementia. The principles of his approach are that citizens are cared for with minimal, but precise touch and much reduced handling.

It is known that citizens with dementia lose several of their senses and this includes the sense of proprioception (knowing where their body is in space).

Each time the citizen is touched or handled this causes anxiety and agitation as they do not understand what is happening. As a result, the individual tenses and they find the position which gives them the most sensory feedback which is an increased flexed position (foetal position).

TOO is combined with 24-hour postural support and this has in Belgium resulted in greatly reduced numbers of individuals developing pressure injuries or contractures.

TOO supports our Moving with Dignity approach, as it advocates that a personal care routine is completed by one person.

One of our Senior Occupational Therapists has been awarded funding from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists (Innovation Award) for an educational visit to the residential home in Belgium, to learn about this approach. It is her intention that following this visit a small research project can be completed with residents in Denbighshire. If we can demonstrate that the approach can reduce agitation, this could delay the need for a change in category of placement, or increase the time an individual remains at home before placement is needed.



Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Micro-providers

As of 1st January 2023, we have established a permanent post in the Edge of Care Team to continue the micro-provider initiative in Denbighshire.

There are 28 established micro-providers in Denbighshire, supporting around 120 citizens to meet the care and support needs they require in their own home.

The support offered by the micro-providers can include services such as personal care, practical help around the home, cleaning, cooking, gardening, dog walking, companionship - anything at all that will help someone be happier and safer in their own home.

There have been positive outcomes for the citizens using micro-providers, which we hope will continue.

Case Study

Daughter of citizen was becoming very stressed as she was having to go round and support her mother each morning to wash and dress prior to safe hands collection, daughter was late for work on many occasions, this caused relationship breakdown with mother and daughter as things were very rushed and tense whilst supporting in the mornings.

A micro-provider is now supporting Monday to Friday, with a morning visit to help with personal care, medication prompts and meal preparation. The micro-provider sent a very in-depth referral form with fantastic questions, to get to know citizen prior to arranging a meeting with citizen and daughter to introduce herself.

This has had a very positive outcome for both citizen and daughter, who now enjoy time together at the weekends, stress free. "The micro-provider is professional, thorough and very quick with communication responses, highly recommend."

Carers

Working with the Edge of Care team we are able to support carers and their cared for, carefully matching volunteers who have similar interests. As an example, rather than a traditional style service, an Edge of Care volunteer has been matched, through their shared interests and character, to provide weekly companionship to a gentleman who spends most of his time at home following a change to his health.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

His wife, who is an informal Carer was upset that her husband was really missing 'male banter' and opportunities to share his love of 60's and country music.

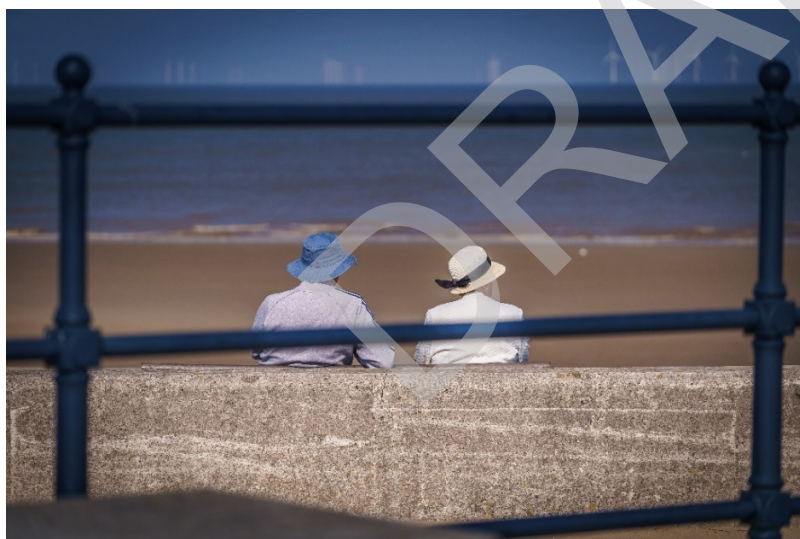
The family now look forward to the volunteer visits and they tell us that they consider him as part of their family. We know that they get the best biscuits ready for his visits!

It makes it even more special that the volunteer, sadly lost his wife during the Covid-19 pandemic and the Edge of Care Team maintained regular contact with him through a significant period of change, leading to his decision to take up volunteering. It's been lovely to see his confidence grow and new friendships develop.

This is what we still have to do

To trial the Touch Only Once (TOO) approach which in the longer term can improve the lives of citizens and their families.
--

To continue with the review of Mental Health Services in Denbighshire.
--



c) Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

This is what we said we would do

- Continue to embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures into all aspects of Children's Services.
- Ensure effective preparation of all staff across Adults and Children's Services for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

This is what we have done and achieved

98.80% of all adult protection enquiries were completed within statutory timescales. This is a slight reduction compared to last year.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Of those children who were placed on the child protection register during the collection year, the number that has been previously registered under any category, at any time during the previous twelve months was 4. There were 3 children in this group in 21/22.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The total number of days on the child protection register for children who were removed from the register during the year was 27,354 (28,281 days 21/22).• The total number of children removed (de-registered) from the child protection register during the year was 77 (82 children in 21/22).• This gives us an average of 355 days per child (345 days in 21/22).• This is an increase of 10 days from the previous year (100 days in 21/22).

The implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards has currently been put on hold by the United Kingdom Government. Therefore, we are continuing to work to current legislation and are completing Deprivation of Liberty Standards as necessary.

The Herbert Protocol has been promoted and staff continue to be encouraged to advise and complete this with citizens, especially those living with dementia. Staff keep up to date with briefings and research and these are discussed in regular Social Worker meetings.

Contracts and Commissioning staff and Reviewing Officers review and monitor all providers and the care provided to older people in Denbighshire. Any concerns are followed up and where serious can lead to multi agency Escalation of Concerns meetings, attended and supported by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). These lead to the development of action plans and will generally ensure that no further placements are made with that provider until issues are resolved. All safeguarding concerns are managed by the Safeguarding team with close involvement of, as appropriate, Health partners, Adult Social Care Officers and CIW.

Managers within the Complex Disability Team attend essential Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) meetings in relation to high risk domestic abuse and sexual violence cases. They also manage safeguarding casework in partnership with BCUHB and Denbighshire Safeguarding teams. Casework includes completing capacity assessments (particularly around keeping people safe online), healthy friendships and sexual relationships.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Practitioners and citizens are encouraged to attend specialist training courses by Jiwsj and SPARC, sourced by the Complex Disability Team. Professionals regularly adapt information into easy read formats for citizens to use.

Children's services

Return Home Interviews – the Intake & Intervention Service Manager is a member of a Task & Finish Group with North Wales Police and other Local Authorities regarding Return Home Interviews, working together to improve the process and data provided.

Mind of My Own 'Return from Missing Scenario' investment - Denbighshire Education & Children's Services have re-invested in an add-on scenario for the digital participation and engagement tool, Mind of My Own, from 2022-2026. The 'Return from Missing Scenario' is a tool to gather information and intelligence that can better inform Return Home Interviews and/or intervention and safety plans in a way that young people may find easier as they can complete it on their own or with support, anytime, anywhere. This key information can help safeguard young people and prevent further missing episodes. Where appropriate, we would encourage use/offer of Mind of My Own 'Return from Missing' with children and young people who have gone missing from home or care, alongside or in addition to completion of a Return Home Interview.

Information Factsheets - A variety of information factsheets for children, young people, parents / carers and professionals have been established in relation to Child Protection Procedures, Conferences, Core Groups, Leaving Care and Being Looked After. They are on the Denbighshire County Council website and are available in a range of formats, including Welsh, to meet legislative accessibility standards

Children's Services Gateway - A project to improve practice and process within the Gateway is underway, after feedback from CIW's assurance check and follow up targeted inspection. Additional staff have been allocated to the Gateway, including increased management capacity.

Development of Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) – Denbighshire along with partners in North Wales Police are discussing the development of a MASH model in order to establish a more effective multi-agency strategy discussion mechanism.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

A dedicated officer has been assigned to Denbighshire that has resulted in strategy meetings taking place at a set time each day, allowing other agencies to join as appropriate. Work on this project is ongoing but all agencies are committed to improving the opportunity to discuss child protection referrals in a multi-agency forum.

Child Practice Review Learning – Denbighshire practitioners have access to Community Care Inform which is a website to assist professionals working with children and families to make and evidence decisions and assessments. All staff who have signed up receive regular e-mail bulletins on trending information, research and learning from child practice review and details of new members of staff are forwarded to set up accounts.

This is what we still have to do

To continue working with partners to establish a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
--

To continue reviewing and monitoring the practice and processes within the the Children's Services Gateway
--



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

This is what we said we would do

- Further expand the work of the Edge of Care team in Adult Services to reduce social isolation, loneliness, improving health and developing independence skills for citizens.
- Develop provision that will provide appropriate accommodation with ongoing intensive person-centred support for Looked After Children with the highest complexity of need.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

- Continue to build upon work done so far and further develop Assistive Technologies to increase access and knowledge within Community Support Services and the community.

This is what we have done and achieved

During the year to 31 March, 4 looked after children have experienced one or more changes in school that were not due to transitional arrangements. This is a 44% decrease from the figure of 9 in the previous year.

Older People

Denbigh was chosen as the first community in North Wales to help shape the future of dementia care. The new, innovative Denbigh Community Listening Campaign was launched in March 2023 and aims to bring the regional dementia groups together with local residents, to share stories about the community and what is important to help to shape how local people with dementia are cared for.

The campaign puts local people at the centre of the discussion around dementia care. Along with support from Improvement Cymru and Citizens UK, the Denbigh Community Listening Campaign aims for local people to co-produce a plan for how support for residents of Denbigh should be tailored.

The aim is to ensure people with dementia have the best possible experience of living in their own home and participating in community life.

From local councillors, community volunteers and activity group leaders to shop owners and third sector representatives, community leaders will take a leading role in getting the conversation started across Denbigh.

Through talking and listening to people in Denbigh, stories will be collected about what it's like to live in the area and about the current dementia support, to establish a vision for the future representing the whole community's view.

Within our 2 residential care homes, Dolwen and Cysgod Y Gaer, we have had a range of digital technology equipment installed that provides leisure activities and supports those suffering from dementia, such as the Rempod, RITA (Reminiscence and Interactive Therapy Activities), tablets and iPads.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023



In both Dolwen, Denbigh and Cysgod Y Gaer, Corwen we have strong links with the local community. This has seen neighbouring schools coming into the homes and undertaking inter-generational work on activities including arts, crafts and music.

Dolwen Care Home, Denbigh started a new music therapy project delivered by music therapy charity Nordoff and Robbins. The Denbighshire care home hosts the musical sessions every Monday across 12 weeks, either in small groups or on an individual basis. The sessions taking place include interactive and collaborative music making, where residents have the opportunity to sing, play instruments, listen, and even dance, if they wish.

Music therapy can support people with all kinds of conditions: from autism to dementia, learning difficulties to brain injuries, life-limiting illnesses to mental health issues, grief, and trauma. Shaped by more than 60 years of practice, Nordoff and Robbins has a unique approach to music therapy. The charity's trained music therapists aim to break through the barriers caused by life-limiting illness, disability, and social isolation.

Cysgod Y Gaer recently enjoyed a day filled with chances to meet a whole host of new furry (and scaly) friends. The residents and their families met with a number of animals, including rabbits, guinea pigs, a tortoise, corn snakes, a 10-foot python, a little Shetland pony and lizards.

The event was planned so that residents and their families could enjoy the experience of meeting the animals together and was hailed as a huge success.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

The animals were supplied by Animal Encounters, a local company. Catherine Roberts, Assistant Manager at Cysgod y Gaer Care Home said: “What a great afternoon had by all, from the young to a lady of 102 years old. It was lovely to see everyone interacting. The pandemic took precious time away from family and friends and there was so much joy and laughter to be seen by all ages”.

The residents and staff in Dolwen also enjoyed a visit from a local pony.



In response to the Covid-19 pandemic and the need to support people in their own homes, Denbighshire Community Support Services set up a volunteering service to help take the pressure off traditional services. The ‘Edge of Care’ team help people all-across the county. Jackie is an Edge of Care volunteer, and has a very special friend who accompanies her on her home visits - her beautiful dog, Maisie. Maisie is the youngest volunteer on the team, and is almost 3 years old (in human years). She is less than 2 feet high, but is a massive stress reliever and help to the residents she visits weekly. The Australian Labradoodle is extremely well behaved and loves nothing more than receiving treats and being fussed. Whilst on the home visits, Jackie has a cup of tea with the resident and chats about their day and any needs they may have, whilst Maisie gladly receives some well-deserved treats.



Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

On Maisie, volunteer and owner Jackie said: “She was going to be given to a rescue centre and I couldn’t have that. So, we rescued her and to be honest she has rescued me too, and everyone else she meets really. I’ve had her for nearly two years now. Maisie never misses her visits, and we even visited a resident on Christmas day, so they could spend time with her. She’s a really calm dog and that’s why she is great when she comes along with me”.

Maisie has quickly become the best of friends with the members of the service and the citizens they support and they always look forward to weekly visits from Jackie and Maisie.

A Prestatyn resident who is an Edge of Care service user and has regular visits from both Jackie and Maisie said: “I am very glad for her coming, I feel like we have both saved each other in a way. Maisie has helped me with confidence, and I go out of the house more now”.

People with Learning Disabilities

Our Complex Disability Team get involved with key events and milestones in citizen’s lives and, in the first instance, will always strive to enable citizen’s to access mainstream services and resources. But recognise when specialist services and support are required.

Due to a lack of resources the moving in group was developed as a direct response to meet unmet need regarding learning the necessary life skills required to move into more independent living. We had a situation where 3 quite large community living projects were running concurrently – 8 people moving to Awel y Dyffryn, 3 to properties in Denbigh and 4 to Meliden. At this time the Just Enough Support scheme through Co-Options which provides life skills that people need to meet their chosen outcomes did not have the capacity to see every individual in time.

In Meliden, 4 tenants were moving at the same time and the idea arose of providing the life skills for 4 tenants at once, “the Moving In group”, to ensure they had suitable life skills to leave family homes and live more independently. Topics covered include - keeping safe & secure, what to do if there are water leaks or power cuts, cooking meals & healthy eating, local bus routes and nearest shops, money management and how to be a good neighbour.

Sessions were run by Co-options but co-produced by the Complex Disability Team. The 4 people got on well in early sessions and found they gave each other strong support, so continued with that support outside of the formal sessions.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

The group came out of necessity but the outcome was more than anticipated so the Complex Disability Team now hope to reproduce it when a similar opportunity arises. It was tried with 2 people moving in Denbigh but with a different agency and it was not as successful. When we have another 'own front door build' we will try to reproduce the moving-in group

Following the Covid-19 pandemic it was proposed is to stop running Popty, a Work Opportunity catering service and focus on providing learning opportunities, skill development and new enterprises. After engagement and consultation with citizens accessing the service previously, their families and practitioners a decision was taken to instead develop Popty as a learning academy. The service was relocated to Denbigh into more appropriate premises, to allow us to develop a service that was going to meet the ongoing needs of people with learning disabilities, as well as future service users.

Priority was given to the promotion of Health & Wellbeing through the provision of training opportunities and activities such as: cooking classes; food hygiene; healthy eating; exercise; wellbeing and personal safety. The aim is that citizens will develop tangible outcomes and life skills which promote independence, choice and control as well as improved physical and mental health.

In both Y Bont, which is based in Ruthin and Popty we have installed Promethean Interactive Screens and this has had a huge impact on citizen engagement. They are used for a variety of different tasks: to play interactive quizzes, display and create recipe cards, watch and follow You Tube guides e.g. recipes and to do group games. Every Friday both services use their screens to join an online music session and it is fantastic to see everyone enjoying themselves on the big screen.



This is complemented by the Mobi projector at Y Bont which allows our citizens to interact with games and touch screen technology on the floor – it encourages physical activity and is a big hit.

Both services have had an advisor come in to show them how to make the most out of Ipads and tablets. Popty has run a course for its citizens on how to use various functions on these devices to promote independence, both at home and in the work place.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Global Resettlement Team

To ensure the Ukrainian families being supported in Denbighshire are provided with the right help, advice and information to find employment, a range of provision was sourced from Jobcentre Plus, Working Denbighshire and Third Sector partners. Specific employment training was delivered with ongoing support to find jobs, along with ESOL (English as a Second Language) training. We linked in with Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC) to seek opportunities for the Ukrainian families to participate in society and help them to engage with various events within our communities.

Children's services

Education and Children's Services continue to support care experienced young people to access post 16 training and education, offering financial and practical support to attend college or apprenticeship's. Care experienced young people who choose to attend University are well supported, with services ensuring that all grants are accessed and that students have appropriate accommodation over the summer months. We have worked closely with Working Denbighshire to ensure care experienced young people have access to a range of employment and training opportunities and are supported to prevent becoming Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET).

Barnardo's Care Leaver Service (Personal Advisers) work with care experienced young people and care leavers to support their transition to adulthood. Barnardo's have undertaken a number of group sessions during 2022-2023 for care leavers including;

- day excursion to Glan Llyn outdoor pursuits centre
- 3-day residential to Glan Llyn outdoor pursuits centre where young people took part in kayaking, high ropes, paddle boarding, climbing, orienteering, archery, bowling and a basic substance misuse awareness session from Young People's Substance Misuse Service (CYPSMS).
- a trip to visit the 'Knife Angel' (national monument against violence and aggression)
- Cinema and Restaurant outing, young people completed work around budgeting and were able to socialise with peers.
- Young people have also taken advantage of leisure passes previously purchased through Moon Dance funding. Young people are reporting a positive impact on their emotional health and well-being.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

This is what we still have to do

To continue working with Age Connects and Conwy County Borough Council to become an Age Friendly Community. To continue with the development of the action plan that will be submitted with the application to the World Health Organisation.

To continue to develop a bid with Digital Communities Wales to secure funding to employ staff to help residents use and benefit from a range of digital technology within our care homes

To ensure that our telecare provision is ready for the National Digital switchover in 2025 as the majority of our equipment currently is only suitable for analogue phone lines.

Establish closer working relationships with Working Denbighshire to reduce the number of young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET)

Enhance the supported living options within Denbighshire to allow more young people to remain living within the county.

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

This is what we said we would do

- Implement the actions of the State of Caring Action Plan to review and develop services that meet the needs of carers in Denbighshire.
- Continue with the development of Bwthyn Y Ddol and the multi-disciplinary approach for children on the edge of care.
- Development an in-county residential short breaks & emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire.

This is what we have done and achieved

15 children returned home from care during the year. Last year's figure was 18 children.

On 31 March 2023, 18 looked after children had had three or more placements during the year. Last year's figure was 19 children.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Carers

We recognise the substantial contribution that unpaid carers make and put high importance on ensuring the best outcomes for unpaid carers. We are continuing to work collaboratively to strengthen support for carers by listening to what local carers say about how we can better meet their needs.

Progress of the State of Caring Action Plan was slower than initially hoped, due to various external pressures and internal staffing issues, but the actions identified in the plan are now being taken forward as part of wider work to support the implementation of the National Carers Strategy 2021 and Carers Charter. This will continue during 2023 – 2024.

The legacy of the Covid-19 Pandemic, rising costs of living and pressures on health and social care services are adding to the stress felt by unpaid carers. They are anxious and uncertain about what the future holds. They don't feel recognised or respected as experts in their own lives. Statistics tell us that more carers are living in poverty, cutting back on food and reducing work hours or leaving work all together. Many struggle to maintain their own wellbeing and often overlook their own needs because of their caring responsibilities. Carers report that support is often not available when they would most benefit from it.

To address some of these issues, we have a project delivered in partnership with NEWCIS and Citizens Advice Denbighshire. It provides practical and emotional support plus financial or benefits checks for those carers who are most at risk of isolation and carer breakdown. There is a waiting list for this service and further funding is being sought to ensure the longer term sustainability of the project.

Carer Assessors are reintroducing home visits and re-establishing relationships through attendance at Talking Points. They are strengthening the provision of information advice and assistance in collaboration with community navigators and other organisations supporting carers.

Children's services

Ending Physical Punishment legislation was cascaded out and formed part of the training to schools and staff across education services. All school staff received awareness to respond to this change where concerns were apparent and required intervention.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

This information was also sent out to parents / carers of children across Denbighshire at the time of implementation.

Edge of Care Program sits within the Therapeutic Service and aims to:

- Support families to address their problems and make positive changes that can reduce the risks for their children, as well as helping them make a positive contribution to the community in which they live.
- Provide intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple complex problems, where there is or has been a strong possibility of a child becoming looked after
- Enable a child's circumstances to improve and to give the family skills so they can sustain their own improvements.

The program has a clear focus on providing intensive home-based intervention for the whole family where children are considered to be 'on the edge of care'. The Edge of Care program also provides a similarly high intensity intervention for care- experienced children including those in residential settings where the plan is for them to return to their family of origin or general foster care or children who have been adopted where significant support is required to prevent their placement from faltering. The Edge of Care program works within the Integrated Family Support Team model of assessment and intervention and provides the intervention over a maximum of 12 weeks delivering practical short and building community/wider resources using clear outcome focused goals co-developed with the child / young person and their family.

Bwthyn Y Ddol - unfortunately the work on the regional assessment centre has seen significant delay and work is unlikely to start on site until the summer of 2023, in the meanwhile work is going to develop a temporary assessment centre.

In county residential short breaks and emergency care provision – due to capacity and resources, this work has not got as far as we would have hoped and is something we will be progressing during the next year.

This is what we still have to do

To improve the availability of short breaks and respite for carers in Denbighshire.

To continue implementing the actions in the State of Caring Action plan

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

To continue with the development of the Bwthyn Y Ddol regional assessment centre in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council and BCUHB.

Development of an in-county residential short breaks & emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire.

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

This is what we said we would do

- Commission specialist supported accommodation for young people with complex needs that is person-centred and provides sustained support to mitigate the risk of the young person falling into a future cycle of homelessness.
- Work with partners to promote social care as a career opportunity by building on our recruitment to care and career pathways for young people
- Continue to review and modernise our offer of day and work services for people with complex disabilities.

This is what we have done and achieved

The total number of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in: a) the 12 months since leaving care was 10 (5 care leavers in 21/22) and b) the 13 - 24 months since leaving care was 7 (5 care leavers in 21/22).

7 care leavers have experienced homelessness during the year, within 12 months of leaving care (9 care leavers in 21/22).

Older People

The pandemic was particularly tough for care home residents especially when visiting was limited. Those who do not have family or friends visiting comment that they still sometimes feel lonely. This led to us supporting Book of You who have received a grant from Age Friendly Communities to arrange for visitors to those that request them, in 4 homes in the south of the county.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Awel Y Dyffryn



The first citizens moved into the new Grŵp Cynefin Extra Care Housing facility in Denbigh, Awel Y Dyffryn, in February 2022. Currently, of the 42 2-bedroom flats and 24 1-bedroom flats, there is only 1 vacancy. Abacare have 11 members of staff providing on-site care packages, 24 hrs a day to those who need them, and emergency care can also be provided. Activities on site include bingo, quizzes and film nights too. There is also an on-site hair salon.

Excellent feedback has been received from citizens, staff and the local community.

People with Learning Disabilities

Complex Disability Team staff support citizen's and families with future planning, starting when citizens transition from children to adult services. We hold a housing needs database that informs future housing need and shapes services now and for the future. Supporting and facilitating citizen's moving into different types of supported living options is a huge part of CDT work and can take many years for outcomes to come fruition or to be realised to enable citizen's to meet desired outcomes.

The housing needs database has this year enabled us to plan for and identify suitable new homes for 3 individuals within our current supported living homes, providing varying levels of support. Two individuals have been able to move directly from college into their local community. The Complex Disability team have also used the housing needs database to evidence the need for future accommodation across the county and are working with a local housing association to develop a new accessible home for four more individuals, meeting their desired outcomes and reducing admissions to residential settings.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Meifod, one of our Day and Work Opportunity Services reopened in the spring of 2022, following them being suspended during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A significant investment through grant funding was made to improve aspects of the buildings in which they are located, including an upgrade of the heating and ventilation systems. The service also invested in both a 3D and Laser Printer. As a result of this we are able to offer more activities other than those associated with making garden furniture.

The new Boxer Laser Cutter has allowed the service to diversify into a different market and evolve with a different product range. The new technology allows our citizens to embrace a new way of working away from traditional woodwork with more of an emphasis on creativity and computer-based design. Working with the new software and understanding how the machine works will also open up more work possibilities going forward.



The individuals at Meifod are acquiring new skills that will give them experience of how modern machines work within the industry. The laser machine is also complementing our existing garden furniture production by being able to add the Meifod logo to our products, a service that we previously used to outsource. This ensures that both historic and modern techniques can work together.

During 2023 – 2024 we plan to maximise the use of the 3D printer to produce diverse, eco-friendly plastic products such as plant pots and mini gardens.

Children's services

Basic Income for Care Leavers pilot

In June 2022 Welsh Government launched a basic income pilot for eligible care experienced young people.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Education and Children's Services have worked closely with Citizens Advice Denbighshire to ensure that eligible care leavers have independent financial advice regarding this pilot and are supported to ensure that they are not disadvantaged by being part of the pilot scheme.

Education and Children's Services continue to foster close links with housing and homelessness to improve accommodation opportunities for young people. The establishment of a monthly meeting between internal services and external partners has ensured that the housing needs of children looked after, care leavers and 16/17 experiencing homelessness are understood and appropriate priority given to this cohort.

This partnership working is also allowing greater future planning to meet the complex needs of individual young people alongside developing wider provision to support care leavers.

We have provided groups, activities, and events for children, young people and families through our Families First, Flying Start, and commissioned projects. Covid-19 impacted children, young people and families, some of whom have experienced isolation, anxiety, and depression. For some families, it has meant our staff working intensely with them to support and encourage them to come along.

We continue to improve engagement with our hard-to-reach families, although in some cases we are still working with them on a 1-2-1 basis in order to get to a stage where they feel confident enough to venture out and about to meet others. For some this can be a language and cultural barrier and we continue to gain their trust at their desired pace.

We have met with Working Denbighshire to look at what support can be offered to individuals interested in becoming childminders, and also support for older Young Carers.

Our Internal Care Management Team and Human Resources Recruitment Specialist have undertaken a number of initiatives over the last year to encourage and support young people to think about social care as a career. This has included attendance at the following:

- 2 events at Rhyl College
- Careers Wales events at Prestatyn High School, Christ the Word School and also Choose your Future Careers Festival at Kinmel Kinspa for Denbighshire and Conwy Schools
- Llandrillo College Freshers' Fairs – 1 in Rhyl and 1 Rhos on Sea

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

- Working Denbighshire Careers Event for 16-35 year olds
- 2 Health and Social Care events in Coleg Cambria, 1 in Deeside and 1 in Yale College
- Working Denbighshire Taster Sessions online event for social care
- Meet the employer event – Coleg Cambria

During 2022 – 23 we formalised placements for Social Care and lined up a number of providers to match with potential students coming through the College-based City & Guilds route at both level 2 & level 3. This wasn't as successful as we'd hoped. Although we had a more formal recruitment and induction strategy in place, students were struggling with transport issues and getting to placements etc. This pilot was only run with one particular college, so in 2023-24 we are aiming to widen this audience.

We did successfully host in our locality Teams 3 level 3 students who expressed an interest in Social Work/Social Care / Occupational Therapy. All 3 students provided positive verbal feedback about their placements.

This is what we still have to do

To commission specialist supported accommodation for young people with complex needs that is person-centred and provides sustained support to mitigate the risk of the young person falling into a future cycle of homelessness.
--

To continue to develop technology within our day and work services to increase participation and engagement of people with complex disabilities.
--

To continue to work in partnership and develop innovative ways to attract more young people into social care as a career.

5. How we do what we do

a) Our workforce and how we support their professional roles

For the first time we have introduced Domestic Skills studies for domestic workers in care settings. It was identified this part of the workforce often felt neglected, so this package of training has been devised with them in mind and incorporates updates and refreshers on all aspects of health & safety, infection prevention and control, CoSHH, manual handling of objects and record keeping.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

We were also able to deliver a 'train the trainer' event for participants to be able to deliver the Manual Handling Passport. A working group will be established to monitor consistency and quality of training provided.

We have established closer links with BCUHB Care Home Corporate Quality Development Team and attend regular Joint Regional Training & Education Group meetings to map training which covers both areas and share resources and contacts.

A big part of this work will be to agree regional mandatory training for social care workers aside from the expectations of All Wales Induction Framework (AWIF).

Recruitment and retention remains a Corporate priority, with dedicated HR time provided to Education and Children's Services to improve recruitment and retention across the service and primarily into social work posts. There have been a number of positive outcomes from this focussed work including a revised vacancy pack, revised starting grade and progression pathway and support for staff to act as Practice Educators for social work students. Recruitment and retention will remain a priority area with continued focus over the coming year.

In early 2023 we successfully appointed a new Social Work Practice Learning Coordinator who will focus specifically on student social work placements; developing opportunities amongst existing services, but also seeking placement experiences with our partners who are able to host. They will also manage our relationship with the universities, supporting to shape the way social work education is delivered.

As a part of this work Denbighshire, along with Wrexham and Flintshire are working with our partner Higher Education Institution (HEI), Glyndwr University, to develop a part time route to the Social Work Degree. It is hoped this will be available from September 2023.

College placements for students studying the City & Guilds Level 2 & Level 3 Health and Social Care Qualification have been developed in collaboration with operational teams and Denbighshire's Human Resources team to ensure that we have more effective systems in place to support work placements in the future.

National Safeguarding Standards were introduced in October 2022 and a mapping exercise is now taking place to look at job roles in comparison to the requirements of the standards.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Denbighshire Contracts and Commissioning team work closely with the Workforce Development team to ensure that information about resources, training and other support available is shared with all providers on a regular basis. They hold regular meetings with providers to ensure that there are clear channels of communication.

The Workforce Development team have invested in Virtual Reality to support training and intervention where understanding of abuse and trauma are required. They will primarily be used as tools to support interventions, but will also enhance learning experiences. As the year progresses we hope to develop this programme of learning and discuss future use and investment with partner agencies such as Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Education and North Wales Police.

Education & Children's Services now have Collaborative Communication Mentors who are able to deliver training to new staff to support a service wide commitment to strengths based approaches when working with families.

Through support from the Social Care Workforce Sustainability Grant we have been able to commission a series of courses to support the wider workforce in being able to address training needs within their own services or organisations. In 2022 we were able to deliver a Level 3 Award in Education & Training allowing participants to run learning events themselves. 10 participants across Adults and Children's services engaged with the 4-day training event and we will now establish a working group to ensure consistency and quality in any training delivery.

Sheila Mullins, a care assistant in Dolwen Residential Home, Denbigh was a finalist in the Social Care Wales Accolades 2022 in the 'We Care Wales' award. Sheila was nominated by her line manager, who said "Sheila has been nominated for her dedication to the residents of the home she has worked at for more than 20 years. Sheila always goes the extra mile to help the people she looks after, making it her goal to get to know every individual in her care and find out the little things that matter to them. Even in some of our darkest times Sheila has always found a way to be positive and that was infectious to staff and residents alike."

More Than Just Words

Alaw Pierce, Service Manager won the Social Care Wales Caring in Welsh Award 2022. There is a [short video on Social Care Wales's website](#) that tells a little bit more about Alaw.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023



Alongside Alaw, Catherine Roberts, Manager of Cysgod Y Gaer Residential Care Home, Corwen was a runner up in this category.

Staff attend weekly catch ups in the medium of Welsh to ensure that those who are learning keep it fresh in their minds. Short and long term Welsh language training is attended, to include week long total immersion courses at the Welsh language centre in Nant Gwrtheyrn on the Llŷn peninsula.

Providers are encouraged to provide support bilingually and to ensure that residents / attendees get support in their language of choice. They are also encouraged to distinguish between first language Welsh speakers and others, by using memory aides such as logos on bedroom doors and on personal files.



A Welsh language promotion week was held at Prestatyn Community Resource Team. This included a session from Margaret Watkins, Welsh Language Champion within Adult Services and Meilyr Emrys, BCUHB Welsh Language Lead, talking to us about using the Welsh language in the office, on e-mail and when answering the phones.

Posters were displayed to help and encourage staff to use a little Welsh where they can and of course to encourage staff to talk in Welsh to each other.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Children's services

A list has been developed identifying who within Children's Service speaks fluent Welsh, are a moderate Welsh speaker or are learning Welsh. The list is regularly updated and shared with staff within the Service.

This helps with any queries that non-Welsh speaking staff might have on e.g. referrals and identify Welsh speaking Social Workers to speak to children / young people, parents and professionals. Staff are regularly reminded of the Welsh Language Standards and to contact their Champion if requiring help with anything relating to the use of the Welsh Language (e.g. e-mail signatures, telephone messages etc).

Education & Children's Services have a Facebook page in both Welsh and English and a 'Closed' Group for Foster Carers in which all information is published in both Welsh and English.

Staff are offered and provided with computer software for checking spelling and grammar in Welsh, and Welsh language interfaces for software (where an interface exists) i.e. Cysill, Cysgair.

They are also regularly reminded that messages such as Out of Office and answer phone messages must be bi-lingual. The Welsh Language Champion supports staff to ensure their answer phone messages and written responses are accurate.

The Service has taken part in 2 self-assessment analyses:

- Compliance with Welsh Language standards
- The Welsh Language Commissioner's Questionnaire – about current practices of public organisations in terms of promoting Welsh language services, and the data that exists on the use of Welsh language services

As part of a Joint Inspection of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) in February 2023, Children's Services were inspected by Care Inspectorate Wales and the Head of Service was asked about the Welsh Language and the way we promote it within the Service. Inspectors were provided with information on how we adhere to the standards and promote usage and their findings will be mentioned in the final report which will be published later in the year.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Through the Flying Start Programme, the offer of free childcare for two year-olds has been rolled out across Wales, with a particular emphasis on Welsh Medium provision and support. Through our Childcare and Play element, we have Welsh medium childcare in Rhyl, and will be extending Welsh medium provision in Prestatyn, subject to funding through the Early Years and Childcare Capital Grant. This will provide families with more choice. Being able to attract more first language Welsh staff to join the Authority is encouraging.

b) Our financial resources and how we plan for the future

Monthly budget monitoring takes place for both Adult and Children's social care, including Homelessness and regular finance reports are presented to the Senior Management Teams forecasting the year-end position.

Changes since the previous month's report alongside projected pressures are highlighted and discussed with mitigating actions where possible, although this continues to be a challenge when managing demand-led statutory Services. The annual budget is set following a lengthy process of anticipating future pressures and identifying savings across all services whilst engaging with elected members and others.

In the medium term, the Council has a rolling three-year Medium Term Financial Plan which sets out the estimated funding position over the period and, working with services, builds in estimates of required savings and additional funding requirements. This medium term planning process helped to identify and provide, through the council's budget, additional funding in 22/23. This helped to support growing pressures mainly due to annual care fee inflation and the rising costs of homelessness accommodation and Adult Social Care (£3.1m) and Children's Services (£0.750m). The projected inflation cost for 23/24 has had a significant impact on the additional funding required and an unprecedented increase to the social care budgets has been applied to Homelessness accommodation and Adult Social Care (£8.2m) and Children's Services (£2.0m).

It is recognised that the Council faces growing financial challenges going forward, due to the growth in inflation and demand outstripping increases in funding, and that all departments will need to play their part in identifying reductions in pressures and savings over the next few years.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

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 officers also meet regularly with Heads of Service and the Management Executive Team.

c) Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability

Working in partnership with a wide range of organisations is critical to the successful delivery of both statutory and non-statutory services across both our Adult and Children's services. In Denbighshire we have some very long-standing and successful partnerships delivering collaboratively to provide the necessary support to some of our most vulnerable citizens across the county.

As resources become more stretched, working in partnership is essential to achieving the right outcomes for our citizens. Early intervention and prevention work is vital to ensure that we are minimising the complexity of need and addressing support needs as early as possible to reduce the reliance on statutory services. This is evident in some of the examples of partnerships detailed below.

The multi-agency Ageing Well in Denbighshire group has grown in attendance since merging with Dementia Friendly Denbighshire and this group has created an action plan describing the role that each member takes in getting us closer to our aim of having an age and dementia friendly county.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) is a key partner in delivering seamless health and social care. Weekly Complex case meetings continue with a multi-disciplinary team approach consisting of all GP surgeries within Central and South Denbighshire, Pharmacy, Mental Health team, District Nurses, Third sector, Social Care and Advanced Nurse Practitioners etc. From April 2022 to March 2023, there were a total of 1976 complex case discussions held.

A multi-disciplinary team has been established within our Complex Disability service for a number of years and it prides itself in working in partnership with Health colleagues.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

The team recently organised a staff development day due to the high number of new employees within the team, to ensure joint working remains central to person centred practice across the team.

In her report 'Rethinking Respite for People Affected by Dementia' (2018), The Older People's Commissioner for Wales concludes that much needs to change in terms of respite: a fundamental shift in our thinking and practice.

Rethinking the language and terminology we use around respite; consulting with people living with dementia and carers, using their knowledge and experiences to develop and shape models of care and support are just some of the areas of focus.

At an operational level we work with our neighbouring local authorities on joint initiatives and projects such as Bwthyn Y Ddol with Conwy County Borough Council and we are working closely with Flintshire County Council to procure a new finance system to support our financial assessment team in Adult Social Services.

All Wales Protocol for reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults

Welsh Government published the All Wales Protocol for reducing the criminalisation of care experienced children and young adults on 28th March 2022. The protocol is intended to help all professionals who come into contact with care experienced children and young adults while carrying out their work, in sharing a common framework of principles and expectations informed by an approach that actively promotes children's rights and which safeguards and promotes their wellbeing.

The protocol is a framework for good practice for those working with care experienced children up to the age of 18 and young adults up to the age of 25. It aims to avoid their prosecution wherever possible and appropriate, by encouraging a response to incidents which reduces the likelihood of criminalisation, offending or reoffending. Managers, Social Workers and Social Care Practitioners have attended multi-agency training and workshops aimed at embedding this protocol across our service and within our work with partner agencies.

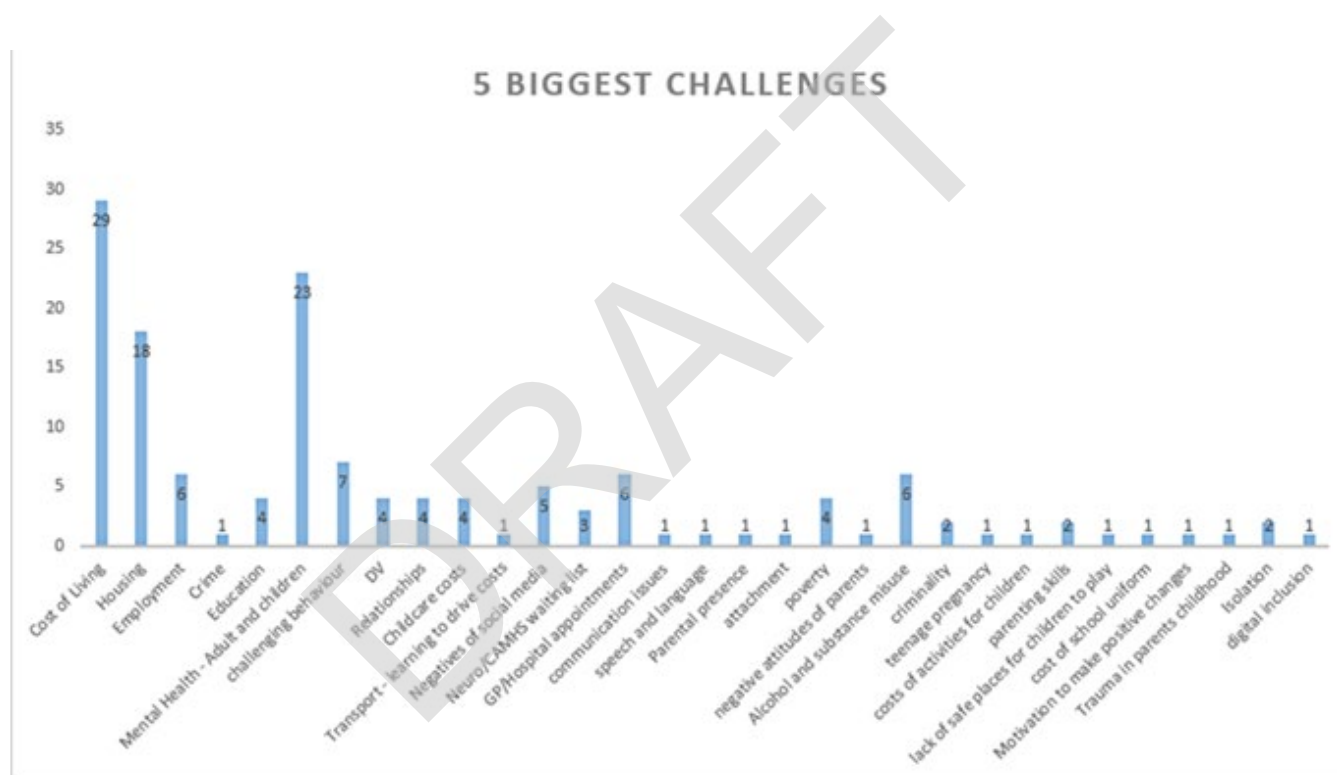
Strategically and operationally, Families First and Flying Start work closely with our internal teams and services, regional partners, and commissioned services.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Our ethos is to work in partnership as much as possible in order for children, young people, and families to achieve the very best outcomes.

We are working with the Healthy Start Scheme to highlight accessibility of a healthy diet for low-income families, and work closely with colleagues within the Tackling Poverty Group, and Food Poverty Group to mitigate the cost of living crisis for our families as much as we can.

Working with North Wales Public Service Lab based at Glyndwr University we are looking at data from Public Health Wales to consider how our communities work with us to deliver co-produced services. We are starting with the 5 biggest challenges that our families face. Please find below, a graph of information we've collected so far during this new piece of work.



We have administered and designed jointly with Wrexham, Conwy, and Flintshire, the National Young Carers ID Card, joining in with Anglesey and Gwynedd where possible.

This included launching the card at Wrexham Football Ground where match proceeds were donated to third sector organisations supporting our Young Carers.

The council has very robust internal governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of Community Support Services and Children's and Education Services.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Reports are taken to various Scrutiny Committees during the year to enable Elected Members to scrutinise policy and performance relating to social services, and to monitor the progress of any actions required in response to the Director's annual report or CIW'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 Care 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 Corporate Executive Team (CET); Senior Leadership Team (SLT); Scrutiny; and Cabinet, and various reports being presented to scrutiny periodically on service specific issues, such as Homelessness, Contracts and Commissioning and Compliments and Complaints.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Accessing further information and key documents

Glossary of terms

Carers Charter

The charter had been produced in consultation with local adult and young carers and Denbighshire Carer's Strategy Group to ensure all carers receive understanding and the best quality support. See details available on [DCC](#) website.

Community Navigators

Work alongside the local authority's Single Point of Access and conduct a What Matters assessment to determine what help they can provide and/or signpost you to suitable support in the community. See details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Community Resource Teams (CRTs)

Offer a more holistic approach to community based health and social care with health staff (including community nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and older person's mental health teams) and social services staff (including social workers, occupational therapists and social care practitioners) all based together. There are nine joint teams in Denbighshire and Conwy focusing on working closer together to provide care closer to home, offering better provision for the population and an increased focus and investment on prevention and early intervention. See details in [County Voice](#).

Denbigh Community Listening Campaign

Denbigh has been chosen as the first community in North Wales to help shape the future of dementia care. The Denbigh Community Listening Campaign aims to bring the regional dementia groups together with local residents, to share stories about the community and what is important to help to shape how local people with dementia are cared for.

Putting local people at the centre of the discussion around dementia care, along with support from Improvement Cymru and Citizens UK, the Denbigh Community Listening Campaign aims for local people to co-produce a plan for how support should be tailored for residents of Denbigh, to ensure people with dementia have the best possible experience of living in their own home and participating in community life.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)

Aims to promote, support, enable and develop a sustainable Third Sector in Denbighshire. Supports organisations to deliver their services in an effective and sustainable manner by provision of low cost training courses, funding advice and information, supporting volunteers to enable them to get more involved in their communities. See details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT)

DBT is a type of [talking therapy](#). It's based on [cognitive behavioural therapy \(CBT\)](#), but it's specially adapted for people who feel emotions very intensely. The aim of DBT is to help you:

- Understand and accept your difficult feelings
- Learn skills to manage them
- Become able to make positive changes in your life

'Dialectical' means trying to understand how two things that seem opposite could both be true. For example, accepting yourself and changing your behaviour might feel contradictory. But DBT teaches that it's possible for you to achieve both these goals together.

Edge of Care Team - Adults

The Edge of Care team is based within Adult Social Care Services and recruits, trains and deploys Volunteers. The Team has demonstrated how the project can positively impact on planned care pathways, supporting discharge from hospital for citizens, working closely with our Community Resource Teams in delivering a 'team around the individual' approach, reducing demand for traditional planned care.

Edge of Care Service - Children

This is support for vulnerable families whose children are on the at risk of becoming looked after by the local authority. Details available on [Welsh Government](#) website.

Herbert Protocol

The aim of the scheme is to help keep people who are living with dementia safe, particularly if, as their condition progresses they start to 'walk about' which is not unusual following diagnosis.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Often people will only travel a short distance, maybe into the garden or down the street and will return a short time later. However, some people can get lost and go missing. This can lead to feelings of confusion, fear and vulnerability for individuals and their families, particularly at night time or in inclement weather conditions.

The Herbert Protocol is designed to assist in locating individuals safe and well should they go missing, and provide reassurance to family and friends that the police have all the information they need to help locate the individual. [The Herbert Protocol is a national initiative adopted by North Wales Police \(external website\)](#), as well as many other police forces around the UK.

Joint Assessment Family Framework (JAFF)

The JAFF should be a streamlined system which delivers a holistic assessment of the needs of the whole family, leading to earlier and more comprehensive diagnosis of need; the development of a bespoke package of support to aid early prevention of potentially negative outcomes; and the promotion of family strengths to develop resilience which should help the family to cope better in the future.

Find out more about family support via the [Denbighshire County Council website](#).

Liberty Protection Safeguards

Planned to come into force in April 2022, they will provide protection for people aged 16 and above who are, or who need to be, deprived of their liberty in order to enable their care or treatment and lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements.

People who might have a Liberty Protection Safeguards authorisation include those with dementia, autism and learning disabilities who lack the relevant capacity. Details available on [Gov.UK](#) website.

Mind of My Own app

A mobile phone app that makes it easier for children and young people to talk to their social workers and other practitioners and have their voices heard. Details available on the company [website](#).

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Moving with Dignity

Since 2019, an Occupational Therapist has been working on this project within the Review Team, moving forward with practical plans to implement changes to the way Denbighshire residents are assessed for and receive moving and handling support. She has been tasked with scoping the issue, researching best practice, and identifying ways of providing effective training and reaching the right staffing groups (including local authority, health colleagues and provider services). This potentially has the benefit of speeding up the hospital discharge process and it could have a positive impact on the well-being and sense of control of citizens and their carers, increasing resilience and engagement.

North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)

Deliver information, one to one support, training and counselling to unpaid carers in North East Wales. Details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Single Point of Access (SPoA)

The team consists of experienced staff from health, social care, and the third Sector, who are able to provide information, advice and assistance about the services available. SPoA acts as the 'front door to services' to ensure you receive the right care, in the right place by people who have the right skills at the right time, first time. Details available of [DCC](#) website.

Social Services and Well-being Act (SSWBA) 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA) 2016

The SSWBA provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. More information available on the [Social Care Wales](#) website.

The RISCA strengthens protection for those who need it, establishes a regulatory system that is in-line with the SSWBA and creates a regulatory system that is centred around people who need care and support, and the social care workforce. The Act provides the statutory framework for the regulation and inspection of social care in Wales. More information available on the [Social Care Wales](#) website.

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2022 - 2023

Southwark cases

This guidance has been issued jointly by the Secretary of State for Education and the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government. It revises the guidance that was issued in April 2010.

Government guidance sets out the respective duties of children's services and housing services to secure or provide accommodation for 16 and 17 year-old children who are homeless or in need of accommodation. The [guidance](#) was originally issued following the [judgment by the House of Lords in the case of R \(G\) v London Borough of Southwark \(2009\)](#). It has now been updated to reflect changes in homelessness and children's legislation.

DRAFT