

<b>Report to</b>	<b>Performance Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>18th July 2024</b>
<b>Lead Member / Officer</b>	<b>Councillor Elen Heaton / Councillor Gill German / Nicola Stubbins, Corporate Director Social Services and Education</b>
<b>Head of Service</b>	<b>Ann Lloyd, Head of Service: Adult Social Care &amp; Homelessness/Rhiain Morrllle, Head of Children’s Services</b>
<b>Report authors</b>	<b>Ann Lloyd, Head of Service: Adult Social Care &amp; Homelessness/Rhiain Morrllle, Head of Children’s Services</b>
<b>Title</b>	<b>Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023 - 2024</b>

## **1. What is the report about?**

- 1.1. Every Statutory Director of Social Services in Wales is required to produce an annual report which summarises their view of the effectiveness of the authority’s social care services during the previous financial year and priorities for improvement for the year ahead.
- 1.2. The draft annual report for 2023 – 2024 is attached at Appendix 1. The report is intended to provide the public with an honest picture of services in Denbighshire and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges faced.

## **2. What is the reason for making this report?**

- 2.1. To enable members to scrutinise the draft annual report prior to it being submitted to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and published on Denbighshire County Council’s (DCC) website.

### **3. What are the Recommendations?**

- 3.1. That the Committee consider whether the report provides a clear account of performance in 2023 – 2024
- 3.2. That members consider whether the report raises any performance issues/concerns that require further scrutiny

### **4. Report details**

- 4.1. During 2023 / 2024 both our Adult Social Care and Children's Services have focussed on meeting our statutory obligations and the demand and complexity of need which is generally increasing. We have continued to build on and implement projects and activities that were ongoing in 2022/2023 but have had very little opportunity to develop new projects or activities.
- 4.2. Overall, our performance is comparable with the previous couple of years, although in some areas we have seen a small decrease in performance. This is, in the main due to the ongoing recruitment and retention issues coupled with increased complexity of need and demand for services.
- 4.3. Over the year we have had some success in recruiting new Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, particularly in Adult Social Care, although we still have significant challenges in both Adult Mental Health Services and Children's Services. Unfortunately, the reliance on agency staff being used to fulfil our statutory requirements remains much higher than we would want. This adds additional pressures to the budgets in both services, but also contributes to a lack of stability across services.
- 4.4. It is interesting to note that in Adult Services we have seen a slight decrease in the number of new assessments completed during the year. However, we know that more of those resulted in the individual requiring a care and support plan and having their needs met through statutory services. This is primarily resulting in people accessing services when families can no longer provide the care needed or the complexity of need is such that a care and support package is required to meet the assessed need.
- 4.5. Whilst our Operational Services teams have struggled to source traditional domiciliary care to get people out of hospital, we have seen more support being

provided by Micro-Providers and where there are lower levels of care and support required by volunteers.

- 4.6. In Children's Services we have seen the percentage of assessments being completed decrease by 11% from 2022 / 2023. This is indicative of the ongoing recruitment and retention issues that is particularly impacting on Children's Services, where again the demand and complexity of need is increasing.
- 4.7. However, having said that we have seen a small improvement on the number of days that a child is on the Child Protection Register and the number of children removed (de-registered) from the Child Protection Register.
- 4.8. Children's Services are already seeing positive results with children and young people who have received interventions from the multi-disciplinary team established ahead of the Bwthyn-y-Ddol development being completed. The innovative approach to an evidence based model of care, along with the reflective practice adopted by the team, has seen young people successfully completing the intervention remain safely at home with their family.
- 4.9. As we move forward into 2024 / 2025 our focus will be on transforming our services to help us reduce our financial pressures whilst allowing us to meet our statutory requirements. All areas of our services will be reviewed to ensure we are effectively managing our resources and maximising every opportunity to reduce costs whilst supporting those with the greatest need.
- 4.10. Focus will also be given to the development of in-county short breaks and emergency respite provision for children with complex disabilities. We will continue to address the challenges of allowing our citizens to remain independent at home for as long as possible as well as supporting our health colleagues to get people out of hospital in a timely manner.

## **5. How does the decision contribute to the Corporate Plan 2022 to 2027: The Denbighshire We Want?**

- 5.1. During the 2022 – 2023 financial year Adult and Children's Services contributed to the following themes within the Corporate Plan
  - A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs
  - A prosperous Denbighshire

- A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire
- A learning and growing Denbighshire
- A fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire

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

6.1. The development and publication of the annual report does not cost anything other than officer time, and does not impact on other services. The future plans and actions identified for Adult Social Care & Homelessness and Education & Children's Services within the report will be delivered through core budgets, or through partnership funding, such as Regional Integration Fund (RIF), but there remain significant financial pressures within both Adult Social Care and Children's Services.

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

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

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

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

## **9. Chief Finance Officer Statement**

9.1. The cost implications of any emerging issues in the annual report must be considered within the context of the council's wider budget position and Medium Term Financial Plan. The financial pressures and challenges for the services and the council are clearly outlined in Section 5 (b) in the Annual Report.

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

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

## **11. Power to make the decision**

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

11.2. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.4 of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's powers in relation to performance monitoring and policy objectives.