

## Challenges and Responses

Challenge	How we are responding
<p><b>Increasing numbers of Looked After Children</b></p> <p>Overall we have seen a slight reduction in the number of looked after children with 158 looked after children on the 31st March 2013 compared to 162 on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2012. However, this figure does not reflect the true volume of activity and work associated with changes to the group of looked after children.</p> <p>Last year 79 children became looked after compared to 50 children in 2011/12. For each child coming into care there are a range of activities that we are required to undertake including allocating each child a social worker, developing a care plan, ensuring they have an appropriate placement, that they are visited regularly and there is a regular review of their case. Adding to this pressure has been the implementation of new legislation that requires care proceedings to be completed within 26 weeks.</p> <p>The headline figure of our looked after population remaining stable therefore masks the volume of work we have undertaken.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• we have invested in, and developed, our early intervention services (Team Around the Family and Families First services) so that we are able to support families as early as possible and help to stop problems and issues growing</li> <li>• we have reviewed our intensive family support service and will extend our family support service to be a seven day a week provision</li> <li>• we will develop a new support foster care service that will help us to support families in crisis with a view to enabling children to remain with their families.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Responding to pressures on Health</b></p> <p>There are significant pressures on the availability of hospitals beds across Wales. Locally there is particular pressure to ensure that social care arrangements are in place to enable people to be discharged from hospital into the community. This means working swiftly and in partnership with Health to assess people and to put in place care arrangements that have a focus on helping people to regain their independence.</p>	<p>We have excellent PI performance for ensuring that care is in place so that people are not delayed when they are ready to be discharged from hospital. During the year the reablement team provided a quick response when support was needed. In all the team supported 219 people being discharged from hospital and prevented 49 hospital admissions. However, there were times when it proved a real challenge to respond to the level of demand. We have developed a discharge policy with Health and will continue to work closely with them to manage this pressure.</p>

Challenge	How we are responding
<p data-bbox="188 236 981 268"><b>Assuring the quality of the services we commission</b></p> <p data-bbox="188 309 1178 491">We purchase a significant volume of services for vulnerable adults. We have well established approaches to monitoring the quality of care but recognise that more could be done particularly to ensure that positive outcomes are being delivered and that service users have a strong voice and control over their care. In 2012/13 we have:</p> <ul data-bbox="188 533 1178 1305" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="188 533 1178 676">✓ improved the timeliness of reviews so that we meet service users to discuss and review their needs, the services they receive and the quality of their support. We reviewed 1610 cases last year and 94% of these were within timescales</li> <li data-bbox="188 718 1178 861">✓ developed standards to ensure that people are involved in their assessment, arrangements for their care and in reviewing services. We will be rolling these standards out and monitoring how well we meet them in 2013/14</li> <li data-bbox="188 903 1178 1011">✓ started to develop information for the public about the quality of our services - we recognise that we need to refine and develop this approach further</li> <li data-bbox="188 1053 1178 1193">✓ developed a questionnaire to establish service user and carer views and experience on the quality of services. We consulted with on the questionnaire at the end of 2012/13 and will be rolling it out in 2013</li> <li data-bbox="188 1235 1178 1305">✓ contributed to a review of how we can enhance quality monitoring across the North Wales region.</li> </ul>	<p data-bbox="1202 309 1977 379">Our aim is to further develop our approach to quality in 2013/14. We will:</p> <ul data-bbox="1202 421 2045 1393" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="1202 421 2045 497">• strengthen and improve contract monitoring processes through regional work on quality monitoring</li> <li data-bbox="1202 497 2045 606">• bringing together our reviewing and contracting staff to join up, and enhance our oversight, of the quality of care provision</li> <li data-bbox="1202 606 2045 683">• explore the potential of carrying out spot checks for domiciliary care</li> <li data-bbox="1202 683 2045 791">• develop a 3 year plan for developing support for carers which could include a role in checking the quality of the service provided to the person they care for</li> <li data-bbox="1202 791 2045 944">• implement rota visits which provide Elected members an opportunity to visit our In House provider services and speak to service users and staff about the quality of services</li> <li data-bbox="1202 944 2045 1053">• continue to embed Dignity in Care as an integral part of our training programme for the whole social care workforce</li> <li data-bbox="1202 1053 2045 1283">• complete a citizen directed support self assessment which has been developed by the Social Services Improvement Agency. The self assessment will help inform a plan to move to a model of citizen directed support that provides service users greater voice and control over their care</li> <li data-bbox="1202 1283 2045 1393">• roll out a service user and care questionnaire and analyse and act on what people are saying about the quality of their care</li> </ul>

Challenge	How we are responding
<p><b>Remodelling services</b></p> <p>Social Services increasingly face serious challenges that include financial constraints, increased demand and shifting public expectations. This is at a time when the demography of our society is changing with:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ an ageing society with many more people in middle years with significant disabilities who are able to live fulfilled lives.</li> <li>➤ an increasing number of children with significant disabilities who rightly have high expectations of services</li> <li>➤ families and communities becoming more fragmented</li> </ul> <p>Like many authorities we are seeing increases in the number of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ looked after children (see points above)</li> <li>➤ children on the child protection register (registrations peaked at 95 in the year ending at 87 children at year end)</li> <li>➤ people with a learning disability (numbers grew from 250 to 273 last year)</li> <li>➤ older people with complex care needs and whose support needs are extensive</li> <li>➤ carers who need support to help them continue to support vulnerable people</li> </ul> <p>It is clear that responding to the demands with traditional models of social care is not an appropriate or sustainable response to meeting the needs and expectations of vulnerable people. The need for change has been identified within Denbighshire County Council's Corporate priorities. However, delivering change, particularly for people already receiving services can be challenging – for individuals, families, staff, elected members and communities – but if we don't make changes then social care will be unsustainable.</p>	<p>We have made good progress in developing more targeted preventative and early intervention services which provide recovery, restoration and can demonstrate a reduction in the need for ongoing care examples include work with Leisure Services to provide activities for older people, reablement, Telecare, Extra Care and early intervention services through TAF and Families First. However, we will need to pick up the pace as we move forward with our programme to modernise social care.</p> <p>Changing the way we work, even when this is for positive reasons, can be challenging. We recognise that the level of change required will involve difficult decisions about the way some services are delivered and that these will not always be popular. We will have to pay attention to managing this change effectively and ensure that we are effective in listening and involving staff, elected members and communities in the modernising programme. As part of our planned approach we will be visiting MAG's to discuss the challenges and plans with local members. Securing their buy in will be key critical if we are to make effective change that will enable us to respond to pressures and meet efficiency savings.</p> <p>Providing high quality services that protect and support vulnerable people and children will remain a core feature</p>

