

Director of Social Services Annual Report 2023 – 2024



(Photo pending approval)

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

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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.

Over the last 12 months both our Adult and Children's Social Services have continued to feel the pressure related to social care recruitment and retention and increased complexity of need. This is in a context of reducing local authority funding and having to make savings and reduce the financial pressures that are being felt across most Local Authorities, not only in Wales but across the UK.

Throughout the year in Adult Social Care, we have seen waiting lists continue to grow for assessments and staff are finding it increasingly challenging to commission packages of care and support to allow for timely hospital discharge. However, during the year we have seen the number of micro-providers increase alongside an increase in the number of people using direct payments to have more choice and control over their care and support needs.

Within our Children's Services the reliance on agency staff has continued as the recruitment and retention of social workers remains an ongoing challenge. Some success has been achieved in recruiting permanent professionals but there is still some way to go in key front-line teams. Despite this, Children's Services have continued to meet demand and deliver their statutory requirements.

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.

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- 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

2. Director' s summary of performance

Denbighshire like most Social Services Departments within Local Authorities are having to balance demand and complexity against significant financial challenges, and whilst both Adult Social Care and Children's Services remain a priority for the Council we are feeling the effects of these conflicts on a daily basis.

I am extremely proud of the dedication, commitment and hardwork that I witness on a day to day basis across my teams. I am regularly touched by the good news stories and case studies that come across my desk, that reminds us all about the difference we make to the live's of some of our most vulnerable citizens in Denbighshire.

Myself and my leadership team are working relentlessly with not only our Corporate colleagues, but regional and national peers to address the challenges Social Care is facing. We are working collaboratively to identify opportunities to tackle issues, maximise resources and raise awareness of the issues the sector is facing.

Throughout the last year our priority has been to manage the flow through the front door and ensure we meet our statutory obligations.

Within Adult Social Care the focus has been on working with our health colleagues to support people to remain independent in their own homes as well as manage timely discharge from hospital.

For our Children's Service's our priority has been on recruitment of permanent staff, embedding our therapeutic offer and the recruitment of foster carers.

I am pleased to say that after a number of obstacles the Bwthyn y Ddol development is now well on its way, with the build ahead of schedule and completion now expected in autumn 2024.

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Whilst the challenges will continue through this year and the next, I am fortunate to have an innovative and creative team whose dedication and sheer tenacity will support our 'One Council' to meet these head on!



Nicola Stubbins

Corporate Director for Social Services and Education

3. How people help us to shape our services

Our main purpose is to provide services that will meet the needs of our citizens, both now and in the future. Throughout the year, there have been many ways by which we have engaged citizens that have helped both Adult and Children Services shape and co-produce services, with examples below.

Every Citizen shapes their Own Service

We are all different, as are the citizens we support, which is why we believe that every contact we have with our citizens provides an opportunity for them to shape their own service. We recognise individual strengths, aspirations and what matters most and we do our best to offer a response that is individually tailored to meet eligible outcomes.

We continue to promote direct payments as a means to that end. We are really pleased to report that by the end of the year we had 57 Micro Providers in Denbighshire, offering further choice and control to our citizens to shape the care and support they receive.

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Older People making Denbighshire a good place to grow older.

Ageing Well in Denbighshire (AWID) continues to meet regularly. This is a long-established, network of agencies and individuals with the collective aim of making Denbighshire a good place to grow older. They are currently contributing to the application to the World Health Organisation (WHO) to recognise Denbighshire as an Age Friendly community.

They have combined with the Dementia Friendly Denbighshire group and look at how to make our county accessible and 'friendly' for all. Members of all ages have been looking at achievements and gaps in provision under the 8 domains of an Age Friendly Community.



Feedback from workshops and discussions form a large part of the Baseline Assessment, which is a fundamental part of the application.

Whilst we, like others, struggle with the impact of budget cuts and the cost of living, progress is being made. For instance, Denbighshire County Council agreeing to become an Age Friendly employer and to conduct 'Walkability' exercises to see how accessible various communities in Denbighshire are.

The Ageing Well in Denbighshire network has held engagement events across the county. Approximately 100 people attended the last one held on 1st February 2024 in Trefnant Village Hall. Most attendees were older people, from older people's fora run by Age Connects, retirement associations across the county, residents, their family members, staff from care homes and individuals with a particular interest. They were joined by people representing various services and children from a local school. Data gathered has informed the Age Friendly Action plan which is due to be submitted to the World Health Association.

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Denbighshire County Council commissions Age Connects North Wales Central to 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 to ask for views on the services that members receive and Commissioning 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 have attended the Ageing Well in Denbighshire meetings in which the Older Person's Commissioner for Wales, or her representatives have attended.

Following feedback from 'ConneXions', a community group in Trefnant, the Age Friendly Communities grant has supported people of all ages to create a book of writings and illustration with contributions from the local primary school and residents in residential care. (The youngest contributor is 3, oldest 103!). The book called 'Weaving the Threads' has now been published and copies are free to anyone willing to add a suggestion as to how to make our county more age friendly.

In summary, some specific examples of the developments and changes made because of feedback of older people include:

- A bus service has been reinstated because of feedback from the St Asaph older people forum, run by Age Connects.
- A 'confidence to travel' day was organised by Age Connects in collaboration with Transport for Wales, to help older people to develop confidence in using public transport. This followed feedback from an older person who was unable to make a planned train journey because she had not anticipated the need to be digitally literate (in terms of parking and purchasing tickets)
- Efforts have been made to ensure that information is available in written form, rather than relying on digital means, because of requests from older people. There is still more to do in this area, to reduce reliance on digital means of communication.
- Older people have requested more intergenerational activity, so the Ageing Well in Denbighshire have committed to continue to provide this and to build this into future events.

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- Feedback from older residents and their families has informed decisions about next steps for care homes about whom there have been concerns.
- Questionnaires have been used and discussions have been held with tenants of Awel Y Dyffryn Extra Care Housing to gain feedback on the service they receive e.g. what is working well, what is not working well and can be improved. This will shape future planning and development for the service.

Denbighshire Community Resources Teams – We are stronger together!

We know that we are stronger together in achieving the desired health and well-being outcomes for the citizens of Denbighshire, which is why, with BCU Health Board, we have four Community Resource teams across Denbighshire. They are made up of Health, Social Care and Third Sector staff, who work closely with local GP practices. Each of the Teams continues to develop new integrated models of working to benefit citizens. To test our view that we do deliver better services together, every month a number of citizens are contacted for feedback on the service they have received. This is what they told us:

- ‘Felt Social Services could see what was needed and spoke to colleagues to get them the right help and support. Couldn’t have done anything more’.
- ‘The hospital bed, updated toilet frame seat and additional commode arranged by OT has made things much better’.
- “It’s a wonderful service and I’ve never been let down when I’ve asked for help”.
- Feels “Very well served” and is “very happy and grateful” for the service provided.
- ‘Have no complaints about any of the staff both medical and caring profession. They are excellent people, and everything has been very well organised.’

We are always open to feedback that helps us improve our service, one citizen told us that they couldn’t remember the names of the professionals that had visited, we have plans to act on this.

During the year, our Ruthin & Corwen Community Resource Team held ‘meet the public and provider’ events in Ruthin, Corwen and Llangollen. Providing an opportunity for local people and local providers to meet the team. The events were positively received with feedback such as ‘Excellent team – very friendly, lots of useful information’ and ‘Great part of the community’.

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Self-Advocacy Groups and Tendering Exercise

During the year members of the two Denbighshire's self-advocacy groups took up the offer to complete a Service feedback questionnaire, views on current service delivery and expectations were invited.

The feedback obtained will inform the service specification for the new self-advocacy service which is to be tendered. Our Contracts and Commissioning Team also joined the self-advocacy group to obtain an insight into the group activities and gained valuable feedback first hand. Efforts are being made to also ensure meaningful involvement of citizens in the upcoming tender evaluation for this service.

Carers and Meaningful Breaks

The Denbighshire Carers Strategy Group has continued to be an active forum of carer organisations from both the statutory and third sector providing information, advice, and assistance to carers. The group works to develop support to meet the needs of carers in Denbighshire, including many who have no digital access.

Members share information and experiences and work collaboratively, linking with other local fora including AWID. Individual organisations undertake their own Carer surveys and share findings. They also co-ordinate and hold joint events and activities to celebrate Annual Carers Week, Young Carers Action Day and Carers Rights Day.

Global Resettlement Team

The Global Resettlement Team is a diverse team that brings together people from different backgrounds, experiences and perspectives; this ensures we celebrate different cultures and informs our practice.

We value and respect each other's differences and embrace new ideas, this ensures that we promote inclusivity and a welcoming environment for staff and citizens we support. We have regular awareness training, culturally diverse events and discussions within the team which further supports understanding and appreciation of diversity.

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People with Learning Disabilities

The Complex Disabilities Team have continued to rejuvenate our person-centred practice and co-production. They were fortunate to have secured additional for a person-centred coordinator for 18 months. The team were really pleased that a citizen was involved in this recruitment process and was one of the panel members during interviews. There has been training sessions with our staff to ensure that person-centred practice 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.

'Keep my Home' project

A consultation questionnaire was shared with all citizens currently in receipt of a Housing Support Grant services to inform the service specification for the new 'Keep My Home' project. It was also shared to the wider service and community and received responses from providers, professionals, town and county councillors, volunteer workers, and Denbighshire citizens who have previously or who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness.

A consultation exercise was undertaken to inform the specification for the new North Wales Domiciliary Care framework (which will commence April 2025).

Talking Points – Rate your experience 'What Matters to you, matters to us'

Talking Points are a way for Denbighshire citizens to find out what help and support is available in their local area, to help improve their health and well-being.

The service provides information about what is available in an area, such as community services, activities or support groups. The service is set up in all libraries throughout the county, with a range of third sector organisations also in attendance – including Working Denbighshire, Citizen Advice (CAD), volunteering services and many more.

The Talking Points service offers a face-to-face conversation with a Community Navigator about what matters and what is important, as well as an opportunity to share knowledge, skills and experiences to improve the well-being of others within the community and during April '23 to March '24, they helped 917 Denbighshire citizens. At every Talking Point we invite the citizens who have dropped in to see us to rate their experience and provide us with feedback.

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- 'Really handy being able to drop in – makes life a lot easier'.
- 'Good to know it's weekly and I can call in again'.
- 'This service is invaluable. Particularly useful that it is regular and reliable'.
- 'I felt that I could be open with them because they made me feel at ease'.

Young Carers

Denbighshire County Council, in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council, Flintshire County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr Heath Board, commissions the WCD (Wicked) Young Carers Service. The service has provided information & advice, individual and group support sessions to almost 600 young carers living in Denbighshire this year. The groups and short break activities that WCD support staff provide are all co-produced with our young people.

Key highlights this year are:

Re-energising of the Young Carers ID card

The promotion of the ID Card for young carers continues to be a priority. In feedback from group consultation work young carers have said that they would like professionals, for example teachers, doctors and pharmacists, to demonstrate more empathy and understanding of the challenges that caring for a sibling or parent can have on them and help come up with solutions to alleviate this pressure. Young carers from our WCD Youth Forum have created a video, as part of a N.E.W. Young Leaders project, to promote the use of the ID card and to raise awareness with professionals about their views and the importance of the Young Carers ID card. You can watch it here: <https://youtu.be/8ToGbFhziMU>.

Small Group Sessions

Following feedback from some young carers who said large groups were not for them, WCD Young Carers started small group sessions. Young carers under 8 as well as young people with Autism Spectrum Conditions (ASC), anxiety and/or mental health conditions preferred a smaller group environment for support and activities. The young people in these peer support groups were encouraged to choose activities that they wanted to do. For example, WCD were able to take a couple of young people with ASC along to the indoor skatepark at Deeside Leisure Centre. They brought along their scooters and enjoyed a couple of hours just having fun and using their physical skills. Feedback was that the small group approach

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helps to increase confidence in social situations as well as feel like they are having a 'normal childhood' activity.

Taking All Opportunities to raise awareness - Young Carers Photography Exhibition

One young carer from Rhyl and their family took part in the Young Carers Photography Exhibition, which set out to capture what being a young carer looks like through natural photography. The exhibition ran until the 30th April in Ty Pawb, Wrexham and featured a series of photographs of young carers with their families playing, laughing, and connecting. It focused on raising awareness of young carers in schools, in their community, and nationally.

There is still more to do in order to improve support for young carers including.

- Young carers continue to tell us that they want educational settings to show more empathy and understanding of the challenges they face and support them with solutions to alleviate the pressure they are under, to create a positive learning environment for them. We will use the Welsh Government's Whole School Approach Framework for emotional and mental well-being to promote the Young Carers in Schools Programme and Peer Mentors Scheme.
- Transport continues to be a barrier for some of our young carers who are unable to attend activities due to parents / carers not being able to bring them. WCD staff do provide transport, when possible, but this is not always available when running back to back small group sessions in evenings. We will work with WCD to explore ideas for supporting young carers unable to access transport, to help them get to sessions.
- We need to develop a more robust process to support the transition of Young Adult Carers to adult services. WCD have already begun conversations with NEWCIS about transitions and will progress this through the Carers Strategy Group.

Children's Services

Language that Cares - Since the consultation with children and young people about the language Children's Services use when talking to them about their care in 2022/23, the Business Development Officer who carried out the consultation has attended various team meetings within the Service to share the findings and work on updating documents children and young people have access to.

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Currently we are revising our Corporate Parenting Charter in line with the finding of this consultation. Once complete this will be formally endorsed and signed by the Lead Member for Education, Children and Families and a representative from our Children Looked After community, who has worked on the consultation with the department.

KIC Club (Kids in Care – Young People’s Forum) - The KIC Club is a forum set up in 2014 for Denbighshire’s looked after young people who are aged 8 to 15 who live with foster carers. They meet during the half term holidays and take part in a range of activities and it’s an opportunity to share their experiences, say what is going well and what they would like to change.

2023/24 was again a busy year for members of the KIC Club and here are some of the things they have been up to;

- In May they joined in with the Play Rangers session at the Oaktree Centre. It was a great session where members got to take part in a variety of indoor and outdoor activities to help them develop their physical, mental, mental social and emotional health and wellbeing.
- The Summer Activity in August was a Wilderness Session around the Clwydian Range and Dee Valley with an experienced Mountain Leader from Wilderness Wales. They took part in a walk, den building, fire making to toast marshmallows and were taught some skills to help them if they ever find themselves in a bit of a pickle in the countryside.

The October 2023 half term session was led by the Safeguarding & Practice Quality Unit, and the children / young people who attended were asked for their views on their ideal review, some examples of feedback received are;

- I need mum.
- Motivation
- I get to see new people.
- Be confident.
- Positive inspiration

Feedback gathered has been reviewed by the Service Manager to improve the quality of Child Looked After Reviews.

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The session in February 2024 was a Scavenger Hunt along the beach in Rhyl where they had a series of clues and riddles to solve and although it was a very cold day, they all had a great time.



Child Protection Conference and Child Looked After Review Feedback Forms - To gain attendees views on the Child Protection Conference and Child Looked After Review process, professionals, parents / carers and young people are asked to complete a feedback form which they can now complete either face to face with their worker, via an electronic link or by scanning a QR Code. Both processes have recently been revised and work on raising awareness and encouraging participants to provide their feedback is on-going.

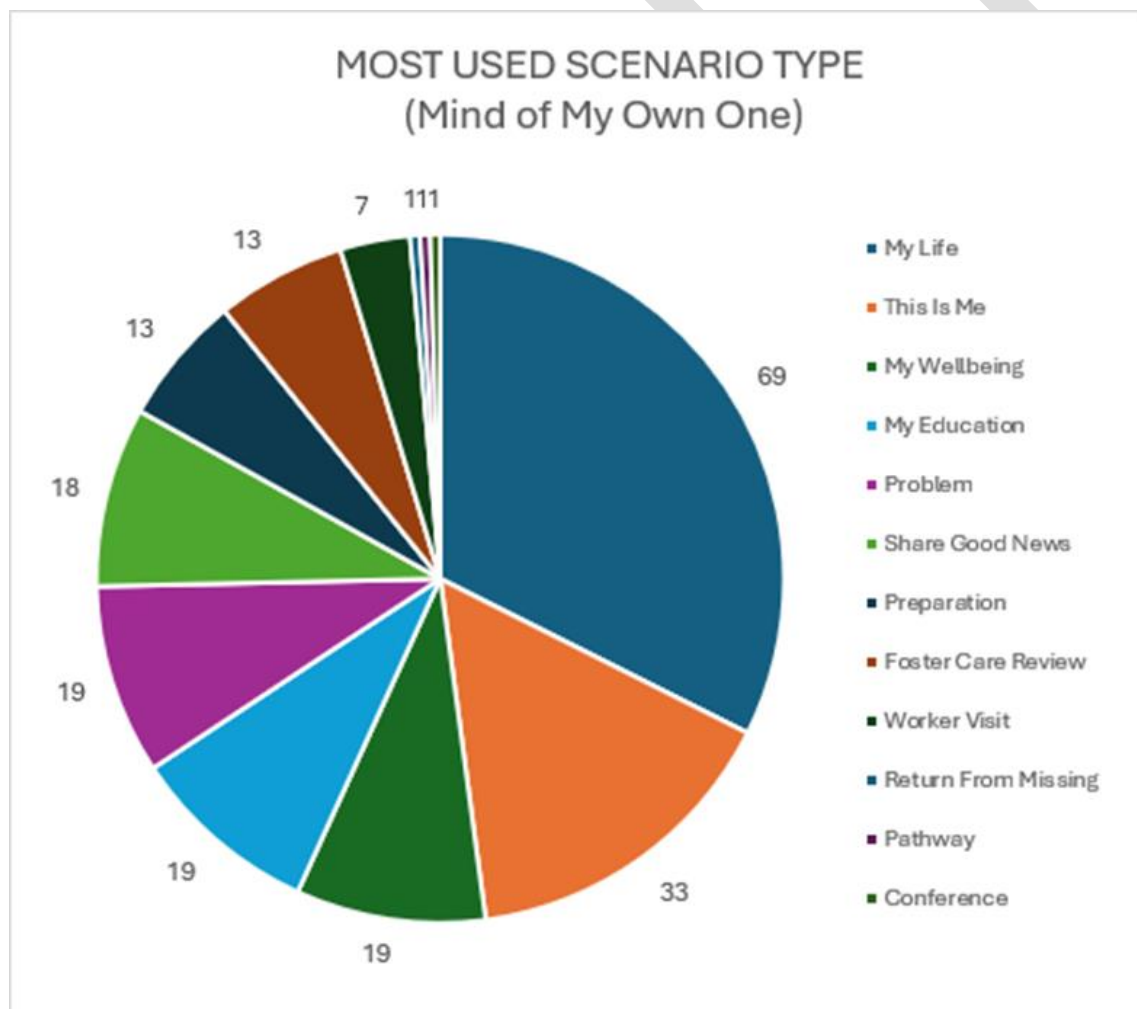
Have Your Say Surveys - To gain views of children / young people and parents on the impact Education & Children Services has had on their lives and how useful the service received is or has been, a range of Have Your Say Feedback surveys are used. The results assist in improving the service as well as 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.

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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.

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 – 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 2023-24 children and young people receiving support from the service were invited to join 'Mind of My Own Challenges' to promote use of the platform, ensuring their views were heard.

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Throughout the year usage has been extended across the service to the Llwybrau Team, School Council, LIFT Team and Personal Adviser Service. In Quarter 3, Denbighshire were announced as Mind of My Own's Number 1 Top Performer in Wales for the Quarter and in addition, Denbighshire were also in the top percentile for all of their customers UK wide.

169 Young People have a Mind of My Own One Account and 194 Workers have a Mind of My Own Practitioner Account. Approximately 260 Statements were received from Children and Young people between the ages of 3 and 19, ensuring their views were heard about their life and care.

Flying Start / Families First

Families First and Flying Start have continued to hold events throughout the County over the year, including a very successful Information Sharing Event, which saw over 30 stands in attendance providing information to families on topics such as Education, Housing, Additional Learning Needs (ALN), Employment, Health, Energy, Money Matters as well as information on support provided by Families First and Flying Start and over 285 attendees come through the door.



We have also had our Family Fun Time events take place in the North and South of County, providing engagement events for families in the areas, these have been very successful in engaging the more rural areas of Denbighshire. More recently we have partnered up with other services from Denbighshire including Denbighshire Leisure Ltd, Denbighshire Housing, Denbighshire Play Rangers

and Denbighshire Youth Services to host Family Fun days to again help reach more families. Alongside these events we have also been holding Flying Start Expansion events for families in the newly eligible Flying Start Childcare areas to help families access our funded childcare.

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Complaints and Compliments

Adult Social Care and Homelessness received 29 complaints during 23/24 (12 Stage 1 and 17 Stage 2), 34% of the complaints were upheld in full or partially.

None of the Stage 2 complaints in 23/24 were under the statutory Social Services Complaints Procedure Regulations (Wales) 2014 and only 3 were partially / fully upheld.

Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) now comes under Adult Social Care, along with the Homelessness Service and almost all of the Stage 2 complaints arose in these two areas. As they fall under Housing Act legislation, they would not be investigated under the Statutory procedures, so we use the council's Corporate Complaints procedure.

Frequently this type of complaint is progressed to stage 2 immediately, to allow a more formal response to be generated and to enable referral of the complainant to the Ombudsman, if they are unsatisfied with our response. None of the Ombudsman decisions in 23/24 went against the council.

Children's Services received 6 complaints in 23/24 (5 stage 1 and 1 stage 2), of which 50% were upheld or partly upheld.

Overall, complaints across both services are slightly down, but the stage 2 complaints received by the homelessness prevention teams have increased.

All complaints were reviewed, with learning identified and implemented across services as appropriate. A theme that runs through all the complaints we have received consistently relates to communication. We are committed to learn from every complaint and we work hard to ensure we communicate effectively with every citizen we support. For example;

As a result of a Stage 2 formal complaint, investigated by the Head of Service, an action agreed was for the Head of Service to work with the management team to ensure that communication is improved between the different teams within Adult Social care, aiming to ensure important information available to share with citizens is not missed and fewer miscommunications occur.

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

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Learning can come from complaints whether or not they are upheld, and an example is noted below;

A complaint about services in a Care Home was based on miscommunication but was not upheld because no error was identified on the council's part. The perception of a family member gave rise to the complaint. Despite the complaint not being upheld, the manager discussed with team members how their work and their manner could be perceived or misconstrued by family members, especially in the event of complex cases where there is a degree of conflict.

During 23/24 Adult Social Care and Homelessness received 71 compliments (73 last year) and Children's Services received 42 compliments (74 last year). We will try to investigate the change in level of compliments for Children's Services, to establish if this is a one-off or a trend.

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;

Examples of compliments received;

Cysgod Y Gaer Care Home

Sian stated that not a day goes by that she is not thankful that her dad is residing in Cysgod Y Gaer. She said it is a brilliant home and is a perfect fit for her dad. Sian said the fact that a lot of Welsh is spoken within the home is good for her dad with it being his first language. He knows a few of the other gents who live there, and they spend their time in the lounge in each other's company. Sian said she has noticed a big increase in her dad's interaction - he has lots chat about these days when she visits him compared to when he was living at home. Sian said that she cannot praise the staff enough, they are all brilliant and she feels her dad is extremely well cared for and that they are always made very welcome when they visit.

Independence at Home [Reablement]

Mrs T had been referred to a falls clinic to improve her walking, and the Adult Social Care team helped with walking aids. As a result of the team's help Mrs T is more mobile and gets out and about again after 3 years indoors during covid. Mrs T would like to thank the team who have got her walking again.

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Community Resource Team

'Just wanted to write to thank you and the team for all your help with my uncle. It has been much appreciated by him and also by myself and my sister.

The whole care system is new for us, and you have been there consistently to answer our questions and provide relevant information at every stage'.

'Me and my husband were really impressed with the help and support when sorting out my mother-in-law with care in Prestatyn. It was a stressful time and X was fantastic. We want to thank X for being so lovely with my mother-in-law and patient with her. it meant a lot to us, and we really appreciate her help'.

Community Equipment Services

'Hello, I've just had a phone call from the husband of Mrs N, who has said a big thank you for everything we have done for his wife, and he very much appreciates it'.

Children's Services

'As always your advice and support are much appreciated' – compliment about an Information, Advice and Support Officer in the Gateway Service.

'I recently chaired a Child Looked After (CLA) Review and the young person said how grateful he is for all the support his Social Worker has provided him, especially with his Home Office interview in relation to his asylum application' - compliment from an Independent Safeguarding and Reviewing Officer (ISRO) about a Social Worker in the 14+ Service.

'I'm writing to share positive feedback in regard to your newly recruited Social Worker about how impressed with the standard of the Child Protection (CP) Report and how positively she has engaged with the parents. It was evident from their feedback that they felt supported and happy to engage with her' – feedback from the Safeguarding & Practice Quality Service Manager about a Social Worker in the Intake & Intervention Service.

Thank you very much for your time, it has been really helpful to have someone to talk to. I also wanted to tell you what an amazing job you do. You clearly make a massive difference to the lives of many children and their families. It can't be easy but people like you make the world a better place – What's App from mum to the Disability Wellbeing Navigator.

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The Support Worker was always there for me and my son when we have been in difficulty, and always helped me sort it. I have always been very grateful for the support and wish to thank the Support Worker from the bottom of my heart. They have always been a good person to me – from a parent regarding their Family Support Worker.

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

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

This is what we have done and achieved

2000 adults had a care and support plan in place during this year. This is down from 2059 adults in 2022-23. In 2022-2023 more adults were being assessed as needing a care and support plan due to increased demand and more complex needs of citizens. This has now levelled out.

65% of assessments for children were completed within statutory timescales. This is below the 76.7% in 2022-23 and is a reflection of continued staffing pressures. Whilst fewer assessments for children were carried out in 2023-24, 517 compared to 983 in 2022/23 there is an evident increased complexity within assessments.

Adults

Through our work with vulnerable citizens, their families and carers, we realise the people we support want a life not just a service. So, we've developed an approach that's informed by our commitment to strengths-based practice and community led support. It aims to increase community resilience by harnessing people's energy and talents to find more efficient and effective ways of delivering care support.

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We have replaced old, traditional approaches to assessment and care planning that tended to focus on problems with 'good conversations' that focus on what matters to people and the outcomes they want to achieve. Our strengths-based approach emphasises people's resilience, ingenuity and desire to live independently, in their own homes, for as long as they can.

It champions their right to identify and achieve goals and aspirations that are important to them and engages citizens, families, and unpaid carers as equal partners.

Council funded care and support can play an important role in helping citizens, families and unpaid carers achieve the outcomes that matter to them, but our approach enables them to benefit from a far greater range of community-based resources that complement and sometimes replace traditional forms of care and support.

Case study

Gethin was referred to the Community Resource Team (CRT) following a fall while out shopping, which caused a severe break and loss of movement in his dominant right arm.

The CRT arranged for an Occupational Therapist to visit Gethin at home, after which aids, and equipment were provided to enable him to remain independent and safe in his own home.

Gethin is a proud man and was struggling at home but initially refused support as he felt ashamed to think he might need it. Gethin is currently heavily reliant on support from his family, none of whom live locally.

The CRT referred Gethin to our Community Navigator who arranged to meet him at home. Gethin said he felt very low and was aware his family were becoming increasingly anxious about the level of support he required. The family were supporting Gethin with shopping, cleaning, laundry, meal preparation, and visits to a local cash machine.

Gethin said he didn't want to be a burden on his family as he felt the strain on them would affect their relationship. The Community Navigator talked to Gethin about several alternatives including Micro-Providers. Gethin said he'd be interested in exploring this option further, so the Community Navigator arranged for a Micro-Provider to visit Gethin at home.

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Gethin and the Community Navigator explored other solutions including home shopping and resuming exercise, these appealed to Gethin who thought they would help with his physical and mental well-being.

The Community Navigator liaised with the Community Resource Team and arranged an iPad for Gethin and between them they downloaded relevant apps and created a shopping account with Sainsbury's, where Gethin preferred to do his weekly shop.

By engaging Gethin in a 'good conversation' the CRT, Community Navigator and Micro-Provider supported him to identify the outcomes that mattered to him, and to access the support that he believed best met his needs.

People with physical health problems

Our Single Point of Access has become an important source of information assistance and advice for people across Denbighshire and often help citizens who've been unable to get support elsewhere.

Bethan phoned SPOA, she was very distressed and said didn't know where else to turn. She'd recently undergone spinal surgery and was struggling to cope at home. She said she'd phoned numerous organisations, but all refused to offer support 'without a referral' and none had been willing to offer assistance or advice. Bethan's significant distress required a long call with the SPOA operator, first to calm and reassure her and then to understand her needs. The SPOA operator completed Bethan's assessment and made a number of calls and referrals to relevant agencies. She also maintained contact with Bethan over the next few days and weeks to reassure her support was on its way.

Bethan subsequently wrote a number of emails to the SPOA operator to thank her and update her on progress, comments included;

- Since we spoke, I have been contacted by an Occupational Therapist (OT) and provided with the equipment I require to assist me and maintain my dignity.
- Words cannot express my thanks for your empathy and actions.
- I am on my own, I was feeling very low and abandoned.
- Because of your actions, I have recovered much faster and with dignity, all due to the fact you truly understood my desperation and went the extra mile to help me in my hour of need.

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- I'm sure you won't appreciate fully just how much you have helped me, but I can honestly say, that without your help, I would be nowhere near as well recovered, both physically and mentally!!
- Thankyou from the bottom of my heart!!

Not only did the SPOA operator ensure Bethan got the support she required to make a swift recovery she also dramatically reduced the amount of NHS and Council funded support she required.

People with complex disabilities

The Complex disabilities service has used Regional Transformation funding to employ a 'Person-Centred Coordinator whose role is to work with citizens, families, and care providers to develop and implement 'Person Centred Planning'.

Person Centred Planning (PCP) uses a range of approaches or 'person centred planning tools' that ensure citizens with Learning Disabilities and their families are fully involved in the planning process, and that plans fully reflect the needs, wishes and aspirations of the citizen involved.

Heledd is a young woman with a diagnosis of Autism, who lives with her mother. Heledd finds it extremely difficult to leave the house and is very socially isolated.

Heledd was referred to the Person-Centred Planning Coordinator who supported her to develop her own person-centred plan. During the planning process Heledd shared her desire to leave her home and increase her confidence in social situations. Heledd now has a Direct Payment which she uses to hire a Personal Assistant who supports her to leave her home and she is now becoming more confident in social situations.

Prior to the involvement of the Person-Centred Planning Coordinator Heledd was very dependent on her mother. This impacted her mother's well-being and threatened her ability to remain in work.

Carers

Denbighshire has a population of almost 96,000 people and it is estimated around 11,000 of these people provide unpaid care to an adult relative or friend. Evidence suggests unpaid carers are now caring for longer and often for people with complex conditions, requiring them to learn new skills including medication management.

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An important way of supporting unpaid carers is to ensure they get meaningful breaks; previously known as a sitting service or respite, we are working with citizens and carers to explore new ways in which carers can get a break, while the citizen enjoys doing something meaningful too.

Children's Services

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. This team is now embedded within the service and has seen an increase in children made subject to SGO's rather than remaining looked after, this sense of permanence is positive for children and their carers. The team are introducing SGO information cards to assist SGO carers in their interactions, the cards give information regarding SGO's to professionals and carers alike.



Foster Wales Denbighshire Activities 2023/24

All 22 Local Authorities across Wales have come together to form a national network of local fostering expertise known as **Maethu Cymru / Foster Wales**. With a clear focus to make a bigger impact on a national level, to work together with each other and with Foster Carers we aim to build better futures for local children.

Due to funding from Maethu Cymru / Foster Wales, Denbighshire have been able to recruit a full time recruitment and marketing officer to concentrate on the recruitment of local Foster Carers.

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In November, a blog was posted to our Foster Wales Denbighshire website in collaboration with a Denbighshire Foster Carer who fostered teens, to highlight the importance around the perception of teens in care, this did really well and was also picked up by S4C, we currently have someone in assessment due to the blog.

We currently have our foster friendly policy going through an approval process once approved this will streamline us with other local authorities and provide flexibility for anyone working in Denbighshire County Council and fostering with a Foster Wales Authority.

We have networked with Betsi Cadwaladr Health board and have hosted 3 recruitment events at Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. This generate a high amount of interest.

Foster Wales Denbighshire is now on social media and we have used this to spread the message of the importance of fostering local children.

Foster Wales Denbighshire has teamed up with various sporting clubs throughout Denbighshire including Denbigh F.C & Rhyl F.C forming close relationships with communities and sponsoring local clubs.

Collaborative Communication - Denbighshire continues to invest in Collaborative Communication. This aims to deliver outcome focused service delivery which works collaboratively with children and families and 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 Collaborative Communication to be embedded into practice. It 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. The Collaborative Communication model of service delivery aims to move away from the traditional problem focussed approach with task focussed plans to holistic approaches that focus on the person and their networks / family whilst understanding the unique identity of each person and 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.

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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. The training has also been delivered to staff within Youth Services with more services across the council showing an interest in the model. All new starters are provided with Collaborative Communication skills to ensure that this approach is embedded into practice as The Denbighshire Way.

ForMi App – Continues to be embedded within the Therapeutic Service. ForMi is a person-centred planning and outcome recording tool for individuals receiving personalised support. The system makes the planning, goal setting and review process come alive and gives ownership to the individual as far as possible which in turn motivates them to achieve and develop. It supports engaging conversations where an individual and their aspirations can be understood, and goals developed that are aligned to their strengths. With the support of a Mentor from the Therapeutic Service, each individual creates a strength-based personal profile and set of outcome focused goals. Actions are agreed that will support the individual to achieve each goal. These are jointly reviewed at regular intervals, including a judgement of progress against each goal on a 0 to 10 scale. Uniquely, the individual captures their achievements through words and pictures on a smartphone, very similar to a newsfeed used on many social media apps. This has the result of empowering the individual to take ownership of their own development and progress. Where wider professionals are involved in supporting the individual, ForMi enables a more joined-up approach through their Circle of Support. Each person who is involved with the family's Circle of Support can see how the individual is progressing and provide encouragement, coaching, feedback and additional evidence of progression. They also have access to the individual's story, seeing their achievements in real time. This in turn enables recognition to be given on a continuous rather than periodic basis.

Parent Advocacy – Child Protection

For parents of children in the Child Protection Arena, Tros Gynnal Plant now provide an independent professional advocacy service across North Wales, which is person-centred, issue based, and outcome focussed. For the next 3 years, parents will be entitled to support at related meetings, including Initial Child Protection Case Conferences, Review Child Protection Case Conferences and Core Groups, up to a maximum of three interventions and referrals can be made by email / telephone / face-to-face either direct from parents or from professionals having secured the consent of the parent.

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Lifelong Links – Children's Services have reinvested in this programme due to the success of the programme so far. Lifelong Links aims to identify and engage relatives and other supportive adults connected to a care experienced child 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.

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, the young person will be required to consent before being allocated a Lifelong Links Coordinator. 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. Links to Lifelong Links is about to launch live on Denbighshire landing page to ensure care experienced children and young people can also have this information to hand and contact Denbighshire Lifelong Links direct.

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 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 plan, where necessary, with the support of professional services and community networks, to keep their children safe. An 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.

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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 Agenda. We have identified the need to address the issues within domiciliary care in particular and will focus on this in 2024 / 2025.

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

- Trial the Touch Only Once approach which in the longer term can improve the lives of citizens and their families.
- Continue with the review of Mental Health Services in Denbighshire

This is what we have done and achieved

During the last 3 months of 2023 – 2024 there were 47 people experiencing delayed transfers of care for social care reasons. The average over the full year was 35. In 2022-23 the figure for the last 3 months was 25 people, and the average over the year was 26. The increase is due in the main to difficulties sourcing domiciliary care and residential care placements, to enable people to safely leave hospital when they have ongoing care and support needs - See section A above – This is what we still have to do.

The average age of adults entering residential care homes in 2023 - 24 was 83. This is slightly older than last year when the average age was 82.

Older People

Turn Only Once (TOO) is a personal care routine developed by a Jo DeClercq, a Physio 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. He uses washing gloves that wash and moisturise the skin and then dry naturally to reduce the amount of touch to the individual's skin and adaptive clothing to achieve this.

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As the name suggests the individual is only turned on to their side once during the washing and dressing routine, again reducing the amount of rolling during the care routine.

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

TOO can be adopted to support the Moving with Dignity approach already in place within Denbighshire - due to the approach advocating that a personal care routine and dressing / undressing is completed by one person.

Sara Thelwell, an Occupational Therapist (OT) and Deputy Team Manager, applied for and was awarded funding from the Royal College of Occupational Therapists to make an educational visit to Belgium, to fully understand how the 24-hour approach supports their residents.

In 2024-25 Sara will carry out a small research project with residents in Denbighshire. During this project she will be working alongside OTs in BCU Health Board. This is an exciting opportunity to trial a new approach which in the longer term can improve the lives of residents and their families within Denbighshire.

Sara presented a workshop on the topic of TOO at The National Social Care Conference 2023, Venue Cymru, Llandudno in October 2023. We demonstrated the techniques and showcased the specialist hoist used by Jo De Clercq at the care home in Belgium where this technique originated. Sara is also being supported by Wrexham University for her research project and is awaiting ethics approval for the research before linking up with our Cysgod Y Gaer residential home to trial the approach.

Mental Health Services for Adults

In 2023 Denbighshire's Mental Health Team relocated to Local Authority premises to focus on the development of a service model that will deliver statutory responsibilities imposed by the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014, the Mental Capacity Act 2005, and the Mental Health Act 1983.

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The service development programme will be fully aligned with the vision and aspirations contained in the Mental Health Strategy for Wales, and the Suicide and Self Harm Prevention Strategy, and will focus on four key areas;

1. Voice and Control.

Citizens and their carers will be supported to achieve their well-being outcomes, by a service which promotes the voice and control of each citizen, leading to co-produced care and support planning and a focus upon recovery and achieving maximum independence.

2. Partnership.

The service will work in partnership and collaborate with all stakeholders, including Community Mental health teams, hospitals, independent providers and the third sector. The service will work in a positive way with all partners to ensure that citizens and their carers receive a seamless service to support their mental well-being.

3. Strengths based.

The service will utilise a strengths-based approach in supporting citizens to achieve and maintain their well-being outcomes. Utilising the Denbighshire resource wheel tool to ensure that care and support focusses upon the citizens own strengths, those of their family, social networks and community resources.

4. Prevention.

The service will have a strong focus upon prevention with citizens being supported to access and engage with primary and secondary care mental health services when needed. The service will work proactively with citizens and their carers to avoid crisis and identify appropriate support to maintain well-being and manage challenges.

Children's services

Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) Skills Groups

The Therapeutic Service have delivered a well-respected therapeutic intervention Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) for nearing six years. DBT is a skills-based experience that allows parents and carers to develop core life skills that help individuals regulate strong emotions, manage stressful situations and experience a kinder relationship with themselves and others. The group covers four sets of skills;

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- Mindfulness (increasing self-awareness to help a person cope);
- Interpersonal Effectiveness (feeling able to communicate with people more effectively);
- Emotion Regulation (learning how to understand emotions and how they affect behaviours)
- Distress Tolerance (increasing ability to tolerate feelings of distress and to cope more effectively in a crisis).

When brought together, these skills build towards a life worth living. Where parents and carers may struggle to attend the group, 1:1 DBT skills can be offered as a way of building confidence to join a future group as the messages from attendees highlights the powerful nature of being alongside others in validating progress and potential barriers to recognizing and celebrating personal strengths.

The Therapeutic Service has great success in working with men as fathers and carers and a male DBT Group is now part of the DBT offer.

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 as 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 positive results with children / young people successfully completing the intervention and safely remaining at home with family.

In 23/24 CIW registered Bwthyn Y Ddol phase 1, an interim residential solution for use whilst the main assessment centre is under construction. This has allowed for the recruitment of the residential staff team and enabled the multi-disciplinary team to include a residential stay as part of their work.

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The build of the main Bwthyn Y Ddol Assessment Centre is making good progress and is estimated to finish ahead of schedule. Site visits have been undertaken by all three partners with positive feedback as to the design of the building.



Barnardo's Care Leaver Service

In 2023 we gave notice to Barnardo's Care Leaver Service (Personal Advisers) that the contract for this service would come a natural end in March 2024 and the service would move to an in-house provision. Barnardo's worked closely with the service to ensure a seamless transfer and to enable eligible staff to TUPE to Denbighshire County Council. The transfer was successful, and the new PA service started operation on April 1st 2024.

Carers

This is what we still have to do

- To continue to implement the Mental Health Service Development Programme.
- To fully embed the Care Leaver Service into our internal services following the transfer from Barnardo's.

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

This is what we said we would do

- Continue working with partners to establish a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub
- Continue reviewing and monitoring the practice and processes within the the Children's Services Gateway

This is what we have done and achieved

In 2023/24 98.5% of all adult protection enquiries were completed within statutory timescales. This is a very 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 7. There were 4 children in this group in 22/23 and 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 28,055 (27,354 days in 22/23 and 28,281 days 21/22).• The total number of children removed (de-registered) from the child protection register during the year was 80 (77 children in 22/23 and 82 children in 21/22).• This gives us an average of 351 days per child (355 days in 22/23).• This is a decrease of 5 days from the previous year (there was a 10 day increase in 22/23).

Older Peoples Services

The implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards is still 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.

There has been continued joint working between our Contracts & Commissioning and Safeguarding teams with providers, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and other key partners in safeguarding all citizens cared for and supported by our commissioned services.

Safeguarding and Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLs) was a topic of discussion in a recent provider forum and was well received.

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A 7-minute briefing from the North Wales Safeguarding Board on Safeguarding and Informal Carers was also shared with partners and carers networks.

Adult Practice Reviews (APRs) are carried out on behalf of the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board. They are a way for all partner agencies to identify the lessons that can be learned from particularly complex or difficult Safeguarding Adults cases and to implement changes to improve services in the light of these lessons. APRs are shared with operational teams and used as learning and reflective opportunities for practitioners.

Links to safeguarding resources from North Wales Safeguarding Board and Social Care Wales are provided on our website. In addition, all operational staff have access to online training and resources via Community Care Inform.

The Safeguarding team is working with other teams within Adult Social Care & Homelessness Service by delivering Q&A sessions to promote awareness and compliance around the All-Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

The Aging Well in Denbighshire Group issue a regular SWAY bulletin that shares information designed to protect / safeguard / benefit older people.

The Older Person's Commissioner has arranged training with the Regional Safeguarding Board about relevant topics, such as male victims of domestic abuse and modern slavery.

A significant amount of training has been delivered over the past 12 months relating to a range of safeguarding issues;

- 13 sessions of the 'All Wales Basic Safeguarding' course were delivered by Y Bont and attended by both internal staff and external providers.
- 6 sessions of 'Ask & Act' training delivered by STORI Cymru and attended by those who fall into the Group 2 category of the National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence.
- 2 sessions on an 'Introduction to the Mental Capacity Act 2005 and providers' specifically to care Provider Managers.
- 1 session on 'MCA and consent' to increase understanding of the Mental Capacity Act in the context of safeguarding and the impact of abuse on decision making by the adult at risk - linked with All Wales Safeguarding Procedures.

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- 1 session on the 'Mental Capacity Act and sexual intimacy' which provided an understanding of the way in which the MCA is relevant and is used in situations where there are concerns about a person's capacity to make sexual decisions.
- 3 sessions of 'Mental Capacity Act Awareness' were delivered to internal and external Social Care Workers. 19 social care workers successfully completed the Mental Capacity Act awareness module on the Social Care TV platform.
- 1 session on 'Determining Mental Capacity' for Social Workers to enhance practitioner confidence in determining if an individual is able to make various decisions under the act.
- 30 social care workers enrolled on the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards course on Social Care TV – 27 have successfully completed.
- 2 workshops were run with Providers to offer further advice, guidance and support regarding the new National Safeguarding Learning & Development standards.

Children's services

As part of safeguarding week, Denbighshire County Council staff members within Children's Services have taken part in unique Virtual Reality sessions to immerse themselves in topic areas such as trauma and safeguarding.



By embarking on a journey through Virtual Reality, practitioners experience a series of Virtual Reality films closely following the lives of children and young people from pre-birth to adolescence, helping to get a better understanding of areas such as trauma and neglect and how this might impact in later life.



This technology allows an immersive learning environment and helps promote active learning and development, deepening empathy and a focus on individual outcomes.

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The Virtual Reality training is also used as an intervention tool in any safeguarding context to improve the lives of children and young people and provides professionals, parents, guardians, or care providers a unique perspective of the lived experience for someone working to manage trauma.

Kevin Jarvis, Team Manager, Business Support said: “Based on direct experience of social care and the key issues facing individuals who have experienced traumatic life events, this unique approach to learning is proving popular and engaging and establishes a strong forum for discussion and reflection on the roots of trauma.

In Denbighshire we view the use of Virtual Reality as a progressive approach to learning and development which will complement our current delivery models and promote conversation on how we can all be more trauma informed in our approach to work.”

Laurel Morgan, Team Manager, Therapeutic Team said: “Using VR has been a helpful tool to enhance reflective practice, generate further insight and develop our thinking around trauma informed practice. We have used VR within Children Services, with partner agencies and with the families in Denbighshire. It has been a helpful tool to promote engagement and understanding”.

Councillor Elen Heaton, Lead Member for Health and Social Care said: “It is important that our staff have the best understanding of their specialist areas. This Virtual Reality training will further enhance staff knowledge and understanding towards more vulnerable individuals, helping to nurture better and more informed responses.”

Child Practice Review Learning – There are a number of Child Practice Reviews and Multi-Agency Practice Forums being undertaken across the region including in Denbighshire. Learning from the ongoing Child Practice Reviews will form part of the future training and development across Education and Children’s Services and will include partner agencies.

Multi Agency Practice Forums have been completed with good practice highlighted. Key themes were identified, including parental cannabis use and professional curiosity, and these will be discussed in future Learning Seminars. These themes have also been noted in Child Practice Reviews and Multi-Agency Practice Forums across the region.

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Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA) - Denbighshire was part of a JICPA in early 2023, an action plan has been agreed and is subject to monitoring by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Many positives were identified within the report including positive working relationships across the partner agencies, strong safeguarding practices within Education and schools. Within Children's Services innovative practice was acknowledged, as was the strengths-based approaches within child protection processes. Areas of improvement included initial responses to some referrals, adherence to statutory timescales, the establishment of regular joint agency strategy discussions and consistency in early decision making. The significant impact of difficulties in the recruitment of suitably experienced qualified social workers had on caseloads and practice was acknowledged by inspectors.

There has been a significant improvement on caseload numbers within the service, increased recruitment has assisted in this area. Additional audit processes have been introduced to assist managers in the monitoring of performance, quality and outcomes. The establishment of daily strategy discussions, at a set time, and with consistent staff members has allowed for more consistent and robust discussions and challenge across all agencies. The Gateway has been subject to an improvement plan with additional management capacity secured. Whilst there has been improvement across many areas highlighted within JICPA, work is ongoing across the service to embed this practice. There is no doubt that capacity due to increased complexity in referrals, and due to staffing challenges, impacts the pace of improvements.

The Child Protection and Children Looked After Quality Assurance Checklist process has been established and provides a wealth of information in order to map and plan improvement activity and celebrate good practice.

A number of recommendations have been agreed and accomplished following analysis of the results; Paris and process improvements, training sessions, children looked after review feedback surveys and development of good practice examples etc. Successful recruitment of vacant Independent Safeguarding & Reviewing Officer (ISRO) posts within the Safeguarding Unit has resulted in more checklists being completed across the year.

Completed Checklists					
2023/2024	Qtr. 1	Qtr. 2	Qtr. 3	Qtr. 4	Total
Child Looked After	39	42	114	98	293
Child Protection	12	13	21	25	71
Total	51	55	135	123	364

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These QA checklists have provided additional audit oversight and have assisted Managers in the targeted support of staff and practice. It is also important that the positive work completed by staff is recognised, and these forms an important part of the QA process.

Children's Services Gateway – Following feedback from JICPA measures to improve practice and process within the Gateway were implemented. Additional management staff capacity was allocated to improve supervision, as was office-based working, mentoring and the organisation and delivery of learning workshops for the team. This work is ongoing.

Edge of Care Programme - 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 Programme 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 Programme works within the Integrated Family Support Team (IFST) 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.

This is what we still have to do

- For 2024 / 2025 the North Wales Adults Safeguarding Board have approved an Adult Practice Review (APR) submission and have agreed to Support a concise APR in Denbighshire. The APR will provide a source of learning for all those involved and will be shared for training purposes across the region.
- Work will continue to improve practice within Children's Gateway in line with the feedback from the JICPA measures

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

This is what we said we would do

- 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.
- 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.
- 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. This is what we have done and achieved
- 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.

This is what we have done and achieved

During the year to 31 March 24, 18 looked after children have experienced one or more changes in school that were not due to transitional arrangements. This is a significant increase from the figure of 4 in the previous year. **It should be noted that changes of school can be for positive reasons, such as a child being placed with permanent carers.**

Older People

We have continued to work with partners in the voluntary sector, including Age Connects and many departments in Denbighshire County Council, to become an Age Friendly Community. We have continued to develop the action plan that will be submitted with the application to the World Health Organisation. Cllr Elen Heaton, our Lead Member for Health and Social Care, has been very supportive with this work. We hope soon too, for DCC to be recognised as an age friendly employer.

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We continue to work with Digital Communities Wales, and the bid to secure funding to employ staff to help residents use and benefit from a range of digital technology within our care homes was successful. Cwmpas have appointed officers who are offering support and training across the county.

Telecare digital upgrade is going well and is on schedule to meet National Switchover Deadlines. BT Group have recently announced the reset of this date to 31 January 2027. This gives us an additional 13 months to safely migrate our service users to digital equipment. We are able to prioritise people for new digital equipment as they switchover to digital phone lines.

Working Denbighshire, as one of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire members, presented to the full group on opportunities for employment support for older citizens. This was particularly well received as many members report that the cost of living crisis has had a big impact on older people, leading them to feel the need to return to work or to remain in work longer despite health concerns. Some members were able to offer work opportunities whilst others have linked those they support to Working Denbighshire for help and support with issues like confidence building, language skills, digital inclusion and other skills updates.

People with Complex Disabilities

We continue to fund a pilot Employment Ambassador and Job Coach project jointly with Conwy County Borough Council that is delivered by a social enterprise. A range of approaches have been adopted to evaluate the effectiveness and impact of the model, which has included economic evaluation and the commissioning of a citizen panel that worked alongside the evaluator, ensuring that the voices of people with learning disabilities were heard during the process.

We also continue to support the development of Project SEARCH in Denbighshire, a supported internship programme for young people with a learning disability.

We have reviewed the service that provides support in our in-house work opportunities settings (provided by a third sector organisation). The contract was updated significantly to better reflect the needs of the service and of the individuals who benefit from these opportunities.

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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 apprenticeships. 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 continue to work 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).

Young Adult Carer Peer Mentors

Young Adult Carer (YAC) is the term we use for young carers who are 18 to 25 years old. As some of our young carers have become adults, they have wanted to use their lived experience and knowledge to help support their younger peers by volunteering at peer mentors. This group of young people have been influential in shaping the culture of delivery of groups and activities and by supporting young carers in school as part of the Young Carers in Schools programme. These YAC peer mentors have been involved in training student nurses from Wrexham University in sessions in St. Asaph to raise their awareness of the issues and experience of young carers in the health arena. On Young Carers Action Day, 13th March 2024, one YAC from Denbighshire was part of a group zoom call to the Deputy Minister for Social Services, Julie Morgan, to discuss issues that matter to them.

Young Carers in School Programme

Young carers continue to tell us that they wish school would understand them better and would like to see awareness for school staff rolled out. WCD worked with Youth Friendly, a North Wales-based company that aims to use design, film and media to communicate with and involve children and young people in decisions that affect their lives and give them a 'voice', to create the 'Young Carers in Schools' programme. This programme is now freely available for all our schools to use via the Education Hwb. This year Rhyl High School has been an exceptional partner in supporting young carers to develop the roles of Young Carers Ambassadors, Peer Mentors and Champions in the school environment.

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Carers

The Carers Befriending Scheme (Keeping in Touch Service) was included in the re-tender of the main corporate Consumer and Financial advice contract, to keep things simple and reduce the number of separate contracts. The new contract was awarded to Citizens Advice Denbighshire.

Under the scheme unpaid carers are offered information, advice and assistance from NEWCIS and Citizens Advice Denbighshire (CAD) to help them reduce the negative impact of stress and isolation.

Assistance includes befriending and counselling from NEWCIS and income maximisation and budgeting advice from CAD. Carers are offered help with benefits, debt and advice cost advice.

NEWCIS and Denbighshire Citizens Advice work closely with other providers and partners, e.g. Working Denbighshire, to help unpaid carers access expert advice and guidance. Community Navigators support unpaid carers to have a life of their own and access activities in their communities. There are a range of organisations across Denbighshire that offer support groups and activities for carers.

This is what we still have to do

- During 2024 / 2025 Adult Social Care and Children's Services will work closely together to determine the best way forward to provide supported living for Young people that will prevent disruption at the point of transition to adult services.
- We will continue to upgrade Telecare Equipment to meet the revised switchover deadline from analogue to digital.
- The Age Friendly Community will continue with their work to submit the application to the World Health Organisation.

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

This is what we said we would 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
- To continue with the development of the Bwthyn Y Ddol regional assessment centre in partnership with Conwy County Borough Council and BCUHB.

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- Development of 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

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

On 31 March 2024, 19 looked after children had had three or more placements during the year. Last year's figure was 18 children. It should be noted that placement changes may be planned and for positive reasons, such as placement moves to permanent carers.

Carers

The rising cost of living and pressure on Health and Social Care is an additional stress being experienced by unpaid carers. We have delivered (in partnership with NEWCIS and Citizens Advice Denbighshire) a project to provide support to counter the additional pressure on unpaid carers. The purpose is to provide practical advice, emotional support, financial review and benefits checks for those carers who are at risk of isolation and carer breakdown. The service has a high demand and not all needs are met in as timely as expected, due to the ongoing waiting list. Options to support these initiatives sustainability are being explored to enable them to continue long-term.

Carer Assessors have reintroduced home visits and re-established relationships with some Denbighshire unpaid carers 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. Talking Points sessions are delivered on a regular basis through 7 local libraries across the county, and the purpose is to offer a different way for people to access available help and support.

In addition, Talking Points offer opportunities to volunteer not only within Edge of Care but also within Talking Points themselves, to support other citizens.

Older people

We have continued to develop the Telecare Service and upgrade it in line with technological changes. Telecare is a specific kind of assistive technology which uses sensors and alarms to keep people safe in their homes whilst facilitating healthy, meaningful independence.

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When an alarm is raised, citizens will be connected quickly to trained staff at the monitoring centre who will have the information to hand and will immediately know about the citizen and their general circumstances. Once the operator has established what is required, they arrange for someone to come and help. This could be a family member, neighbour, doctor or one of the emergency services. The service gives the Citizen and family reassurance of safety.

Homelessness

Working closely with both Adult Social Care and Children's Services, Denbighshire's Homelessness Prevention Team continue to support older people and families to prevent homelessness or if homelessness does occur to ensure we take a multi-disciplinary / multi-service approach to address all issues faced by the individual / family.

We have continued a Rapid Rehousing Plan (RRP) to invest in early intervention and prevention support. During 2023-24 we implemented a RRP delivery group to ensure that council support across all areas supports the work we are doing with citizens and their families who are facing crises such as homelessness.

Targeted work-streams include;

- enhanced multi-disciplinary wrap around support for individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness;
- working with partner Registered Social Landlords developing a strategic approach to the supply of appropriate accommodation;
- developing an offer to Private Rented Sector Landlords to increase the supply of affordable and sustainable tenancies to relieve homelessness utilising the Leasing Scheme Wales.

At the point of homelessness, we have witnessed an increasingly frequent reason being friends and family asking people to leave, combined with non-violent relationship breakdown. This is more than double the cases caused by loss of private rented sector accommodation.

A key priority from this data has been the need to educate people to seek help as early as possible when they become aware there could be a potential relationship breakdown, or that friends and family can no longer support them.

This has been facilitated to date through the My Home Denbighshire Collaborative partnership (Housing Support Grant funded (HSG)).

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Children's services

Having experienced difficulties, the project to build the new Children's Assessment Centre, Bwthyn y Ddôl, has made good progress this year, following the appointment of the new contractor. Wynne Construction was appointed by Conwy County Borough Council, Denbighshire County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to design and build the new facility which will improve access to support for children with complex needs and their families in Conwy and Denbighshire.

Work on site began in the summer of 2023 with the demolition of the existing building and since then the building works have progressed well. Build is on schedule to complete in summer 2024.

During this year, Denbighshire, Conwy and the Health Board have worked together to recruit the multi-disciplinary team who are already working with children and families, using a temporary base, in readiness for the new centre opening.

This is what we still have to do

- To continue to improve the short break experience for more unpaid carers and families in Denbighshire.
- To continue with Carers' Think Tanks to promote creative and innovative thinking in relation to bespoke breaks for carers.
- To develop a specific Carers Peer Forum to ensure each 'carer offer' has the opportunity to be carefully considered by a range of professionals in order to promote a 'team around the family' approach to supporting the best outcomes for families.
- The Edge of Care Team will look to extend the volunteer offer to more carers in the future. Recruitment opportunities will focus on the specific characteristics that individuals bring to this highly valuable and rewarding roles.
- To offer more choice with control, promoting the uptake of Direct Payments for carers.
- To actively promote a partnership approach and supporting local service providers (including those signed up to accept Bridging the Gap vouchers) to develop more responsive, flexible and creative short break options. Our approach is underpinned by co-production and creating opportunities for unpaid carers to contribute to the design of services.

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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.
- Continue to develop technology within our day and work services to increase participation and engagement of people with complex disabilities.
- Continue to work in partnership and develop innovative ways to attract more young people into social care as a career.

This is what we have done and achieved

The percentage of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the collection year was 75% in 2023/24 – 73% in 2022/23.

The total number of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4 who experienced homelessness during the year was 17% in 2023/24 - 15% in 2022/23.

Adults

An integral part of Adult Social Care and Children's Services is our Homelessness Prevention Team who work in a person-centred way to prevent and address homelessness.

Engagement with Social Care is critical in achieving our ability to prevent or relieve homelessness. A multi-disciplinary / multi- team approach allows us to focus the right resources with the most appropriate skills and experience to help individuals and families.

As at the end of March 2024, there were 188 households in Emergency Bed & Breakfast Accommodation (a reduction from 220 at its peak in November 2023) with an average length of stay of 238 days.

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Within the multi-disciplinary Homelessness Prevention Team, we are working to provide targeted support to citizens who have been in Bed & Breakfast accommodation for over 12 months, to address the root causes of homelessness and support citizens to access and sustain suitable settled homes/accommodation.

To support this approach, we have increased our portfolio of leased accommodation. We have 153 households in leased temporary accommodation with an average length of stay of 430 days.

Homelessness Prevention Case Study

Sean is a male in his 50's who is experiencing homelessness. After our support workers got to know Sean, they realised that some of Sean's more negative behaviours were due to him being unemployed and bored.

Sean had experience in the joinery trade and had previously owned his own company, before life events meant he was no longer able to work. However, he had reservations about his ability to hold down a job.

A volunteer opportunity was identified with the 'Willow Collective' in Rhyl where Sean could take part in some joinery work. Over a few months Sean took part in sessions and due to the depth of knowledge that he demonstrated; he was asked to produce a wooden bench that would act as a centre piece for a housing project in a neighbouring county.

Sean produced the bench and led on the completion of this project. Sean was invited to meet the First Minister during the opening of the housing project. Sean is now successfully maintaining his leased accommodation and mentors other participants of the volunteer project.



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The UK Resettlement Team have supported 55 refugee households to secure, furnish and move into long term accommodation. The team are piloting an employment scheme for refugees, working with in-house partners to promote social care as a career opportunity. This has led to 11 individuals participating in work experience and five subsequently leading to permanent contracted employment. Another 7 citizens have joined our relief/bank pool of staff. We aspire to see another 10 people participate in this pilot during 2024/25.

A priority for the Workforce Development Team is engagement with providers, ensuring they are aware of and can take advantage of opportunities focused on recruitment and retention. These include promoting Social Care Wales activity, 'We Care' campaigns and links with the Regional Care Coordinator, as well as links with regards to employability. We work with Higher / Further Education settings and our provider sector to offer social care placements. We now have established links with a few settings who are willing and able to offer placement opportunities.

Recruitment to care continues to be a challenge. During 2023/24 we were able to appoint 22 people aged under 30 to care and support roles within our in-house provision. This compares to 19 for the previous year. With a dedicated HR officer, we have been able to promote care as a viable career choice and/or as a stepping stone towards another career.

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Case Study – recruitment and training

Kira is 23 and studied Health and Social Care at college, choosing to do her placement in our Corwen care home. After finishing her studies, she enjoyed her placement so much that she decided to work full-time in the home for the next two years.



Kira quickly rose through the ranks and became a Senior Care Assistant. Kira has now successfully enrolled on a full-time nursing course - her ultimate goal is to become a qualified adult nurse.

Kira said: “In my role as Senior Care Assistant, I worked a lot with nurses and paramedics, and I really got to build my confidence. I got a real insight into that line of work, and it gave me the confidence to decide to give it a go”. Since beginning full time studies, Kira has remained as a supply Senior Care Assistant and often picks up shifts at the weekend / during breaks in her studies.

Older people

We have liaised with older people through older people’s fora and age friendly communities’ engagement events. Their feedback has informed the baseline assessment that fed into Denbighshire’s action plan and application to the World Health Organisation to become accredited as an age friendly county.

One of the Ageing Well in Denbighshire members, Working Denbighshire, gave a presentation to the group on opportunities for employment support for older citizens. This was particularly well received as many members report that the cost of living crisis has had a big impact on older people, leading them to feel the need to return to work or to remain in work longer, despite health concerns.

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Some members of the group were able to offer work opportunities whilst others have linked people they support to Working Denbighshire for help and assistance with issues like:

- Confidence building
- Language skills
- Digital inclusion
- Skills updates

Work is under way to ensure that all providers of residential and domiciliary care in Denbighshire are able to meet the Active Offer of Welsh (Mwy na Geiriau) and provide support to citizens in the language of their choice. Due to the recruitment and retention challenges, progress is slower than we might hope, but there are already some examples of good practice such as;

Active Offer Case Study:

A provider home in Denbigh has approximately 15 staff members who can speak some Welsh and are able to have simple conversations with Welsh speaking residents.

The home tried to book staff on basic Welsh speaking courses but, unfortunately, they found that courses have been booked up very quickly or else cancelled.

To celebrate Santes Dwynwen day, the home-made cards for family members and served typical Welsh foods during the day. They also celebrated Dydd Gwyl Dewi (Saint David's day). The home uses bilingual posters to invite families to celebrate these events with their loved ones who are residents.

The home works closely with Menter Iaith, who have adapted basic phrases for staff to learn and speak to residents. About 80% of the home's notices are bilingual and they intend to make it 100%. Many of the residents' families have embraced the homes efforts to improve the use of Welsh within the home and are very helpful in supporting staff with pronunciation of Welsh words.

Micro-providers predominantly support Older People in Denbighshire, although some do support people with learning disabilities, younger people, people with dementia and people with physical health disabilities. Eligible citizens may utilise Direct Payments to pay for micro-provider services.

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Micro-providers provide increased choice for care and support options, supporting people to live in their own homes for longer and improving the quality of their lives by delivering a range of services such as helping people to have active social lives. As of 30 April 2024, there were 58 (an increase of 30 from last year) micro-providers operating in Denbighshire, supporting around 250 citizens.

We are fortunate to host Talking Points within libraries throughout the county. One of the services Libraries are able to provide is free mobile data for people who are struggling to afford internet access. They have sim cards available with a six-month provision of data. Community Navigators will also explore ways to obtain compatible devices if required. The Community Navigators continue to refer to Citizens Advice Denbighshire (CAD). Community Navigators are also dedicated ambassadors of Warm Hubs throughout the county during the winter period.

The Edge of Care team and Working Denbighshire have supported greater numbers of older people to remain in work or to take up volunteering opportunities during 2023 / 24.

The high cost of living has led to people needing to remain in work for longer, so it is helpful that DCC is working toward becoming an 'Age Friendly employer'.

46 citizens (older people) are being supported within our 3 Extra Care Housing Schemes in Denbighshire. The amount of Older People's accommodation will increase by 35 units with the completion of the phase 2 development in Llys Awelon, Ruthin, during autumn 2024.

A Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) inspection of our domiciliary care service was undertaken in Aug 2023. The inspection consisted of a desktop review, staff and citizen interviews and a site visit to Gorwel Newydd Extra Care apartments in Rhyl.

The summary findings within the CIW report were;

- People are happy with the service they receive and praise the standard of care delivered.
- Efforts are made to involve people in decisions regarding the care and support they receive.
- Their views are respected, and their care is tailored to their own wishes and preferences.
- The care provided is flexible to changes in people's needs.

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- Personal plans reflect people's current care needs, how they wish to be supported and these documents are updated when required.
- People's views are sought as part of the formal reviews of the service provided.
- The service is well lead and consistently well managed. There are firm arrangements in place to regularly monitor the quality of the service provided and to consider how the service can be improved or further developed. Staff are recruited safely, are well supported by managers, and are provided with relevant training.
- Staff enjoy working at the service and feel they are valued in their roles. People told us they are happy with the care and support they receive, and their care needs are met. A social care professional told us staff work in partnership with them and health professionals. This facilitates people to overcome obstacles and achieve positive outcomes.

There is also an Extra Care Housing Scheme in Denbigh, where the care is delivered by an external provider. We are currently considering options for further development in the south of the county to meet the needs of older people in the more rural areas beyond Ruthin.

People with Complex Disabilities

Community Living supports individuals to live independently in a safe and comfortable space. This is usually shared supported housing, with numbers in each house ranging between 2 and 5. Each individual has their own care plan, developed with them. Support staff encourage active participation and help individuals to develop new skills to maximise their independence. Community living also support's individuals to take risks in a positive and mindful way to allow them to achieve desired outcomes. An example of this is shown in the case study below.

Community Living Case study:

A moved into a Community Living house at the end of last year. Until then, A had always lived at home with family. From the beginning, it was important to reassure A that moving into a supported living setting would not hold them back, but instead would help them to grow in independence, to have more control over their life and to give them the chance to develop new social networks.

Over the first few months, support staff spent a lot of time with A, to find out what was important to them and to learn their goals and ambitions.

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Support staff learned that the most important things to A were having a routine, to be able to work and to be able to go out into the community to take part in activities that they enjoy.

As A was completely new to the area, they did not know what activities were available, did not have a job and were unable to go safely into the community alone.

Support staff started going out into the community with A as frequently as possible, helping A to become familiar with the local area and activities available.

Support staff visited lots of local groups and places with A and worked on skills to build confidence. During this time, support staff were able to reinforce appropriate behaviours and discouraged behaviours that may put A at risk when alone in the community. As a result of skill building and increasing A's confidence and familiarity, A has recently started safely attending some activities and places alone, without staff support. A also attends work-based day services for 3 days each week.

A mentioned to support staff that they have always wanted to visit Edinburgh but have never had the opportunity to go and there was no one for them to go with. As a result, A is currently in the process of planning a 2-night visit Edinburgh with a member of support staff.

Feedback from family members has included that A has become more independent than they have ever been and moving into Community Living has given them so much opportunity.

We commission care and support in 50 Supported Living schemes across Denbighshire, as well as having two in-house schemes.

More recently citizens have been offered Direct Payments to purchase their own care within a Supported Living scheme. This has led to 3 citizens purchasing care and support this way.

We continue to work to map housing and support needs for people with learning disabilities to live independently in the community, with flexible care and support arrangements. A new supported living project for four tenants in Rhyl should be completed by late summer 2024.

In partnership with Conwy CBC, Denbighshire is commissioning self-advocacy services to support young people with complex disabilities to express their views and wishes for the future. The projects seek to support people to have aspirations for paid employment and independent living where possible.

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In addition, we are commissioning a project with an independent provider to focus support for individuals to acquire new skills to enable them to participate and access employment opportunities. The 'just enough support' project is led by Occupational Therapists who provide detailed plans to support the development of specific skills and confidence building for adults with complex disabilities.

The North Wales Supported Employment Strategy is due to be launched very soon. This aims to empower individuals with learning disabilities by promoting their access to paid employment while respecting their choices and fostering inclusive communities. It seeks to implement a new supported employment model for people with learning disabilities aligned to Supported Employment Quality Framework (SEQF) model fidelity standards.

The Progressional Approaches to Supported Housing (PASH) project involves developing new models of integrated and collaborative service delivery which promotes progression from traditional settings. The project involves working with families and citizens transitioning to adult services, from aged 18 years upwards.

The PASH model assesses the level of need to ensure the citizen is matched to the right supported living placement promoting independence and self-worth.

It is also intended to increase investment in social value models of delivering care, moving away from the residential model of support, towards proportionate support in the community settings using community resources. The different types of supported living placements range from Own Front Door with hub and spoke support models to Person Shaped Support and 24-hour community living projects.

Furthermore, the PASH process enables the authority to fill community living placements faster and more appropriately, reducing the number of vacancies and breakdowns of placements. Key objectives of PASH are to keep support local, cost effective and person centred.

It is intended to avoid the reliance on long and short-term out of county placements.

Building on the learning from the Pandemic, we continue to look at innovative ways of introducing technology within Day and Work opportunities both internally and with the provision we commission.

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Using Technology Case Study

Citizens attending our in-house day resource, Meifod Wood Products, were supported in designing, packaging and selling of a new range of Christmas Decorations.

Citizens gained valuable experience in the process of product development, and they made key choices around the final products. Citizens used computer based design programmes and a laser machine to produce products, alongside offering more traditional carpentry skill development opportunities in making wooden Christmas trees.

Citizens attended a number of community Christmas Market events to sell the products, giving them the opportunity to develop their interpersonal skills. This project was a huge success according to the citizens themselves, the staff and the local community. Everyone felt that this project was a big step towards inclusivity for all!



The Local Authority Court of Protections (COP) Team works with citizens and their carers to improve the communal areas of their homes by maximising the benefits of their Additional Housing Support costs claimed through Housing Benefit.

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43 Community Living houses have been visited and assessed, faulty white goods replaced or upgraded to meet the needs of the residents, communal areas decorated, and flooring replaced, to make a homelier environment and accommodation that meets their needs.

The COP team also works with residents to increase their access to outside spaces examples being ensuring access to their gardens by ensuring there is wheelchair access, replacing rotten decking, employing gardeners. The COP team supports citizens in accessing Mobility cars by ensuring individuals are receiving the correct benefits and are able to budget effectively, having the right transport allows for great community access and involvement in social activities.

Carers

Denbighshire remains committed to promoting choice and control and encouraging carers to make individual choices. Advice and support are available from the Independent Living Advisors and Direct Payments (DP) team, who are able to attend joint visits with Carer Assessors to explain the Direct Payment process and responsibilities to unpaid carers and their families.

This support enables us to identify circumstances that may lead to a DP or issuing of Bridging the Gap code / vouchers. Direct Payments (sometimes via prepaid cards) allow carers to purchase appropriate support to meet their own wellbeing outcomes and support them to maintain their own wellbeing. Denbighshire County Council commissions the Bridging the Gap scheme from NEWCIS. After a carer assessment, eligible carers are allocated Bridging the Gap vouchers, which can be exchanged for services.

We are exploring the use of technology such as Telecare to provide carers with reassurance and assistance related to safety concerns and other matters. We have been able to promote and support the use of simple devices and apps that make all the difference to someone's independence and provide reassurances to the carer. Training has been provided by our Integrated Community Equipment Service (CESI) for some unpaid carers to ensure their confidence in use of telecare equipment and adaptations.

Carers have also been signposted to digital skills training from DVSC and Cwmpas to build digital skills and help people maintain their independence and connections with their families and communities.

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To address the concerns of the carer not having confidence to leave the cared for person or the cared for person not wanting to be left alone while the carer takes a short break, Denbighshire County Council is exploring the use of technology to provide carers with reassurance and assistance related to safety concerns and other related matters.

One example of this was a presentation by Science and Engineering Applications Ltd to explain their Care and Respond application.

There is ongoing work to improve the short break offer and extend flexibility and choice to unpaid carers, with development of a policy and guidance for our staff who support carers and the people they care for. A break for the cared for person also provides a break for their carer, with the opportunity to attend appointments or take part in leisure pursuits.

Hafan Deg Day centre was taken over by the council in March 2023 and we have invested in the refurbishment of the building, making it a modern and attractive multipurpose resource. We are now able to offer a range of support services for carers and carers' respite, as well as bathing and laundry services. There is a reablement day room in Hafan Deg where 2 or 3 people can take part in reablement activities such as preparing a meal, mobilising or bathing. Equipment ranging from a kettle tipper and raised chairs to a specialized bed and hoist equipment can be 'tested' by citizens with support staff alongside.

Staff in our Community Resource Teams across Denbighshire can make contact with Hafan Deg staff to arrange an appointment. During 2023-24, 16 citizens booked taster days in Hafan Deg day centre. On average 20 citizens currently attend the day centre for between 1 and 3 sessions each week.

NEWCIS and Citizen's Advice Denbighshire provide a Keeping in Touch Scheme for unpaid carers, targeted towards those who are particularly isolated or lonely. ASCHS developed this scheme as a pilot with NEWCIS and CAD and continues to fund via RIF. This service has just been recognised by DVSC and won a volunteer award for community support.

Children's services

Work started this year to develop a 'Bed Space' project for young people (16-25) with more complex needs, this provides intensive, person-centred support & builds independent living skills.

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This is what we still have to do

- Continue working on the employment scheme for refugees, working with in-house partners to promote social care as a career opportunity
- Implement the North Wales Supported Employment Strategy
- Pursue options for Extra Care Housing in the south of Denbighshire
- Retender the Supported Living Care and Support Contracts across our 50 projects

5. How we do what we do

a) Our workforce and how we support their professional roles



A Denbighshire County Council social worker has been recognised in this year's British Association of Social Workers (BASW) Amazing Social Workers 2023 campaign for her outstanding contributions to the profession.

Anne Roberts is an experienced deputy team manager within the council's community resource team.

This campaign was launched as part of BASW's World Social Work Month celebrations and is a unique opportunity to recognise and share the accomplishments of social workers across the UK as well as to recognise and pay tribute to their work.

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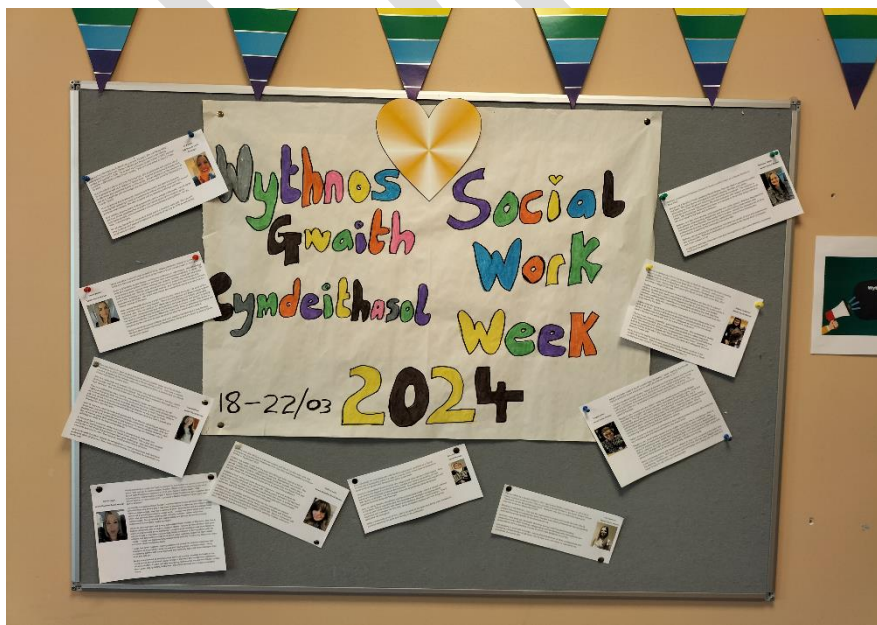
Speaking on her nomination, Anne said: “It is a privilege to be nominated for such an award. The services encompassed within social care have played an important role within my life on both a personal and professional level. It is through these collective experiences that I have developed a deeper insight into the role of a social worker, and the transformative support it can provide people.

Education is of great value to me, and Denbighshire County Council have provided me with the opportunity to develop my career and study further. Working in such a positive environment and working collaboratively with other health colleagues has provided me with additional knowledge and skills to be able to support my team.

My colleagues within Denbighshire County Council are a pleasure to work with. The team I manage consists of social workers, social care practitioners, dementia social care practitioners and occupational therapists. They all have such a fantastic work ethic and are supportive of one another. They make my role so much easier”.

Councillor Elen Heaton, Lead Member for Health and Social Care said: “I’m so thrilled to hear that one of Denbighshire’s own social workers has been recognised at a national level for their hard work and commitment to their role and team.

Our social workers in Denbighshire work extremely hard, so I am very pleased to see that this dedication has been recognised by the British Association of Social Workers. Huge congratulations to Anne for this incredible accomplishment”.



Our teams celebrated Social Work Week during March and Lead Member Councillor Elen Heaton visited and added a pledge to the promise tree. Staff shared knowledge and experience and were inspiring each other when sharing case studies and success stories.

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Denbighshire Occupational Therapist presented with prestigious award



Sara Thelwell, an Occupational Therapist at Denbighshire County Council was presented with the prestigious 'Innovation Award' at this year's RCOT (Royal College of Occupational Therapists) Celebration of Excellence in Occupational Therapy Awards 2023, held recently at the Shard in London.

The Innovation Award provides funding towards projects aimed at supporting the future of the profession and professional practice.

Sara received the Innovation Award earlier in the year but was formally presented with it at this year's recent awards celebration.

The funding from this award allowed Sara to go to Belgium earlier in the year and work with renowned physio Jo DeClercq, studying the Turn Only Once Bed care technique. This approach has resulted in greatly reduced numbers of individuals developing pressure injuries or contractures.

We have experimented in how we engage the workforce in learning and development and this year commissioned the two-woman theatre group 'Haylo' to present a moving performance promoting the awareness of dementia and its impact on the whole family. Staged in Denbigh's Twm o'r Nant Theatre, 'Over the garden fence' encourages conversations not only about dementia, but the continued importance of the individual living behind the diagnosis.

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Invites were extended to a variety of agencies and the evaluations received after the vent highlight the success;

- “Excellent performance, very powerful and more effective than standard training to raise awareness”.
- “Brilliant performance to highlight the issues of dementia for both the individual and family members”.
- “Thank you for the opportunity to see this performance, adding another storytelling insight into dementia”.
- “Please let me know if there is another opportunity to see this again!”.
- “A very sensitive portrayal of dementia”.
- “It was very clever and tugged at my heart. To see the dementia affecting both people in different ways”.
- “This is an emotional rollercoaster of a performance! I both cried and laughed. Very powerful, very accurate portrayal and heartbreakingly inspiring to want to do even more to support people living with dementia”.

2193 training places were taken up across the sector in 23/24. Of those 90% were workers from statutory services, 97% were from Voluntary Organisations and 83% were from Private Providers. This shows that we are still positively supporting the wider sector in accessing much needed learning & development resources.

The National Safeguarding Learning & Development Framework was launched in October 2023. This complements the Safeguarding Standards launched last year and provides more direction for learning outcomes. To support understanding of this Work-Force Development put on 2 workshops for Providers to talk the standards and framework and support ideas in implementing this in their own settings.

WFD have launched a First 3 Years in Practice Community of Learning for newly qualified social workers embarking on their first years in practice. The group is designed to provide bespoke learning & development opportunities and offer additional professional, reflective and peer support through the sharing of experiences. The Social Work Practice Learning Coordinator role is in its second year and having this dedicated role is bearing fruit in respect of closer partnership working with students, Wrexham University, Practice Educators and the teams in the services.

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This is leading to more quality placements and students applying for jobs, with discussions often taking place as early as the 2nd year placements.

The Open University 'grow your own' pathway is continuing to gain momentum and in 23/24 we were able to sponsor 2 further Social Care Practitioners, to join the 3 who have just started the second year, to complete the Social Work Degree Programme through the Open University.

Over the last year we have also supported student placements from degree courses other than Social Work i.e. Childhood Studies – this has been beneficial in introducing Denbighshire as a potential employer and it's hoped that positive placement experiences will lead to job applications or promote careers in social work.

Our Virtual Reality programme has grown, and we have been invited to give demonstrations of the resource to the North Wales Safeguarding Board and the Spring Conference of ADSS Cymru. We also provided sessions for the Regional Workforce Development Team Managers and North Wales Adoption Service.

The resource is quickly gaining traction across the region and with that will possibly come opportunities to possibly adapt and develop content with a Welsh context. As part of the rollout, we delivered a session to students at Wrexham University where Social Work and Criminal Justice students were combined to develop conversations about joint working in safeguarding. The VR content triggered some very interesting conversations around differing perspectives and the use of professional language and jargon in safeguarding work. The evaluations demonstrated how powerful the content had been.

“As an adult I found I couldn't make eye contact with the man in the film and was shocked at how powerless I felt. That does not come from a textbook”.

“Having the perspective of the child really opened my eyes to the power imbalance. This will be particularly helpful in a Social Work setting”.

“This gave me better immersive and empathetic understanding from a child's perspective. I will apply this to my work and in my life generally, as it allowed me to keep the child centre stage in my mind and in my feelings”.

“With a VR experience you retain more information as you are not just learning but feeling the experience”.

“100% support VR training for any future learning - this is by far the most powerful training I attended”.

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More Than Just Words

Within Denbighshire Social Services there is a clear commitment to improve services to ensure that the Welsh language is a key element of care, including services provided by the independent sector. This work has been guided by the Mwy na Geiriau Framework (2022-27)

We continue to promote the Welsh language within Adults and Children's services at induction sessions for new staff. In addition, staff are regularly reminded of the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards. We share the details of the Welsh language awareness e-learning module which has been developed by Social Care Wales for workers and students in social care who wish to learn more about the Welsh language, culture and working bilingually [using-welsh-at-work](#). We have also commissioned Courtesy level Welsh skills courses for staff and also promote a range of language training opportunities (Work Welsh courses and also the [Camau-Welsh-course](#)). In addition, the Adult Services team have participated in the ARFer Project which is delivered by Bangor University and aims to offer opportunities for staff to increase their confidence in using their Welsh language skills.

The steps that Denbighshire's Adult Services team have implemented during 2023-24 include undertaking an audit of how services currently meet the needs of Welsh speakers, alongside work to ensure improvement and sharing of best practice in providing the 'active offer'.

The Contracts and Commissioning team have also undertaken an audit of Denbighshire care providers in order to assess to what extent they are meeting the requirements of the Mwy na Geiriau 'active offer'. An information sharing session is planned for a future Provider event in order to share examples of best practice, together with sharing of resources and information.

Finally, we have continued to increase the sector's awareness of the Active offer.

Posters, lanyards and stickers are distributed as well as the newly produced resources which have been produced by the North Wales Regional Partnership Board with input from the North Wales Mwy Na Geiriau Forum <https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/regional-priorities/mwynageiriau-morethanwords>

Welsh Language Award - Excellence Denbighshire

Holly is not first language Welsh, but she is an extremely passionate advocate for the language.

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As well as being an advocate for the Welsh language within the team and the wider services, she also consistently and genuinely champions the importance of the Welsh language and active offer with our commissioned providers.

Holly clearly understands and empathises with the pressures faced by social care but never loses sight of the huge difference that speaking to citizens in their first language can make to wellbeing and good care/support. Holly has inspired me, and I believe others, to not only improve their Welsh, but be less scared to use the Welsh we do know.

With all of the massive day-to-day pressures it's sometimes difficult to think about taking on extra learning and challenges, but Holly has continued with significant efforts to learn Welsh because it's something she is passionate about and sees the importance of – and her efforts are definitely paying off. She naturally offers Welsh language greetings to citizens - which I don't think is something all of us always think/remember to do - and it clearly makes a huge difference to putting people at ease. Things like this help with cultural shifts, and also help to build more positive relationships and give a positive impression of the Council.

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

2023/24 continued to be a financially challenging year, with the cost of Children and Adult social care services exceeding the resources allocated for their delivery as shown below.

	<i>Budget</i>	<i>Actual</i>	<i>Overspend</i>
<i>Children's Services</i>	£15,272,212	£17,693,499	£2,421,287
<i>Adult Social Care & Homelessness</i>	£52,449,039	£54,271,728	£1,822,689
Total	£67,721,251	£71,965,227	£4,243,976

Each Autumn, financial forecasts are updated for the forthcoming years, which include assumptions for demand and inflation increases, with the aim of allocating sufficient additional budget to meet rising costs. However, the increased cost of care packages caused a larger than anticipated budget pressure, mainly due to higher provider fee increases, including some considerably expensive individual placement costs, particularly in Children's Services.

The large Real Living Wage (RLW) increases in recent years have had a significant impact on the fees charged by providers with hourly rate increases of 10% for both 23/24 and 24/25; however, we have also been faced with fee uplift requests in excess of this RLW increase and Consumer Price Index inflation rates across both Services (Specialist Services in particular for Adults and the very complex cases within Children's).

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In light of these forecasts for 23/24, the Council allocated additional budget to meet these anticipated pressures as follows:

<i>Additional Budget Allocation towards 23/24 Pressures</i>	
<i>Children's Services</i>	£2,000,000
<i>Adult Social Care & Homelessness</i>	£8,187,000
Total	£10,187,000

Given the significant financial challenge faced by the whole of the Council and acknowledging the statutory requirements, unfortunately, neither of these Services are exempt from budget reductions. Savings targets for 23/24 were set at £251k for Children's Services & £830k for Adults Social Care & Homelessness; which are increasing in 24/25 to an additional £322k for Children's and £1,263k for Adults; this upward trend is set to increase further for future years and elected members and executive team officers are engaged in this process.

Both services are under continued pressures to review their commissioning decisions to achieve the same and sometimes more, with limited resources.

Monthly budget monitoring continues to take 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.

Discussions are increasingly focussed on pressured budgets and exploring how care can be delivered in alternative ways whilst still achieving outcomes for citizens at a reduced cost.

Denbighshire County Council continues to face growing financial challenges due to the growth in inflation and demand outstripping increases in funding. The need remains for all departments to play their part in identifying even greater reductions in pressures and savings over the next few years.

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

Officers in Adult Social Care and Homelessness are involved in several good examples of effective partnership working, which include:

- Ageing Well in Denbighshire, a multi-agency network which steers all the work to make Denbighshire an Age Friendly Community

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- Regional Dementia Partnership which, amongst other projects, contribute to work to create dementia friendly communities.
- Joint work between health and social care providers to create safe and supported residential and domiciliary care.
- Joint work between Health, Social Care and Sensory loss specialists to create environments which support those living with sensory issues.

We commission several projects regionally and sub-regionally including the North Wales Domiciliary Care Framework. Denbighshire are leading on the work to prepare for the tender, ahead of the new framework starting in April 2025. This has included significant joint working with commissioners from across North Wales, including the Health Board, and consultation with providers.

Carer Assessors are part of the Third Sector team within Community Resource Teams (CRT). Working closely together the CRT practitioners and carer assessors consider how outcomes for the carer and cared for could be met, co-ordinating and joining up all the preventative opportunities available.

Strengthening key partnerships is paramount to delivering effective services and this is evident with the service providers signed up to Bridging the Gap to improve the range of preventative options available for citizens.

The project supports local providers to adapt and develop new, flexible and person-centred opportunities, whilst partners are encouraged to develop services with and for unpaid carers.

Our partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) is critical to deliver joint, seamless health and social care in line with the Social Services and Well-Being Act. A particular focus over the last year has been working with hospital staff in Ysbyty Glan Clwyd to expedite effective discharges from hospital to an appropriate care setting in the community, be that home with a package of care or into a residential care home.

Within the CRTs across the county health and social care professionals work side by side, utilising the most appropriate skills and knowledge, reducing duplication of effort and working together to achieve the best outcomes for our citizens.

Work with the Third Sector is essential to ensure we are meeting demand right across Denbighshire and ensuring we are maximising local community provision. Our partnership with DVSC is well established and they facilitate the engagement with local Third Sector and

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Voluntary Organisations. DVSC are key stakeholders and are represented in a range of strategic groups / meeting both within Denbighshire and across the Region, such as Denbighshire Integrated Services Forum and North Wales Together for Mental Health Partnership Board.

Through our partnerships with Registered Social Landlords, we are awaiting the completion of the expansion of the Llys Awelon Extra Care Housing Facility in Ruthin.

Grwp Cynefin are expanding the current provision with the development of a further 35 one and two bedroom apartments. It is anticipated the development will be completed in summer of 2024; the existing 21 apartments will then be upgraded before new tenants move in later in the year.

The council has very robust internal governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of Adult Social Care and Homelessness and Children's and Education Services.

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.

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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.

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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) Skills Groups

DBT is a skills-based experience that allows parents and carers to develop core life skills that help individuals regulate strong emotions, manage stressful situations and experience a kinder relationship with themselves and others.

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.

Joint Inspectorate Review of Child Protection Arrangements (JICPA): Denbighshire 2023

Together with (HMICFRS) His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services ([External link](#)), (HIW) Healthcare Inspectorate Wales ([External link](#)), and Estyn ([External link](#)), CIW carried out a joint inspection on the multi-agency response to abuse and neglect in Denbighshire. Read the report [here](#).

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.

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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](https://www.gov.uk) website.

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.

National Training Framework on violence against women, domestic abuse and sexual violence

Guidance from Welsh Government on the statutory requirements for training across the public service and specialist third sector. More information available on [Gov.Wales](https://www.gov.wales) website.

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](https://www.dewis.gov.wales) resource.

Project ARFer

The project is part of the [ARFer Programme](#) which is a behaviour change methodology. ARFer is intended to change language practices to enable colleagues who can speak Welsh (but have established a habit of using English) to use more Welsh at work.

Single Access Route to Housing SARTH

Denbighshire operates a Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) service, which means applicants will only have to make one application to go on the Housing Register and not one to each housing provider.

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The SARTH is shared by all social housing providers in Denbighshire including:

- Denbighshire County Council
- Denbighshire Housing
- Grŵp Cynefin
- Clwyd Alyn
- North Wales Housing and Wales and West Housing
- ADRA
- Cartrefi Conwy

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.