

Report to	Performance Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting	17th July 2025
Lead Member / Officer	Cllr Elen Heaton / Cllr Diane King / Nicola Stubbins
Head of Service	Ann Lloyd / Rhiaian Morrllle
Report author	Ann Lloyd / Rhiaian Morrllle
Title	Director of Social Services Annual Report 2024/2025

1. What is the report about?

- 1.1. Every Statutory Director of Social Services in Wales is required to produce an annual report which gives an overview of the performance of the authority's social care services during the previous financial year.
- 1.2. The draft annual report for 2024/2025 is attached at Appendix 1. The report is intended to provide a range of stakeholders and audiences with an accurate and informative view of services in Denbighshire and demonstrate what difference the local authority's actions are making in people's lives.

2. What is the reason for making this report?

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

3. What are the Recommendations?

- 3.1. That the Committee consider whether the report provides a clear account of performance in 2024 / 2025 and demonstrates what difference Denbighshire's social services are making to people's lives.

- 3.2. That members consider whether the report raises any performance issues / concerns that require further scrutiny

4. Report details

- 4.1. During 2024 / 2025 both our Adult Social Care and Children's Services have focussed on meeting our statutory obligations and the demand and complexity of need which is generally increasing. Throughout the year there has been a focus on transforming services to ensure we have sustainable services that will meet the needs of some of our most vulnerable citizens in the future.
- 4.2. Our performance during 2024 / 2025 is seeing different trends across Adults and Children's services. In adult services we have seen demand at the front door reduce, but complexity of need increase, with the number of citizens having their needs met through a care and support plan increasing. In Children's services, however, demand at the front door has increased by 14% on 2023/ 2024.
- 4.3. Throughout the last year we have seen improvements in being able to recruit new Social Workers and Occupational Therapists, particularly in Adult Social Care, although we still have significant challenges in both Adult Mental Health Services and Children's Services. Some of this success has come through our 'grow your own' investment, but means we are losing experienced professionals and this impacts on more senior social workers and Team Managers who are having to pick up the more complex cases that usually need legal intervention.
- 4.4. What is clear in the report is that there is a lot of work going on across both adults and children's services to prevent reliance on traditional care and support, i.e. residential care and domiciliary care. Many of the alternative and preventative approaches are achieving better outcomes for individuals, with the citizen having choice and control over their care and support.
- 4.5. In Children's Services from the total number of children with eligible needs we have seen a significant decrease in the numbers being able to have their eligible needs met by any other means. This has dropped to 66% from 93% in 2023 / 2024. At the same time the numbers of children who's needs could only be met by a care and support plan has increased by 1% on 2023 / 2024. This is

indicative of the increased complexity of need we are experiencing in social services.

- 4.6. However, having said that we have seen a significant decrease of 43% in the number of children being added to the Child Protection Register during 2024 / 2025.
- 4.7. 2024 / 2025 seen both Adults and Children's Services focus on transformation and Denbighshire adopted a Foster Friendly Policy for any council employees who are or become foster carers. The need to increase Denbighshire's Foster Carers enables us to provide better outcomes for our young people but is also more cost-effective.
- 4.8. Work is ongoing on the eliminating profit from care in Children's Services by looking at how we can develop our own small residential children's homes.
- 4.9. In Adult Services we continued with our Moving with Dignity initiative and as from July 2024 no longer offered double-handed care as standard. The feedback we have received from citizens who now only receive single-handed care with the support of the appropriate equipment is really positive as they feel more involved in their care and support.
- 4.10. Alongside of this Adult Social Care is working on shaping the domiciliary care market and improving and upgrading its internal residential care homes to meet the needs and demands of the complexity of need for the future.

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

- 5.1. During the 2024 – 2025 financial year Adult and Children's Services contributed to the following themes within the Corporate Plan
 - A Denbighshire of quality housing that meets people's needs
 - A healthier and happier, caring Denbighshire
 - A learning and growing Denbighshire
 - A fairer, safe and more equal Denbighshire

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

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

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

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

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

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

9. Chief Finance Officer Statement

- 9.1. The cost implications of any emerging issues in the annual report must be considered within the context of the Council's wider budget position and Medium-Term Financial Plan. The financial pressures and challenges for the services and the Council are clearly outlined in Section 2 (c) in the Annual Report.

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

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

11. Power to make the decision

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

11.2. Section 21 of the Local Government Act 2000 and Section 7.4.2(b) of the Council's Constitution sets out Scrutiny's powers in relation to performance monitoring and the delivery of policy objectives.