

# Conwy Social Care Annual Report 2022-23

Jenny Williams

Strategic Director of Social Care & Education Services

[social.care@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:social.care@conwy.gov.uk)



Mae'r ddogfen hon ar gael yn Gymraeg hefyd



**Sir Conwy, yr amgylchedd iawn i fod yn ddiogel,  
yn iach ac yn annibynnol**

**Conwy County, the right environment to be safe,  
healthy and independent**

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# Introduction

At the end of every financial year the Statutory Director of Social Services is required to publish a report to set out the Local Authority's improvement journey in providing services to the residents of Conwy. It demonstrates how we have promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards. It reports on areas of new development rather than all areas of our work, and evaluates our performance in relation to achieving Social Care duties. The annual report is a requirement for every Local Authority in Wales. It is written with the public in mind, but will also offer an insight into our improvement journey to a broad range of stakeholders, including councillors, our partners, our regulators and Welsh Government.

Our service priorities have been aligned to the eight quality standards that represent people's well-being under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.



All people are equal partners who have voice, choice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them



Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled, well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision



The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented, whilst ensuring that the best possible outcomes for people are achieved



Resilience within our communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging and supporting people who need care and support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society



Effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver fully integrated, high quality sustainable outcomes for people



People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners



People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect, and any other types of harm



People are supported to actively manage their wellbeing and make their own informed decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible

# Director's Summary of Performance

Welcome to the Directors Annual Report looking back on 2022/2023. We continue to demonstrate enthusiasm and innovation in our service delivery, despite challenging budgetary times.

There have been some significant developments over the year that have contributed to our strategic direction and we have really good endorsement from service users and carers who continually feed back to us, using a range of methods. Complaints have reduced but we continually learn from them, and we received over 100 compliments, which is testament to the appreciation of our offer in the county.

We have been working hard on our approach to being inclusive and not stigmatising, and I am very pleased to see our shift towards using language that young people tell us is more respectful and in touch with how they view themselves. Such examples include moving away from traditional terms and using 'children looked after' in all of our methods of communication.

We have increased our offer for those affected by dementia, and embraced an ethos of team around the person affected, and building on what matters most to them. This is a key part of our support for adults, as we see an increase in the early identification of dementia and how early intervention and support can then really be effective.

Our care leaver offer has improved and the team are participating in some ground breaking research to consider innovative practice models and how this can be scaled up into a national training package. This also complements the pilot for care leavers accessing the basic income and how this steady income stream can make such a difference.

The Youth Justice Service has worked hard to develop a supportive and effective early intervention model, refining their roles and also working on an improved governance structure. This has really paid off for those who access the service.

We are very proud of the launch of the Mental Wellness Recovery College, an approach that has been an aspiration for some time. Additional grant funding has now enabled us to progress this, and we have plans to enhance the offer in the coming year.

As ever we don't stand still and have an ambitious programme of work ahead. We continue to make considered efforts to make sure our services are as efficient as possible, however this can come at a cost to quality, as resources are diminished. Nevertheless, we look forward to progressing with our plans, and the most significant programme of work ahead will involve transforming children's care experiences, especially those in high cost placements.

I want to express my thanks to staff yet again for another productive year despite pressures and challenges. I am hugely proud to lead the service and look forward to the next chapter.

*Jenny Williams*

Strategic Director of Social Care and Education Services  
Conwy County Borough Council



# What we said we'd do

## **Develop the Local Integrated Family Team**

Last year we talked about the new Local Integrated Family Team (LIFT) made up of staff from Conwy, Denbighshire and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. It helps families with managing children and young people's challenging behaviour at home. It has been fully operational for a year now, serving both counties with a staff team providing psychological, behavioural and intervention support.

Primarily, LIFT referrals seem to have been received for individuals with ASD, ADHD or attachment disorder traits, with a significant number waiting for neuro assessments. Members of the team have received Paediatric Autism Communication Training (PACT), Video Interaction Guidance and Positive Behaviour Support, all evidence-based interventions which support parents to manage challenging behaviour.

By December 2022 the team had received 175 referrals, so the demand for support is clear.

## **Create the Bwthyn y Ddôl Children's Assessment Centre**

In light of delays associated with the build of Bwthyn y Ddôl, the plans for which we have shared in previous reports, the team continue to work from our Council offices in Colwyn Bay. The team has an agreed referral and assessment pathway across Conwy and Denbighshire, and this partnership is working well.

Staff members originally based within our children's home, Glan yr Afon, have been immersing themselves within the multi-disciplinary team and learning new therapeutic ways of working with children. We have been recruiting for the residential element of the service, in tandem with the staff being recruited by Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

By December 2022 the team had worked with seven families and avoided 1061 weeks in care across Conwy and Denbighshire.

In terms of the project to build the new assessment centre, we have selected a preferred bidder and are currently working on the contract award with a view to then agreeing on the design and target costs.

Once costs and funding have been agreed, we expect the development to take around 70 weeks, starting in May 2023 and ending in August 2024. We will, of course, update you on progress in next year's report.

## **Working with Clwyd Alyn to provide accommodation in Llanrwst**

As mentioned in last year's report, we have worked alongside Clwyd Alyn Housing Association to develop three one-bedroom flats in Llanrwst. Two have been allocated to people accessing Disability Services, and one to the Vulnerable People Team. Both services worked jointly to identify three tenants who would be compatible with each other. All had low-level support needs requiring two to five hours of support a week.

The flats were completed to a very high standard, and available for move-in at the end of August 2022. We are pleased to say that the tenants moved in soon after.

## **Addressing the staffing challenges within our Older People Service**

As was reported last year, our Older People Service continues to face unprecedented demand and capacity issues. Each one of the Community Resource Teams (CRTs) has long waiting lists of cases that are waiting for assessment by either a Social Worker or an Occupational Therapist. The teams are currently only able to allocate cases that are deemed urgent and every other request for assessment is triaged by managers and sent a delay letter. The teams are now routinely dealing with very complex cases that are often in crisis, whilst managing the additional difficulties when needing to commission care packages.

We currently have in excess of 100 hours of domiciliary care which we are unable to broker. Vulnerable individuals are duly being placed in care homes or are cared for at home by families or unpaid carers, some of whom are struggling to manage the caring role as a result of a care package not being available to support

them. Despite these pressures we always endeavour to prioritise hospital discharges and have consistently maintained a low level of Delayed Transfers of Care for Conwy patients.

Within our Social Work teams we have been making use of locum and agency staff to absorb some of the workload demand, but due to the expense involved, this isn't our favoured option. Our external partners are struggling to recruit and retain staff, and as a result have had to hand back care packages which they cannot deliver. These have been absorbed by our in-house teams, who are experiencing their own difficulties in recruiting staff.

Using some Regional Integration Funding we have established a peripatetic team using a recruitment/staffing agency. This has enabled us to create some additional capacity in one CRT area; we have managed to facilitate four people returning to their own homes from a care home placement and enabled one informal carer to return to work. An additional 300 hours of care will be available as a result of this work.

We successfully acquired some additional funding via a business case last year which enabled us to recruit five additional Social Work staff; one to each of the CRTs to support the increasing demand on our services.

We have also started using alternative means of attracting and recruiting new staff to our community support teams, with managers attending various community events and jobs fairs to promote careers in our services. This has had some impact, and we have recruited some new staff as a result.

Retaining and ensuring the wellbeing of our existing staff, who are all working under immense pressure, is a service priority, and through discussion with HR and staffing colleagues we have very recently managed to secure a session for staff to help them understand the impact of secondary trauma, and to explain about moral injury and the impact of that on staff.

We also implemented a mid-year fee review in October 2022 to increase provider fees with a view to enable them to increase staff wages. The implementation of the new domiciliary care commissioning model is also something we hope in time will have a positive impact on the capacity within the domiciliary care sector in Conwy.

**If you, or someone you know, is interested in a career in Social Care, visit [WeCare.Wales](#) or [Conwy Council's jobs board](#)**

## Settling into Canolfan Ffordd Douglas

Following the refurbishment of a Victorian school in the centre of Colwyn Bay we have seen an increase in calls and walk-ins for information, advice and assistance, and the number of third sector and other Local Authority services using the facilities to link up with families closer to home. These include:

- GIFT, providing holiday activities for people with a disability.
- The Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU), providing advice and support, one to one meetings, and access to programmes such as 'Freedom' and 'Own my Life', as well as the 'STAR' programme for children who have suffered domestic abuse.
- Conwy Employment Hub, who offer advice and support about accessing learning and work. They have run cook and eat sessions from the centre.
- Youth Justice Service, providing targeted group work for under 16s around wellbeing, including one to one cooking sessions.
- Cymraeg i Blant, providing Welsh language sing-along sessions for parents, introducing Welsh into their homes.
- STAND under-five group sessions for parents and children with a disability, parent advice workshops, and the PEEP programme around developing early number skills through play.
- North Wales Integrated Autism Service providing drop-in support for adults and children.
- Local Integrated Family Team, supporting families with managing challenging behaviour at home.

- Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service pre-consultation appointments for young people on the neuro-development waiting list.
- Advanced Nurse Practitioner for health of children aged 4 to 18 years.
- Breast feeding support group with a Flying Start midwife.

Engaging with the public during Covid-19 restrictions was challenging, however, once we were able to open to the public and start groups, we saw an increase in walk-ins.

Organisations were not aware of the facilities available to them at Canolfan Ffordd Douglas, so we invited them for viewings. GIFT in particular use the centre regularly to take advantage of the disabled facilities.

We'll be engaging further with the community and local partners to develop a bespoke family offer, based on the identified need in Conwy's central area.



# How are people shaping our services?

Asking the people we support about what matters to them is a key part of developing our services, and the feedback we receive enables us to see where improvements may be needed to the services we deliver. This year we have continued to focus on recovery following the Covid-19 pandemic, so have not been able to consult with individuals as much as we would like. However, you will find examples of feedback and surveys throughout the report, under the relevant quality standard.

## Complaints about our services

These provide us with direct feedback from people who receive our services, and their families and carers. They highlight areas where we are doing well, and also where we can improve our practices. Receiving a complaint means that we can:

- Acknowledge them quickly when we make mistakes
- Put them right and apologise where appropriate
- Ensure we learn lessons from complaints

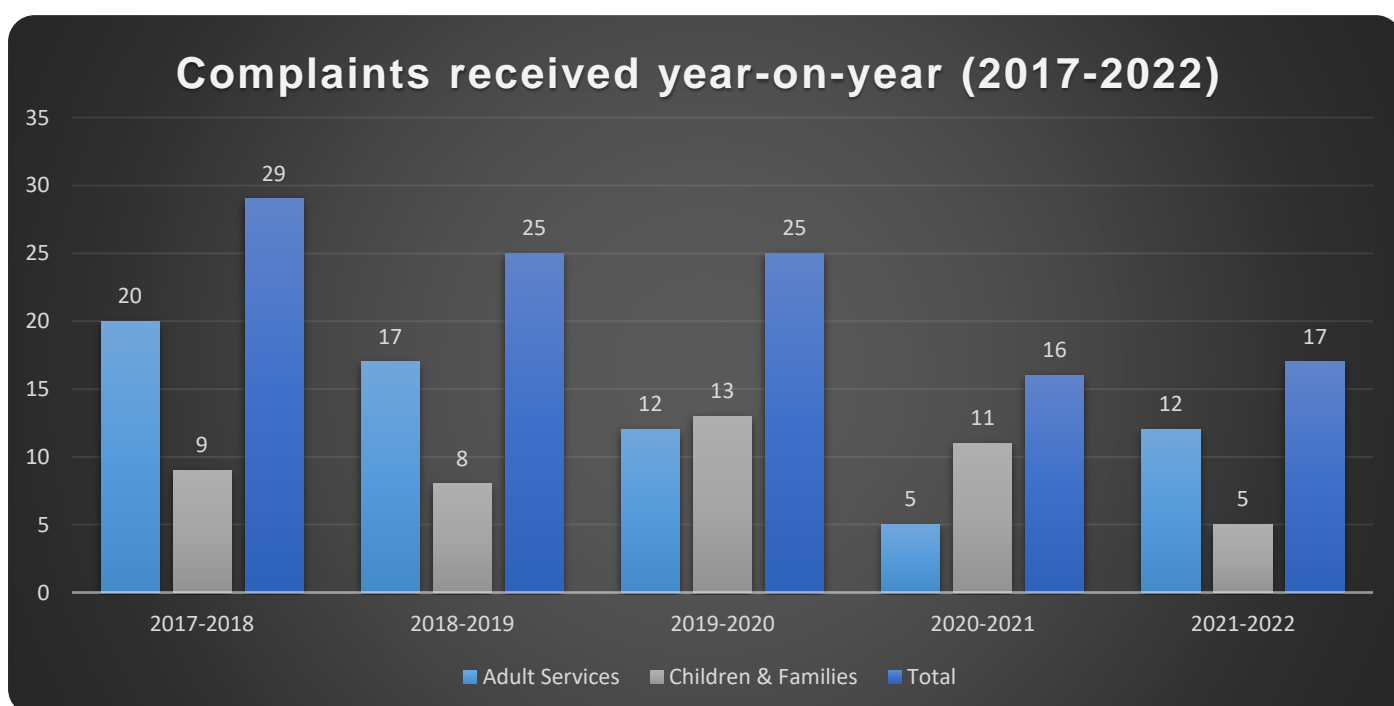
Due to the way we report on complaints and compliments in Social Care, we are providing you with a summary of our performance from 2021-22.

To understand the volume of complaints regarding the average number of cases open to the department, the proportion was:

- 12 complaints about Integrated Adults and Community Services out of approximately 3,400 people receiving services (0.35%)
- 5 complaints about Children, Family and Safeguarding Services out of approximately 900 children and young people receiving services (0.55%)
- In total there were 17 formal complaints received and concluded in the reporting year 2021-22

The financial impact on Conwy as a Local Authority totalled £5,426, up from £4,710 on the previous year. This included appointing independent investigators or independent persons to complete the Stage 2 investigation process, one of which had been concluded in 2020-21 but was reconciled the following year.

The graph below details the number of complaints received across the department over the past five years:





The trend over the last five years represents a decline in the total number of formal complaints received year on year, however, there were a total of 17 complaints for 2021-22, an increase of one from the previous reporting year. There has been a reduction in the number of formal complaints received in regards to Children, Family and Safeguarding Services, with an increase in complaints for Integrated Adults and Community Services.

Of the 17 complaints received, 15 were resolved at Stage 1 and two at Stage 2. This highlights the effort we afford to resolving complaints early and achieving a local resolution. Eight complaints were about Older People and Hospital Social Work Services, however they also have the highest number of open cases within the whole department, so this is still a low figure in terms of an overall percentage.

100% of Stage 1 complaints had an acknowledgment letter or e-mail sent out to the complainant within two working days.

60% of Stage 1 complaints received were completed within the 15 working day timescale, which represents a slight decrease in performance in comparison to the previous reporting year. Those that didn't meet the timescales were either very complex, or took place over the Christmas period when staff were on leave.

76% of complaints were received from family members, and the themes varied from care home or domiciliary care arrangements, poor (or a lack of) communication, a lack of support provision or a lack of action from staff.

The most significant lessons resulting from complaints in the past year are:

- Communication is key to people receiving services and their families; any changes in circumstances need to be effectively communicated to them. Returning calls or simply calling when planned is vitally important to ensure a good working relationship.
- Following up on any agreed actions.
- Ensuring that any information provided is clear and followed up in writing.
- Contact should be arranged when there is a relationship breakdown between parents.
- Individuals should be updated in relation to any update to their care and support.
- We should ensure that people understand the information provided and manage expectations.

## **Compliments about our services**

During 2021-22 we received a total of 122 compliments; 107 about Integrated Adults and Community Services, and 15 about Children, Family and Safeguarding Services. The nature of the different services will influence the numbers, but it is good to note that compliments outnumber complaints! Almost half were received by the Older People and Hospital Social Work Service.

We welcome compliments as a way of learning good practice, and they assure us that we are on the right track.

## **Changing our Children's Services terminology**

You will notice that we refer to 'Children Looked After' throughout this report, whereas in previous years we have used the phrase 'Looked after Children'. This is part of a move away from the 'cold and distant' language used by everyone from social workers to civil servants when referring to children and young people in our care. In Conwy this change has been welcomed by everyone, from the Chief Executive, to colleagues who work with children who are looked after, and the children and young people themselves.

The change in tone will apply to several aspects of children's care and support, including placements, contact with parents and guardians, and periods of respite. Plain and simple terms, in everyday language will be used instead, referring to home, family time and short breaks or sleepovers. We will all be making an effort to incorporate these changes into our paperwork, conversations and meetings.

Take a look at the video created by children's charity Voice of Young People in Care, which explains the reasons behind this change in language.



## Engaging with care home residents

This year our Participation Officer has engaged with the residents of four residential homes, the families of one nursing home, and the tenants of the four housing association-owned extra care housing projects in Conwy. As a result of the engagement in the extra care housing settings we noted improvements in the wellbeing of many people living there, after the isolation and limited social contact throughout the pandemic. Findings were shared with our Partnership Support Officer colleagues, who were able to ensure that some of the issues raised by the residents in one care home were resolved.

### What were the challenges?

Not all residents want to or are able to engage with consultation exercises, so we ask settings such as nursing homes to write to families to gain their support. In extra care housing not all of the people living in apartments are confident about the process, so the Participation Officer tries to allay their fears by emphasising her impartiality.

### What's next?

In 2023 we'll be continuing our engagement and participation work with care homes in Conwy to ensure that residents have a say in what matters to them. We are also supporting the development of age-friendly communities by involving care home residents and volunteers in a new reminiscence therapy project.

# People

Quality Standard 1: All people are equal partners who have voice, choice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them

## Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards/Liberty Protection Safeguards

The Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DoLS) process continues whilst the national transition to the Liberty Protection Safeguards is still anticipated in future. No start date has yet been confirmed.

The DoLS team is now almost back up to full strength following a period of change, with additional agency staff taken on to help manage the waiting list. Now the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic has passed, practitioners have been able to return to more nuanced face-to-face visits rather than remote assessments. The team continues to build positive working relationships with advocacy services and other partner agencies. Feedback suggests the Conwy DoLS team has a good reputation in terms of advocacy.

Through group training and consultation on individual cases, the DoLS practitioners (Best Interests Assessors) continue to actively support front-line staff (both social work teams and care homes) in improving robust, person-centred application of the Mental Capacity Act and the Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. They have also fed into the national consultation process regarding the new Mental Capacity Act Code of Practice (incorporating the forthcoming Liberty Protection Safeguards).

### What difference has it made for people?

Implementation of the DoLS process means an increasing number of individuals have their rights safeguarded, have an extra layer of scrutiny over their care arrangements, access to advocacy, and are able to bring a challenge to court should they wish to do so. The DoLS help ensure care planning is lawful and completed in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act's principles of being in the person's best interests and of being the less restrictive option. This includes more robust planning, consultation and documentation around issues such as advocacy, tailoring placements, access to the community, the use of covert and anti-psychotic medication and meaningful daily activities.

### What are the challenges?

There is a long waiting list for referrals. The high concentration of older people and care homes in the area result in an above-average number of people deprived of their liberty. In addition, DoLS authorisations have to be renewed at least every twelve months and the assessments are legally complex and lengthy. These factors perpetuate the waiting list. As a result, there is a risk people may be unlawfully deprived of their liberty, may not have full access to their rights, and may be in a placement which is not in their best interests, or which is overly restrictive.

We are awaiting the start date for the introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards, but we know that some responsibilities under the LPS will transfer from the DoLS team to front-line social work practitioners. This will require significant preparation and adequate training for those teams. Not knowing the date, final shape or form of the LPS makes it difficult to plan and develop a service delivery model.

### What next?

The DoLS team will continue to actively manage and prioritise the waiting list. On-going high quality legal and refresher training will be provided to new and existing staff, both in terms of the DoLS and LPS, in preparation for the changes in practice. Existing Best Interests Assessors (DoLS practitioners) will prepare to convert to the role of Approved Mental Capacity Professional (AMCP) under the LPS. However, this cannot happen until the accredited training organisations and conversion requirements for this post have been published.

## Loud Voices

Loud Voices is a group for children and young people cared for by the Local Authority and facilitated by Independent Reviewing and Safeguarding Officers. The aim of Loud Voices is to listen to children and young people about their experiences and views to ensure that they have a voice. This enables professionals to learn about what is going well and what we as professionals can do differently.

Following exit from the Covid pandemic, we have reactivated this group. The sessions are always planned to ensure there is a balance so that children can have some fun time, as well as participating in consultation with the adults present.



## Developing our dementia services

To support the development and delivery of dementia services locally we have established the Conwy Dementia Services Forum. This is an operational group which aims to foster open and collaborative discussion for those involved in the development, implementation and reporting of dementia care across Conwy. The group will also drive and oversee the innovative implementation and delivery of the Dementia Strategy across the County. We have representatives from the Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and the Third Sector on the forum.

Officers from Adult Social Care have established a working group with representatives from a range of different departments across the Council to support us with achieving the status of being recognised by the Alzheimer's Society as a Dementia-Friendly organisation. We are now working on an action plan to support the retention of that status. This is now acknowledged and recognised in Conwy's Corporate Plan.

We are actively engaging in a range of newly-established task and finish groups managed by the Regional Collaboration Team in relation to supporting the implementation of the 'All Wales Dementia Care Pathway of Standards'. These have been scoped over the past two years, with over 1800 people, ranging from those living with dementia to voluntary sector organisations and practitioners across Wales and the UK. This work has been led by Improvement Cymru as part of the Dementia Care Programme, and directed by the requirements of the Dementia Action Plan for Wales, overseen by the Welsh Government Dementia Oversight Implementation and Impact Group (DOIIG).

There are 20 standards (narrowed down from over 100 potential standards), and they drill down to the detail of what people believe will make a positive difference to dementia care in Wales.

Within the Social Care Department we have utilised Regional Integration Fund money to appoint a Dementia Support Worker (DSW) within each of our five locality teams. They support Health and Social Care staff working at the CRT, enhancing our multi-disciplinary approach to supporting people to live well with dementia whilst staying in their own homes. This in turn supports the development of the team around the individual approach referenced in the Dementia Action Plan and provides more person-centred and coordinated care, as well as support and treatment as required. The DSWs provide a key point of contact for families to help them navigate the complex Health and Social Care system, and also deliver:

- Flexible, personalised outreach support, using a 'team around the individual' approach from first diagnosis.
- Community navigation (signposting to other services) and advocacy support for people with dementia and their loved ones.
- Support which responds to need, rather than dictated by rotas.
- Support to access overnight and day respite services at Llys Elian residential home as needs escalate.
- Extra support for those where traditional domiciliary care is failing, and more support is needed to maintain independence.

- Support and training for families and unpaid carers, including the promotion of the use of digital technology.
- Links with district nursing around end of life care, and the wider Community Resource Team.

Through the Dementia Support Team (again funded through the RIF) we have been able to test the concept of a more flexible approach to delivering care and support in the community for people living with dementia, and their unpaid carers.

The team has enabled people living with dementia to maintain their independence and remain at home, avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital or residential care, and delaying the need for such services. They have also reduced delays when someone is due to be discharged from hospital. Within the local context, this means a reduction in incidences of Delayed Transfer of Care from the psychiatric hospital, with reduced use of out-of-area placements, thus reducing disruption and distress for families and with associated savings in placement costs. It is anticipated that this more effective support for carers of people with dementia will impact positively on carer resilience and reduce crises. Unfortunately, recruiting to the team has continued to prove extremely challenging, and we have never been able to appoint into every position.

Due to service pressures, our plans to trial a more flexible service at our Elderly Mentally Ill residential home (Llys Elian) and link it with the work of this team have still not been able to progress. We had hoped the team could access overnight and day respite at Llys Elian as needs escalate, but due to Covid restrictions and capacity issues across the care home sector, we have not been able to progress this at all. Regardless of this, the team itself has had a positive impact on some individuals' lives.

**The following case study demonstrates how the Dementia Team work closely with individuals and their loved ones to create the best possible outcomes.**

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Prior to our involvement, M lived independently at home with the support of his caring step-daughter. Following his dementia diagnosis, our Reablement Team supported him for an initial assessment period, and were then replaced by the Dementia Team for four calls a day for personal care, meals and medication. M is a pleasant gentleman who is mostly receptive to care, however on occasions he will decline assistance to dress for bed. This was an initial challenge, as his step-daughter was concerned that he wasn't getting to bed at night, and the bed didn't appear to have been slept in. We had concerns that, in time, he may develop pressure sores, so we worked with M to establish an evening routine, which has had a varied success rate.

In good weather M likes to walk over to the local grocery shop, and is sometimes absent at the lunch call. We work with M, and go back to him at a later time.

We also work closely with M's step-daughter, who escorts him to all his health appointments and feeds back any relevant information to the team. We are currently working together to fortify M's diet due to weight loss and low blood platelet counts, and completing food and fluid charts. His weight is being monitored at the clinic.

M continues to live well with dementia in the community with four calls a day.

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### **What were the challenges?**

Ensuring the involvement of a person living with dementia and their loved ones on the Dementia Services Forum has been challenging, so a different approach is being trialled to engage and consult with individuals who access the Dementia Centre, managed by Carers Outreach. By discussing service issues and hot topics on a regular basis, this avenue will allow us to inform service development and delivery.

The DSW was a new role for us, and at its inception we weren't really sure what the form and function of the role would entail. However, it is true to say that the role has evolved over time and the post-holders are now seen as integral to, and very valued members of, the CRT.

### What's next?

We would like to increase the number of Dementia Support Worker posts as the role has become key in enabling the wider CRT's support of individuals living with dementia in their area. Should any further funding be made available to us it is certainly a resource we'd like to build on due to the positive difference they make. Over the next twelve months we hope to progress with our plans to foster links between the dementia team and the resources available at Llys Elian residential home.

### Engaging with Care Leavers research programme

Conwy County Borough Council, in collaboration with Bangor University, have won a bid of £234,000 from Health and Social Care Research Wales to undertake a two-year piece of research that looks specifically at the engagement of care-experienced young people. Currently the ethics application has been submitted and the literature review is underway.

### What were the challenges?

A large factor was seeking funding during the Covid-19 pandemic. This piece of research was the only successful bid in North Wales and, in order to strengthen the application, we have partnered with other agencies across Wales to ensure there is a national approach to the research and its dissemination.

The research itself focuses on the poor engagement of care-experienced young people with services, and this may present a leading challenge going forward.

### What's next?

The research aim is to:

- Develop a new practice model for engagement with care-experienced young people.
- The project management board has been established and nominations have been put forward for young people across Wales to take part in the research.
- Dissemination of the research will include creation of a podcast, TikTok and training packages for all Local Authorities.

### Autism Reality Experience Bus

Conwy commissioned the Autism Reality Experience Bus in the autumn and winter of 2022-23. The Autism Reality Experience is an innovative, immersive and hands on training session which has been developed to give non-autistic people a virtual experience of living with autism. It provides a very practical hands-on experience that gives participants a greater insight into autism and helps them to begin to see the world from the perspective of a person with autism.

The bus focuses on raising awareness of the sensory processing difficulties faced by people on the autism spectrum. As this is an important area of awareness-raising across the Local Authority, the experience has been made available to all public-facing services across Conwy, including Housing, Leisure Services, Libraries and of course Social Care and Education. We included an invitation to local architects working with the Local Authority, whose feedback was positive in terms of their understanding of how the environment can positively or negatively impact a person with sensory processing difficulties.

This is what participants took away from the experience:

It has made me think more about how a person with autism thinks and sees things around them, and their interaction within their environment.

Being more aware in terms of communication and be aware of the environment and any background noise before asking questions or giving instructions. I had been aware of this before, but the Autism Bus brought this more alive and made it more visceral.

Being more aware of how overwhelming sensory input can be when asking an individual to complete a task or follow a daily routine.

You can read books and attend other training but this gave so much more insight and really hit home how much of an affect autism has on the individuals we support's everyday life and what they may have to deal with on a daily basis. I really didn't appreciate how hard it is.

### What were the challenges?

Raising awareness that this has cross-cutting relevance for all departments has been a challenge. We are also aware of competing priorities in terms of what training should be mandatory, especially given people's capacity to complete everything that is asked of them.

### What's next?

We will continue to commission the Autism Experience Bus, based on the positive feedback received from participants. The feedback suggested that this would also be beneficial to parents of children with sensory processing difficulties.

The National Autism Team have launched 2 new modules:

- Module 1: Understanding Autism (we would like this to be mandatory across the Local Authority)
- Module 2: Understanding effective communication and Autism

We have commissioned specialist Sensory Processing Training for the Disability Service Occupational Therapists, Occupational Therapy Assistants, and in-house support staff.

### Children and young people have their say via Mind of My Own app

Mind of My Own is a web-based system for children and young people to communicate with the professionals in their lives. Strategically, the aims are to encourage greater levels of participation within Children Looked After (CLA) reviews and Child Protection Conferences, so that the views and preferences of the child are more clearly present. Monthly training sessions have been provided and all Children's Services teams have started to use the apps with children and young people.

The apps also allow young people to share good news with their workers, and create one-page profiles using the "This is me" feature within the app, amongst many other options. There are two versions of the app, one of which is designed for younger children and those with additional learning needs. A monthly infographic is shared with teams, to stimulate sharing of good practice examples, and to promote more staff to use this valuable new system as part of their overall toolkit.

An audit was carried out in late summer 2022 to establish the quality of "the voice of the child" within Children Looked After reviews. The audit revealed a very positive picture. Out of 20 cases audited, 16 were deemed

'Good', 3 'Excellent' and 1 'Adequate'. This is good evidence that as a department, we are engaging with children and young people very well, and Mind of My Own is contributing to that success.

Feedback from the "Loud Voices" group suggests that most young people do not wish to attend their CLA reviews in person, and so Mind of My Own offers a great way for them to let people know what's important to them, in their own words, in their own time.



## What were the challenges?

Implementing a new system like Mind of My Own takes time, and has been a challenge following the pandemic, and through a period where staff caseloads were high due to staffing issues.

Staff have existing methods and preferences for modes of communication with children and young people, and some (older) groups of young people may have seen the apps as being more suitable for younger children.

Many foster carers have embraced the new system and say that the children in their care have enjoyed using it. Some have struggled with the technology aspects, and additional sessions and demonstrations have been provided. Sessions have also been provided for Independent Foster Agencies.

The challenge going forward will be to promote continued use of the app alongside other meaningful ways to engage and consult with children and young people who access our services.

## What's next?

Mind of My Own has been funded for the next three years, which provides a fantastic opportunity to continue to maximise the benefits of the system. We are continuing to provide monthly training sessions for staff, and supporting foster carers via attendance at their bi-monthly coffee mornings. The fostering team are adapting their 'welcome boxes' to include materials to support the use of Mind of My Own, particularly when children come into care for the first time. The Family Centres are also beginning to use it. At Conwy we'll continue to use Mind of My Own in order to encourage children and young people to share their voice, so that we can keep them safe, check on their wellbeing, and constantly enhance our services for them.

## Conwy and Denbighshire Autism Lead Officer

The Conwy and Denbighshire ASD Stakeholder Group agreed in 2020-21 to support a proposal to employ an Autism Lead to work across both Local Authorities. The new officer started in March 2023 and they will



lead on driving the implementation of the Welsh Government's Autistic Spectrum [Code of Practice](#) across Conwy and Denbighshire. They will also work closely with the Conwy and Denbighshire Autism Stakeholder Group to develop a joint local action plan which will build on the Local Authority Code of Practice Implementation Plans and be co-produced with people who have lived experience. They will work alongside the Regional Collaboration officer with responsibility for regional co-ordination of delivery of the Code.

## What were the challenges?

Autism currently affects 1-2% of the UK population; that is 1 per 100 children and 2 per 100 adults. Based on the current population of 118,184 and 16.7% being aged 0-15 we would estimate that there are 198 children with Autism in Conwy and 2,359 adults (Conwy population profile research document Oct 21). Denbighshire population is 98,800, with 16.5% under 16, so around 163 children with Autism and 1,973 people with Autism. Across both Local Authorities this is a considerable potential population (4,963) to provide support to in terms of the intent of the Code of Practice for the delivery of Autism Services. Many will not require the support of Social Care, but will require the Local Authority to consider their needs as local citizens in receipt of a broad range of services from the Council.

The Autism Lead will need to consider how the Local Authorities' policies and procedures need to be adapted or amended to ensure that they take into account the diverse needs of people with Autism and neurodevelopmental conditions, making recommendations as appropriate. Where needed, the Autism Lead may need to work with officers to create new policies and procedures which are specific to the needs of people with Autism. For example the Safeguarding Board have recently drafted a 'Safeguarding Practice with Autistic People' policy which will need to be implemented in Conwy and Denbighshire and may impact on existing Local Authority policies and procedures. This could also include corporate policies, for example in relation to reception and advice around effective communication with customers who are Autistic or who have Neurodevelopmental Conditions. We'd also need to consider how our forms and information systems need to be adapted to meet the diverse needs of Conwy citizens.

## What's next?

The Lead Officer will need to take responsibility for implementing Conwy and Denbighshire separate internal Autism local implementation plans. Conwy and Denbighshire internal structures are organised quite differently, and the Lead will need to familiarise themselves with both in order to effectively implement the plans. These will focus on

- Raising awareness of Autistic Spectrum Conditions (ASC) amongst staff
- Ensuring that there is a seamless referral pathway between Conwy and Denbighshire
- Identifying gaps in provision and commissioning appropriately to address them
- Creating a Conwy and Denbighshire ASC Action Plan in partnership with a range of services and partners
- Contributing to the development of services to support people with a range of neurodevelopmental conditions

## Youth Justice Service

In the Youth Justice Service, we have safeguards and processes in place to support children and young people to learn how to make choices. We see this as a vital part of their development. We continuously seek to provide them with the freedom to make decisions about venues, who is involved in meetings and intervention plans to build their confidence. We understand and acknowledge that young people with a history of trauma may find choice challenging. We work with young people to discover their preferences, to ensure that they have an experience of being treated with dignity.

Our programmed intervention also supports and encourages the involvement of families and carers in all aspects of our work, when safe and appropriate to do so. Through our programmed intervention and feedback systems we support families to develop an understanding of what's important to each other, and work in

partnership with other services and professionals to deliver positive change. We are currently advocating the creation of a Parenting Officer within the service to develop this aspect of work further.

## Child-first and trauma-informed approach

As a service we have adopted and implemented a child-first and trauma-informed approach to service delivery which focuses on creating positive relationships with children and young people, their families and carers by providing safety, trust, choice, collaboration and empowerment.

Through the trauma-informed approach, we have supported practitioners to adopt this practice to all work with children and young people open to the Youth Justice Service.

## What difference has it made?

Through the delivery of this approach we have been able to:

- Introduce new safeguards and processes to support children and young people to learn to make choices which, in turn, builds their independence. We acknowledge that young people with a history of trauma may find choice challenging.
- Seek the view and preferences of the young people we work with, ensuring that they have an experience of being treated with dignity. We feel that this supports them to develop self-respect, and confidence.
- Ensure that we work in collaboration. Collaboration runs through every interaction we have as a service, with children, young people, their parents, carers, partner agencies and colleagues.
- Embed processes that ensure that we regularly meet and review intervention plans and support, and involve children and young people in decision-making around their intervention plans and contact.
- Encourage and allow practitioners the opportunity to get to know young people, and show that as a service we care by encouraging an ethos that we are working with them not on them.
- Promote the use of positive language with young people and advocate on their behalf. This work is supported and developed by the feedback from young people and families gained from our embedded feedback processes.
- Target the involvement of parents and carers. We've programmed intervention to support and encourage the involvement of families and carers in all aspects of our work, when it's safe and appropriate to do so.

## What were the challenges?

There have been a number of challenges in the implementation of the child-first and trauma-informed approach. Since the Covid-19 pandemic we have needed to re-establish contact arrangements and relationships with children, young people and their families.



Quality Standard 2: Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled, well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision

## Early Intervention – Edge of Care

The Strengthening Families Team leads on the Edge of Care, Early Intervention and the Domestic Abuse Panels. The purpose of these multi-agency panels is to share information and plan for timely, targeted support to increase safety, reduce risks, and improve the functioning and wellbeing of families.

The Edge of Care Panel meets weekly and consists of attendees from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS), Family Group Conferencing, Youth Services, Health, Youth Justice Service and Young Carers as standing members. It is a dynamic meeting where a Signs of Safety approach is used as a tool to consider the indicators of safety within a family. A plan is discussed and resources allocated if needed to help stabilise and strengthen a child and family situation.

Between April and December 2022, there have been a total of 57 families discussed at the Edge of Care Panel meetings. A further 23 families were discussed at the Early Intervention Panel meetings.

## The Turnaround Project

The Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service (YJS) have been preparing to deliver the Ministry of Justice Turnaround Project from 1 April 2023. The programme has been designed using an Early Help approach to enable the YJS to improve outcomes for children on the edge of the justice system. The ultimate aim of the programme is to prevent young people offending or reoffending by:

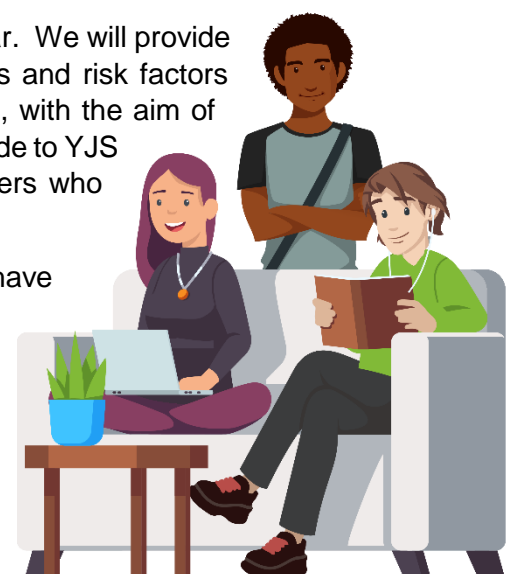
- Achieving positive outcomes for children with the aim of preventing them going on to offend
- Building on work already done to ensure all children on the cusp of the youth justice system are consistently offered a needs assessment and the opportunity for support
- Improving the socio-emotional, mental health and wellbeing of children
- Improving the integration and partnership working between YJS and other statutory services to support children.

The Turnaround delivery model will use an Early Help approach which has proven to be a success with similar early intervention programmes, such as Supporting Families. A five-year impact analysis of the Supporting Families early intervention programme shows a 38% reduction in youth custodial sentences and a 15% reduction in youth convictions within the cohort.

## What's next?

As a service we will be required to work with 38 young people every year. We will provide Early Help support in assessing and addressing the underlying needs and risk factors which may have brought the child into contact with the justice system, with the aim of providing positive development. It is anticipated that referrals will be made to YJS primarily by the police and courts but can be made by any practitioners who have interacted with the child, as well as the child's parents.

In response to this new two-year initiative, two new fixed-term posts have been created within the service, and we are currently in the process of recruiting to these roles.



## Expansion of the Mental Wellness Team

The Mental Wellness Team aimed to expand their support following their inception during the pandemic, and have been successful in their plans. We have recruited a full-time Approved Mental Health Practitioner (AMHP), which is a statutory provision required by Local Authorities and a specialist professional role. An AMHP's key responsibility is to make applications for the detention of individuals in hospital, ensuring the Mental Health Act and its Code of Practice are followed.

### What difference has it made?

The data we gather on this service (provided during office hours) demonstrates a substantial increase in AMHP activity since the pandemic; with 292 referrals recorded in 2022, 15 more than the previous year. The team have also supported an AMHP student to qualify during the year and note that the majority of AMHPs have now been trained in Positive Behaviour Management to assist work with potentially violent individuals.

We appointed to the Section 117 Social Worker post, whose role is to support the aftercare process of individuals who have been discharged following being hospitalised under the Mental Health Act. There are approximately 298 people currently in Conwy who are eligible for S117 support, and having a dedicated and experienced social worker in this post is important to ensure that their needs are being met appropriately and proportionately, that their voice is heard and they are advocated for, and to provide continual review to avoid breakdown of placements.

Furthermore, utilising funding from the Area Integrated Service Board (AISB), we recruited an additional Intervention Worker and Community Support Worker who will provide a period of short-term, intensive support designed to help individuals in a structured, person-led, recovery-focused way, preventing crisis where possible, and facilitating the individual to regain stability. Ultimately, it would be beneficial for this role to offer support to people who are enrolling with the Recovery College, to facilitate their recovery-focused action plan and help them achieve their goals and aspirations within that setting.

### What were the challenges?

For the AMHP service, the work itself is very challenging, dealing with very poorly people in the community. However, the key challenges with service delivery remain systemic in terms of lack of availability of Section 12(2) approved Doctors (who can recommend compulsory admission for assessment or treatment under the Mental Health Act 1983), delays in ambulances arriving to convey the person to hospital, and an overall lack of appropriate beds. This means that a full assessment may take up to 15 hours and often the person has to be admitted out of county.

### What's next?

We'll continue to focus on prevention and early intervention, and on an individual's journey of recovery. We will also continue to provide a responsive service and work with Health Board colleagues in developing strategies to overcome the process issues that create some of our challenges.

## Positive Behaviour Support within Disability Services

Positive Behaviour Support (PBS) is a person-centred approach to supporting people with a learning disability, especially if they are distressed and at risk of harming themselves or others. The approach is based on working with individuals and their support network to understand why they are distressed, the impact their environment has on them, and the best ways to keep them safe and happy.

We have supported some of our in-house disability staff to attend training to gain PBS qualifications. The overview training has been compiled by an in-house Team Manager and Coordinator, and has been piloted with a team of Sessional Support Workers who work with children and young people with complex support needs.

Forms have been devised to enable the support workers to write up reports during or after each support session, enabling analysis of behaviours and identification of strategies to support the person to feel calmer during the day. A PBS working group has been established, consisting of Social Workers, managers and

Support Workers who have started to generate ideas on how to embed PBS across the entire Disability Service.

For those who have undertaken qualifications and training, PBS has started to be used as everyday practice to improve the lives of people who receive services. We now:

- Have weekly team meetings to focus on one individual, identifying what is going well, what needs to change, and new opportunities
- Recognise early indicators that a person is moving away from their 'baseline' and can implement strategies to reduce the need for them to display behaviours to communicate their needs
- Give the people we support more choices in the activities they'd like to do
- Take positive risks, which in turn creates new opportunities and builds skills for the people we support

As a result of implementing PBS we have seen:

- A reduction in incident forms
- Improved communication between the service and families
- Improved lives for people with disabilities
- A reduction in the need for specialist out of county placements, enabling people receiving services to remain close to friends and family
- Reduced demand for input from Health services
- Improved multi-agency working
- Reduction in the use of 'restrictive practice'

## What were the challenges?

The qualifications are detailed and require completion of assignments and PBS-recognised paperwork, involving observations of the individual, speaking with all those involved with them to gather information, putting learning into practice, and training others to put learning into practice. This is in addition to the staff member's main job role, managing time around busy workloads and other commitments.

Not everyone wants to buy into PBS, maybe due to a lack of understanding of what it is, and not seeing the positive changes that it can make, and the time that's required to make those positive changes.

Other workload commitments for the PBS working group reduces the amount of time they're able to commit to this initiative and drive the changes forward.

## What's next?

We hope to roll out the PBS qualification to all frontline staff and develop training to set out the main principles. We'd also like to develop training for families to help them understand PBS plans, the associated terminology and what changes may help them at home.

We'll encourage support providers to skill-up their workforce in PBS practice, in turn increasing opportunities for people with disabilities living in Conwy.

We will continue to reduce the need for out of county placements and bring people back to the county by developing accommodation that fits the needs of the person.

## Staff feedback from attending courses and training

The Workforce and Development Team have completed an evaluation of training courses which has highlighted significant obstacles for both Social Care employers and employees in accessing classroom and virtual training.

## What were the challenges?

Increasing accessibility to training for the Social Care workforce has been challenging. Also, recruitment challenges have impacted upon a Social Care employer's ability to release employees to attend classroom-based training.

Virtual training offers greater access opportunities as it eliminates travel time to a classroom setting. However, employees need to have a suitable digital device to access the training. They also need to have the skills and confidence to use such a device.

## What's next?

We are working on a new model for delivery of training to increase accessibility. This will include delivering core training within workplace settings. Also, it will increase access to virtual learning through the provision of digital tablets and support to employees in using the devices.

## Consulting with our front-line staff

We regularly ask the staff who work in our front-line support teams how they feel about their roles, and the quality of care delivered by themselves and their respective services. We've set out some of the responses and feedback below.

### Disability domiciliary care workers

- 100% of respondents felt that they were sufficiently trained to undertake their role
- 96% agreed that, as a team, we listen to the individuals we support, ensure they have rights, and are able to make choices
- 100% felt that, as a team, we support individuals to live fulfilled lives and support their health and wellbeing
- 96% agreed that, as a team, we support individuals to stay safe and protect them from abuse and neglect
- All respondents rated the overall performance of their team as very good or excellent

Participants were asked what their service does well:

The service opens the door for opportunities for individuals to fulfil/reach their goals, dreams and wishes. The service offers excellent care packages for individuals and treats everyone as an individual and works hard to deliver the right support for that person.

Listen to and act on the needs of the children/young people we support. Support staff and make them feel valued. Go that extra mile!

They were also asked what the best part of their role is:

Getting it right; noticing a change in communication, having that barrier between staff and individual come down as the trust is building...

Knowing you have made a positive impact on someone's day.

Seeing young people achieve something, no matter how small. Seeing young people enjoy doing something. Forming positive relationships with the young people I support.

We asked individuals who work alongside the in-house disability teams for their views on the quality of the service. We received responses from the practitioner teams who work with individuals under 25 years of age, over 25 years of age, and within day services.

- 100% felt that we listen to the individuals we support, enabling them to make choices about the care and support they receive, and the opportunities available to them.

The team are incredibly person-centred...and approach care and support with the individual at the centre. They think creatively and 'outside of the box'. This is clear within the management team and I feel it filters down to the staff on the ground.

- 94% felt that the team respond in a timely manner when contacted with an enquiry
- 100% felt that the team respond promptly to requests when concerns arise around individuals accessing the service
- 100% felt that the team respond appropriately to requests when concerns arise around individuals accessing the team
- 100% agree that the service supports individuals to stay happy and healthy

Support from the team allows families and children to access services, opportunities that otherwise may be unavailable to them, offer periods of respite to parents as a secondary result, and offers professional and caring relationships to the children.

- 100% agreed that the service supports individuals to protect themselves and stay safe from abuse and neglect

I was involved with a particular case...where the team went above and beyond in providing care for the child. They raised concerns when they felt other agencies were not providing appropriate care. They treated the child with respect, compassion and empathy.

- 100% felt that the service is flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs of the individuals we're supporting.
- Examples of effective partnership working were sought, and participants responded with lots of instances, between individuals, internal teams, knowledge- and skill-sharing, and partner organisations, such as Health.

## Older People domiciliary care workers

As part of our suite of surveys we also asked the older people domiciliary care workers for their views on the service they provide and the support they receive from management.

- Over 90% feel that they have the necessary training and supervisory support from their manager to undertake their role
- 100% agree that, as a team, they listen to the individuals they support, ensuring they have rights and are able to make choices
- 94% feel that, as a team, they support individuals to live fulfilled lives and support their health and wellbeing

I actively visit those on my caseload daily or weekly to monitor, support, help, and signpost to facilitate their needs and to listen to them and those around them.

By encouraging individuals to do as much as they can for themselves, building their self-esteem and raising their self-confidence. Also encouraging individuals to attend lunch clubs and other social events so they can build friendships with their own age groups and have things to look forward to.

- 97% agree that, as a team, they support individual to stay safe and protect them from abuse and neglect
- 54% rate the service they work in five out of five, and 34% give it a rating of four.

I am very happy with the service I work in. I enjoy having full and open access to all services which enables me to fast-track individuals to the help and care they need.

In this fast-paced environment, I find that information sharing is very good and any concerns/changes are listened to and acted upon promptly.

The additional comments suggest that, despite the current challenges within social care, the teams remain positive and determined to deliver the best possible care to older people in Conwy.

We asked colleagues from the Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and Housing Associations for their views on this service's performance. Again, the feedback was very positive overall, with an acknowledgment that the demands on domiciliary care teams are high.

- 100% of respondents agree that the service listens to the individuals we support, giving them choices about the care and support they receive and the opportunities available to them
- 96% feel that we respond in a timely manner to enquiries, and 100% feel that we respond promptly and appropriately to concerns about an individual accessing the service.
- 100% feel that we support individuals to stay happy and healthy



- 100% agree that we support individuals to protect themselves and stay safe from abuse and neglect
- 91% feel that the service is flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs to the individuals we're supporting, with additional comments appreciating that this takes place against a backdrop of staffing and capacity pressures, and time constraints

I have worked in partnership with the Reablement Team on numerous occasions and find that their staff are very supportive and engage well with service users and families. They provide a high level of quality of service, can address emergencies when identified, and [are] an excellent resource in the community.

During one of the ambulance strikes one of the senior carers did not hesitate to support me with a service user. During Covid the carers were our eyes and ears and if they had concerns regarding a service user they swiftly updated me.

# Prevention

Quality Standard 3: The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented, whilst ensuring that the best possible outcomes for people are achieved

## Putting individuals at the heart of our Older People services

Our Older People Domiciliary Care project is still underway, with the aim of ensuring that the services we commission are more outcome-focused and promote the principles of voice, choice and control for the service user. As part of this work we also want to support and build a more robust domiciliary service for the future and enable a more integrated and supported working approach with our providers. We are therefore moving away from commissioning services that are time- and task-focused to commissioning services which are outcome-focused and more person-centred.

To support our teams we have produced a staff guidance document to explain and support the delivery of the new model, and a new policy in relation to positive risk-taking which sets out our approach to strengths-based and person-centred practice.

A series of joint training sessions were arranged for internal commissioning staff and for external care provider staff to increase and ensure a joint understanding of outcome-focused working. We've also undertaken a review of all our internal processes, from referral to quality standards and assurance. As a result, we have made some improvements to our client information system processes, making them more efficient, lean, and fit for purpose.



This new commissioning model will be rolled out across all of our community resource teams (CRTs), one by one. Each area will be assigned a group of preferred providers who will be paid on a block contract basis, rather than with spot contracts. The size of the block contracts will be based on current commissioning activity and will be increased or decreased as necessary. A new, refined Service Specification document has been

created in consultation with the providers who will become an intrinsic part of the CRT. They'll have access to the multi-disciplinary team to discuss cases, and seek support when issues or problems arise, to prevent escalation of problems. The invoicing process has now been simplified, as providers need only submit one invoice weekly or monthly for the block amount, not multiple invoices for each client.

Since the first phase of the roll-out of the project only occurred on 29 January 2023, it is too early as yet to report on specific case studies, but the progress of the first roll-out will be subject to regular and robust monitoring and reviewing.

### **What were the challenges?**

The current staffing pressures across the whole care sector have made this project challenging, and the go-live date for the proposed changes has slipped several times as a result.

Whilst there is a lot of support and enthusiasm for the proposed changes in the domiciliary care sector locally, it is fair to say that, despite everyone claiming to already be working in an outcome-focused way, actually putting the theory into practice will prove challenging, both for commissioning and provider staff.

### **What's next?**

As referenced previously, the plan is to roll out the model via a phased approach on a CRT by CRT basis. The Abergele CRT went live on 29 January 2023 and progress will be reviewed on a regular basis. Once the model is established there, we will then move on to the next CRT area.

## **Preventative work within our Community Wellbeing Service**

This service comprises a number of teams who work with individuals at an early stage to help them keep their independence, access community-based service and activities, and stay safe in their own homes.

Our Occupational Therapy Intake Team have continued to visit people with lower level needs at home, to provide equipment and minor adaptations, such as grab rails. These items help to prevent falls and support people to continue living independently at home, lessening the likelihood of reliance on long-term services.

The Telecare service now provides an online form where people can sign up for the service easily and quickly. Having a Telecare Service which is connected to the monitoring service, Galw Gofal, gives people, and their families, peace of mind that they can call for help should they need to.

In light of the cost of living crisis, the Welfare Rights Team have attended Warm Welcome events and been proactive in advising people regarding winter fuel payments and other benefits in a bid to help people maximise their income sooner rather than later. The team has also helped people with unpaid carer grant applications, in particular those who are unable to access the internet when online applications have been the only option. The team continues to assist Conwy residents in maximising their income by ensuring they are claiming the welfare benefits they are entitled to.

The Community Wellbeing Team have continued to work within our communities to ensure our residents over 65 years of age have a voice in developing the activities offered in their geographical area. The team continues to assist people to increase their activity and reduce isolation, thus enabling them to live happier, healthier lives.

The Community Equipment Stores have continued to provide a five-day week service to Conwy residents, including throughout the pandemic, helping to reduce or delay hospital admissions and enabling hospital discharge. This is a key function for the team to ensure the Authority is responding to the regional pressures on hospital, wider health, and ambulance services.

Our Single Point of Access Team (SPoA) continue to provide a front door service for Adult Social Care. Processes are continually appraised and adapted to meet demands across many referral sources. This year these have included a change in how to manage requests for carers' assessments to reduce the pressure on our internal Carers Team. We have also spent time assessing the essential daily tasks within the team

to reduce the risk of backlogs occurring in any one specific area of work. We have adapted our daily rota to ensure all tasks are covered sufficiently and determine which tasks take priority when staffing capacity is below the minimum required. These changes have resulted in better management of the inbox and phone lines.

### What were the challenges?

Demand on our service and teams is often greater than what we are able to deliver. When there is a waiting list of people wishing to access our services, we always prioritise the most vulnerable people first.

Staffing capacity throughout the section due to both long- and short-term absences and vacancies have added significant pressure to remaining staff and managers, and we have increased line manager and human resources support during this time.

Fixed-term contracts due to grant-funding cause stress for staff awaiting the outcome of future funding decisions. This creates the risk of losing experienced staff to permanent roles elsewhere.

The introduction of hybrid working, where staff work partly from home and partly from the office, has caused pressure for managers dealing with staff who are reluctant to return to the office for a portion of their working week. We continue to work with these staff to encourage their return.

### What's next?

We will be looking to further integrate our Occupational Therapy Intake and Telecare functions to develop more resilience in times of staff leave, or when we have vacancies.

We'll review the other teams within our Information, Advice and Assistance section and identify areas for improvement, especially in terms of resilience.

We'll continue to support our staff to manage absence and start to work from the office again.

**If you need information, advice or assistance,  
visit our web pages**

## Upgrading our Telecare equipment

During this year the Telecare Service has worked closely with Community Equipment Stores to progress the provision of digital monitoring units to customers who have new digital telephone connections. We have continued to provide some 'smart' and specialist equipment to help support people at home using technology. For example, GPS devices can help people with early-onset dementia, and epilepsy alarms can give peace of mind to people living with the condition. In many cases these devices can give people independence and the confidence to continue living at home and accessing their communities.

### What were the challenges?

We have faced some challenges around staff shortages in both our administrative and installer teams, but we've continued to prioritise urgent referrals and faults for people most at risk.

We need to understand how the digital agenda will be fully implemented in Conwy. Regional and national discussions are taking place regarding logistics and funding.

### What's next?

The coming year will see the Conwy Telecare Team continue to roll out the digital monitoring units in a phased and controlled way, keeping a close eye on any issues that arise so as to provide appropriate devices according to people's needs, according to best practice.

We are currently developing an assessment flat with the disability Early Intervention and Prevention Team which will eventually be a place where service users can see Telecare and Smart technology on show in a 'similar-to-home' environment. This will give people the chance to try out the equipment and see if it is something that would help them at home; in effect a 'try before you buy' approach.

## **Helping people with learning disabilities to live independently**

In 2017 we launched a progression project, funded by the Integrated Care Fund, to provide individuals with learning disabilities with a specialist occupational therapy assessment. The emphasis was to be on support around skill development and progression towards more independent living and self-value, both at home and in the community. The objective was to help reduce long-term reliance on traditional care services and/or family carers, and embed an approach that focuses on progression and supporting the individual to overcome barriers to complete tasks they wish to undertake, as independently as possible.

It required the individual and their support network to take responsibility for working towards their personal outcomes within an agreed timeframe, and in some instances, for developing their confidence in positive risk-taking.

The project supported individuals to realise their full potential, developing their independence within their own homes, and becoming more independent and active in their communities. In many cases the project enabled individuals to move to more independent living with the right sized care and support. This has meant that citizens developed their confidence in living more independently, and having more control over how they lived their lives, using assistive technology and other aids and adaptations to manage risks.

## **What were the challenges?**

It was sometimes difficult to maintain the focus on progression once the Occupational Therapist had completed their assessment and care and support plan. The Covid-19 pandemic meant we were no longer able to offer face to face assessments and it changed service pressures significantly, meaning the progression service came to a halt at the beginning of the pandemic.

## **What's next?**

We are pleased to say that we're re-launching the Progression Service, which will now be funded under the Regional Integration Fund. An Occupational Therapy Assistant post has been introduced to facilitate some of the post-assessment monitoring of progress, and to develop a technology specialism within the service.

The project reflects a shift away from long-term, support-focused delivery of services. The focus will be on short-term interventions, adhering to a detailed plan, supporting individuals to develop new skills to achieve their pre-agreed outcomes.

A new location has been identified where functional assessments of activities of daily living can be completed within a suitable environment. Specialist aids and equipment will be available to support citizens to develop a plan on how to achieve their personal outcomes as independently as possible. We aim to promote the use of modern assistive technology in meeting personal outcomes, promoting independence and in managing risks within the home.

Demonstrating the use of modern equipment and assistive technology will help inform citizens and professionals alike about innovative ways of meeting outcomes and managing risks, in a way which maximises individuals' strengths, reduces the reliance on informal and paid support, and where long-term support is needed, will inform assessments to ensure we promote the right level of support.

## **Developing our Connected Persons Team**

Our Connected Persons Team has seen big changes during 2022 with five posts implemented, inducted, trained and upskilled to cater for the needs of connected persons carers. During the Covid-19 pandemic connected persons support groups were facilitated by an independent charity who amalgamated Conwy, Gwynedd and Ynys Môn together. Following feedback from Conwy-based connected foster carers, we set up a group for Conwy only, with the help of a new team manager, and the Kith and Kin Group was established.

Special Guardians are individuals who can apply to look after a child when they cannot live with their birth parents, and adoption is not right for them. In Conwy our Special Guardianship offer continues to thrive with support from a dedicated coordinator who monitors the Special Guardianship Support Plan. With a now-established relationship, they are able to provide early intervention support, review support plans and review payments, all helping to prevent breakdowns in the arrangements, and strengthening the active service of Special Guardianship support.

Connected Persons is also a strand of the 'eliminate profit' agenda introduced by the Welsh Government. By strengthening the Connected Persons fostering service and providing effective Special Guardianship support we facilitate a successful and realistic move-on plan through foster care to Special Guardianship. Within our grant application we identified that a second Special Guardianship Coordinator would support the 'eliminate profit' agenda, the Special Guardians themselves, and proactively strengthen the core offer in the Special Guardianship plans.

### What were the challenges?

As all five members of staff started within the same month, this was a challenging period.

### What's next?

Connected Persons training has been developed, and this needs to be delivered to the wider childcare teams to strengthen their understanding of the assessment process, share knowledge and skills, and ensure greater awareness of the Special Guardianship support provided. All of this will strengthen our offer of support. We'll also be recruiting to the new Connected Persons Coordinator post.

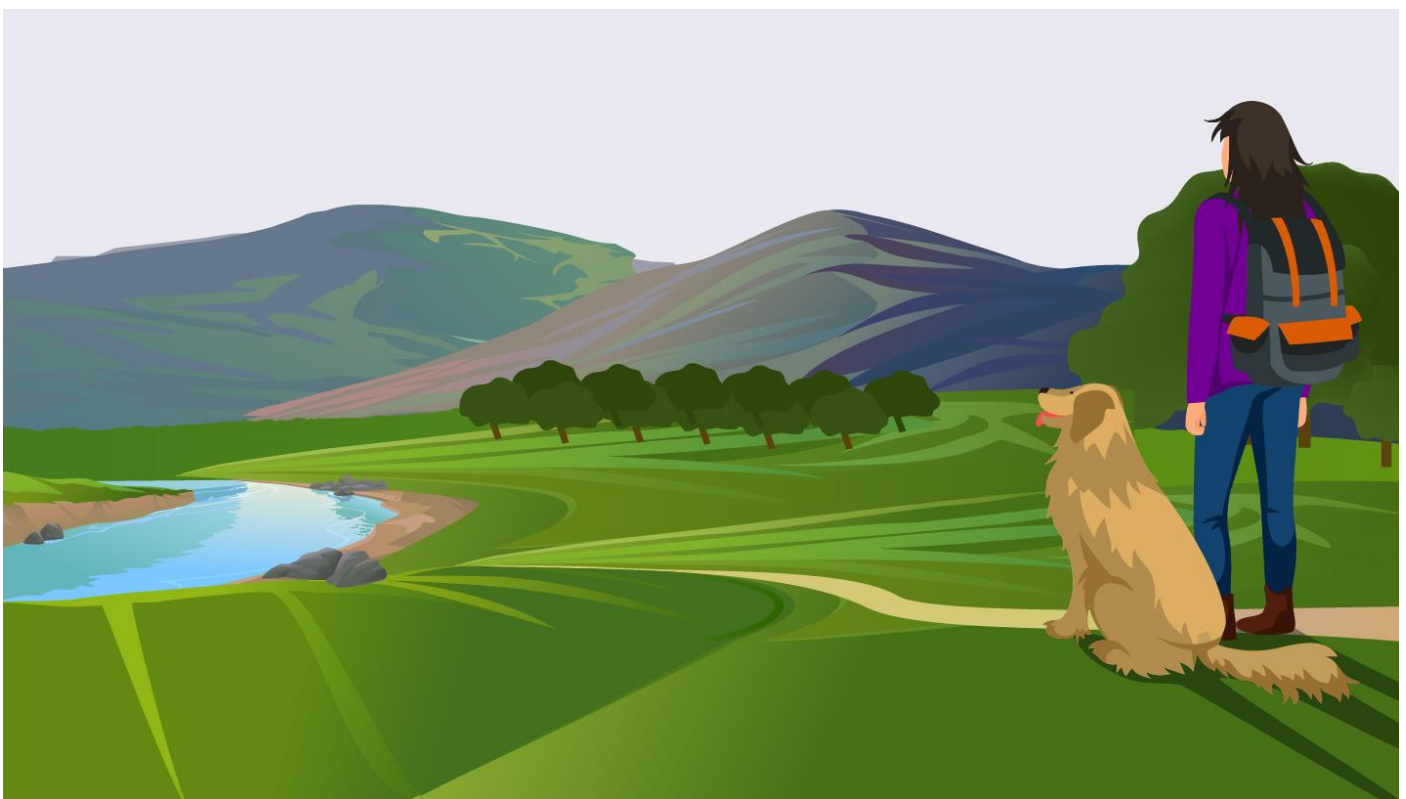


Quality Standard 4: Resilience within our communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging and supporting people who need care and support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society

### **Getting back outdoors**

The Covid-19 pandemic has had a negative effect on the mental health and confidence of older adults, leaving many vulnerable to increased social isolation and loneliness. To combat this in Conwy the Community Wellbeing Team has offered support to help individuals reconnect with their communities and step back out with confidence by organising a range of outdoor activities such as social strolls and themed walks.

These sessions have been very well received, and between April and December 2022 we delivered 17 different walks across the county. We continue to work with local providers to ensure that provision continues, as the feedback we have received is that individuals are finding the walking sessions hugely beneficial, and wish for them to continue on a monthly basis.



### **Virtual Dementia Bus Tour**

In August 2022 our Staying Well Team hosted a Virtual Dementia Bus tour at the Conwy Business Centre. Providing a proven method of giving a person with a healthy brain an experience of what dementia might be like, the experience allows delegates to enter the world of the person, and understand which simple changes can be made to their practice and environment to really improve the lives of people with dementia. In all, 36 participants undertook the training and we received some fantastic feedback after the sessions.

I would recommend this training to anyone who has a family member who has dementia, I'm so glad I came today.

Thank you so much for organising this training, it was fantastic and I have learnt so much.

## What's next?

We have organised for the bus to return in March 2023 to deliver the new 'inclusive' Virtual Dementia Tour. This involves delegates moving through the usual tour into a new environment. Here the training provider demonstrates what life could be like if all the necessary changes were made to make the environment as comfortable as possible for the person living with dementia.

We will be hosting two sessions; one at the Conwy Business Centre in Llandudno Junction for members of the public who have a loved one living with dementia, and one for Social Care staff, which will be held at Llys Elian residential home.

## Strengthening Families Team and Pre-birth Support

There are targeted resources within the Strengthening Families Team to provide pre-birth support to those parents who are referred to Children's Services who present a high risk of having their babies removed from their care. Often, these parents have experienced previous care proceedings and the removal of children from their care. These pregnant women are vulnerable for a variety of reasons; for example, due to an existing mental health condition, they are teenage parents, victims of domestic violence, poverty or homelessness, substance misuse or by being care-experienced themselves.

Using the pre-birth support model, the aim of the Strengthening Families pre-birth intervention is to:

- Work with parents as soon as the referral comes in where the unborn baby is open for a pre-birth assessment
- Assist parents to address the concerns that have necessitated a pre-birth assessment
- Build a positive relationship which is central to successful outcomes
- Providing support with social work assessments offering advice and guidance
- Refer early to specialist support services, for example, perinatal services and substance misuse services
- Refer to Family Group Conferencing to identify appropriate support
- Provide interventions for parents to address barriers to successful parenting



Interventions are often based on identifying Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACE), support to understand the impact of ACEs and building personal resilience and coping skills. In addition, trauma-informed interventions help to improve parents' health and wellbeing, which can impact on their caregiving capacity.

## The Recovery College

The purpose of the Recovery College is to support people's self-management of mental health difficulties through learning and education. Most colleges are co-produced by people with lived experience and people with professional expertise.

The Mental Wellness Team were successful in their bid for UK Government's Community Renewal Fund (UKCRF), which was instigated as an opportunity for short-term projects as the first step towards implementing the UK-wide Shared Prosperity Fund.



The project was established with the aim of consulting, and seeking partners and beneficiaries to help create a recovery college in Conwy. Our vision is:

A co-produced recovery college for the county of Conwy, which enables people to restore hope, build resilience, connect and create a community, and sustain themselves to have a satisfying and purposeful life.

We ran a series of workshops and events with our partners at Conwy Mind to introduce the concept of the Recovery College and co-production, culminating in a planning session to map out our next steps. The illustration on the next page was captured by a graphic artist in real time, reflecting the discussions held on the day.

### What were the challenges?

The main challenge was our inability to recruit to the post of College Coordinator, who would have provided focused capacity to the project. This meant that the project was managed on top of day jobs, which undoubtedly impacted on the number of workshops we could offer.

There were also challenges in terms of the short-term period of the funding. A key lesson learnt was that fostering relationships with people and partners takes time but is fundamental to building strong foundations for future work.

Delivering in-person sessions following the pandemic also had an impact, as some people's confidence in attending face-to-face was slow to build and capacity was further hindered as Covid-19 was still prevalent.

We therefore also created an online survey, so that people were able to input their views. Overall, 86% of people felt that the recovery college would be beneficial to supporting their mental health and we have a preferred set of courses that people would like to be developed as part of the college offer.

### What's next?

We have put forward a bid to the Shared Prosperity Fund, which is the second tranche of funding by UK government, to enable us to recruit to posts to help build the college going forward. We are also planning to bid for Big Lottery funding so we are able to commission a variety of third sector partners to get the college up and running.

We are working in partnership with the Library service to refurbish the first floor of Colwyn Bay library to create a safe and welcoming space where we can begin to deliver recovery education courses and wellbeing sessions, such as Creative Journaling and Shared Reading.



# CONWY RECOVERY + WELLBEING COLLEGE

PATHWAY MEETING 09.12.22  
@TAPE

**DEBBIE DOIG - EVANS PROJECT LEAD**

WORKING WITH PEOPLE NOT DOING TO PEOPLE

**RECOVERY COLLEGE** LOOKS LIKE IT COULD BE THE ANSWER

WE'VE BEEN TRYING TO SET UP A RECOVERY COLLEGE IN CONWY FOR A WHILE...

POT OF MONEY TO TEST & CONSULT ASKING WHAT PEOPLE WANT

MENTAL HEALTH RECOVERY - LIVE BEYOND A LABEL

SOMETIMES WE NEED SOMEONE TO HOLD OUR HOPE FOR US

**HOPE**

RECOVERY IS INDIVIDUAL TO YOU

DEVELOP EDUCATION & TOOLS TO IMPROVE THEIR OWN WELLBEING

**COPRODUCE**

FUNDED BY EUROPEAN

SINCE 2010 EXPANDED TO 22 COUNTRIES IN WALES

COLLABORATIVE STRENGTHS BASED PERSON-CENTRED IN THE COMMUNITY - LOCAL

NOT JUST ABOUT COURSES - IT'S ABOUT MENTORS & PEERS - LOTS OF BENEFITS TO BEING PART OF A RECOVERY COLLEGE

**OUR VISION** A COPRODUCED RECOVERY COLLEGE

ACROSS CONWY IN A RANGE OF LOCATIONS IN THE COMMUNITY

CREATING A REPORT - FROM FIRST WAVE OF FUNDING, ENDS DEC. 2022

**CLUB CONWY**

## NOW - WHAT'S ALREADY IN PLACE WHO/WHAT CAN HELP US? NEXT STEPS

**RESOURCES AVAILABLE IN MIND**

- COMMUNITIES & HUBS SPACES
- COFFEE GROUNDS OUR PEOPLE
- PROVIDO
- TRANSPORT CYCLING NUMBERS
- TELLING US WHAT'S WORKING ETC.
- LISTENING TO THEM STARTED WITH SERVICE-USERS
- LIBRARY AS A REALITY GREAT SPACE & CHECKED LINK TO SIGN POSTING ARTS
- USE THE WORD APP, ALSO JOURNALING CBT BASED
- BANGOR UNI HAS A LOT ONLINE - NO NEED TO DO ONLINE?
- BEAUTIFUL OUTSIDE SPACES
- WE HAVE PLACES FOR MAKING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS
- OS SOCIAL SERVICES & WELLBEING TRAINING IN PLACE

**LIBRARIES** SPACES WHEN OPEN, THOSE WHEN CLOSED

- ONMOBILE LIBRARY
- 'KIND DAY' INITIATIVE
- USA
- WELLFED GOOD NUTRITION & FOOD POVERTY
- CFJ FOUNDATION MOBILISED ORG. FARMERS/SUICIDE
- CANAD
- M.H. SERVICE
- USER ENGAGEMENT GROUP: BETS WUB
- AGE CONNECTS
- LOCAL RADIO BAY, DUWID, BAYSIDE
- OUTDOOR SPACES, FARMS ETC.
- YOUR CHURCH/PATH, JOB BUSINESSES - SPACES
- ONMOBILE BUS

**FAMILY ACTION TOGETHER**

- POLICE GROUP
- PUBS - CONNECTING COMMUNITY SPACES
- COMMUNITY MENTAL HEALTH TEAM
- PRIMARY
- SECONDARY
- ACUTE
- CARE
- ADFERIAD MENTAL HEALTH SUBSTANCE MISUSE CAREER
- SOCIAL PRESCRIBING PEOPLE
- FAITH BASED PLACES
- OUT OF HOWS BUILDINGS EG LIBRARIES
- FAMILY CENTRES
- ADVICE

**SET UP 'MEET THE BUYER'**

- KIND OF LARGE EVENT, INVITING EVERYONE TO SHARE WHAT THEY OFFER (BEFORE JUNE)
- WE'VE ALREADY HAD CONSULTATION SESSIONS, SO WE KNOW WHAT THEIR PASSIONS ARE & COULATE THIS INTO THE REPORT
- ALSO INCLUDE WHERE & WHEN PEOPLE WANT TRAINING
- EG DOG
- WHERE WE WANT TO GO
- 'BIG LUNCH' WALES, MARK TO CONVINCE W. SAMANTHA
- MARK WILL PROOF READ REPORT
- SHARE EXAMPLES OF WORK
- CHANGED PROSPERITY FUNDING APPLICATION SUBMITTING
- HELP WITH CREATING
- WORK WITH CONWY MIND ON A FUNDING BID
- FEELING DN
- JONI MARLES, DAVID, LEE, SUB - COMING TOGETHER WITH TAPE TO ARTS DISCURS PROJECTS

**OUR COMMUNITY NAVIGATORS & ORGANISATIONS**

ASSET MAP ACTIVITY

**POSITIVE & POSSIBLE ... IN ONE YEAR'S TIME**

INFORMATION/RESOURCE DIRECTORY

SOURCED SMALLER FUNDING

STARTED TO TAKE TO CAMUS, PSYCHOLOGY SERVICES TO CO-DESIGN

ASSET MAP & EVENT 2 HELD

STRONG PARTNERSHIPS WITH RELEVANT PEOPLE & ORGS

PEOPLE COME ALONG FOR ENJOYMENT 'CLUB' EG SMALL 'BIG LUNCHES'

SET UP 5 ACTIVITY PROJECTS

TESTING WHAT'S OUT THERE (OTHER N WALES AREAS)

EG MUSIC, LINKING, CINEMA - BASED ON PASSIONS

OPEN MIC SESSIONS (INCLUDE PHOTO RECORD)

GROUPS THAT ARE SUITABLE FOR PEOPLE'S NEEDS, SOME MAY NOT LIKE LARGE GROUPS

PROFESSIONALS DEDICATED TO THE CLUB

COURSES IN RANGE OF VENUES (INDOOR & OUTDOOR)

IDENTIFY FUNDING THAT WON'T DICTATE DIRECTION OF PROJECT

OPEN PLACES ON COURSES NOT JUST FOR STUDENTS

**A GOOD WEEK...**

- COURSES RUNNING IN PLACES VARIOUS ACROSS COUNTY (CLUB MEMBERS)
- 50 STUDENTS INVOLVED
- CREATIVE & INSPIRING PEOPLE
- WORKING WITH PEOPLE WHO HAVE COME FROM W
- PEER SUPPORT GROUPS RUNNING, PROBLEM SOLVING & IDEAS GENERATION
- BUDDY/MATCHING SERVICE, CIRCLE AROUND/TEAMS
- BASED ON PEOPLE'S PASSIONS & INTERESTS
- 'CAN DO ANYTHING' BASED ON WHAT PEOPLE LOVE
- EG FOOTBALL/ARTS
- CREATING SOCIAL CONNECTIONS & RELATIONSHIPS
- PEER SUPPORT

**PROMOTIONS**

- EG ARTS TO MARKET IT - DISABILITY ARTS WALES
- THERAPY
- GUIDANCE
- MINDFULNESS
- PEOPLE LEADING A MEANINGFUL LIFE - WHAT THAT LOOKS LIKE FOR THEM, NOT NECESSARILY A JOB
- PERSONAL PLAN - CREATE YOUR INDIVIDUAL PLAN
- HAVE A CONVERSATION

**OUR DREAM 'NORTH STAR'**

WHAT WILL 'GOOD' THIS LOOK LIKE IN 3-5 YEARS?

ONE-TO-ONE CONVERSATIONS - SOME PEOPLE WILL NEED SOME HAND HOLDING

INFORMAL PROFESSIONALS FOR SOME PEOPLE

INFO IN ONE PLACE - SO PEOPLE CAN FIND IT, AND BE SUPPORTED...

USE WHAT'S AROUND THE PERSON - ASSETS USING A STRENGTH-BASED APPROACH

KEEP MOMENTUM

IDENTIFY FUNDING THAT WON'T DICTATE DIRECTION OF PROJECT

OPEN PLACES ON COURSES NOT JUST FOR STUDENTS

IDENTIFY FUNDING THAT WON'T DICTATE DIRECTION OF PROJECT

OPEN PLACES ON COURSES NOT JUST FOR STUDENTS

**MARK JOHN WILLIAMS PATH PROCESS**

P PLANNING: ALTERNATIVE TOMORROWS WITH HOPE

COMMUNITY LOCAL WELLBEING BUDDIES (WELL-BEING)

THINKING ABOUT THE PROJECT NAME - IS IT RIGHT?

IS RECOVERY RIGHT WORD? SOME THINK HAS NEGATIVE CONNOTATIONS

Q HOW DO YOU FEEL AT END OF SESSION - THOUGHTS? I WOND...

- ★ INNOVATIVE
- ★ RELIEF
- ★ HOPEFUL
- ★ WARM FEELING
- ★ OPTIMISTIC
- ★ LIKE IN A CLUB
- ★ BE BOLD!

★ FIND YOUR SPACE - WE DO THIS TODAY

★ DEVELOPING

★ KEEP MOMENTUM

VISUAL MAP: FRAN OHARA, SCARLET DESIGN, W.T. LTD, 2022

QS4: Resilience within our communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging and supporting people who need care and support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society

## Allotment Service

The Vulnerable People Service continues to manage the allotments which provide a therapeutic and safe space for individuals who use the service. We are currently looking to develop them further, and part of this is opening up the allotments to all those individuals who use the service including Care Leavers and the Mental Wellbeing Service.

### What were the challenges?

Encouraging attendance and participation has been challenging.

### What's next?

We will be consulting with those who currently use the allotments in terms of the service they receive and what can be improved. We will be shadowing the staff who manage the allotments so that we understand the service. We will be promoting the allotments to all users of the Vulnerable People service.



## Summer of Fun 2022

The Summer of Fun is one of the Welsh Government's Covid-19 recovery programmes, and the activities funded provide opportunities for children, young people and families to re-engage with friends and others to promote social skills, speech, language and communication, and improve mental health and wellbeing following the pandemic.

This year over £186,000 was allocated from the Welsh Government for Conwy's Summer of Fun programme. A total of 27 projects were supported, including volunteers and local businesses. This provided over 870 free activity sessions over 13 weeks from 1 July to 30 September 2022. Over 10,000 people attended during this time. Eirias Park play day attracted over 1,500 children and over 850 adults in August 2022 and was even featured on the 6pm ITV news! One of the exciting projects developed for Summer of Fun was a film which was created of the Summer of Fun activities:



QS4: Resilience within our communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging and supporting people who need care and support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society

## What were the challenges?

Applications received from groups and organisations to provide activities were greater than the funding available. A panel was convened to assess the applications and to share the funding as equally as possible across the county, according to location and the different types of activities such as culture, play, sport and creativity. Some applications were awarded reduced funding for a reduced number of sessions due to the amount of funding available.

## What's next?

At present it is unclear if Summer of Fun funding will be made available in 2023. There is currently no allocation within the Welsh Government budget information released. If funding was to become available, we would continue with the same processes we have developed and used over the past two years to allocate funding and invite applications from a variety of external and internal partners to provide activities.

## Developments in our Family Centres

All five of our Family Support Teams, based in Family Centres, continue to work with families to provide early help, and to develop activities and initiatives to meet the needs in the local communities. This year we have been:

- Working with a researcher from Bangor University to develop a pathway of support, a toolkit of interventions, and training on child-parent/carer abuse called 'New Chapter'
- Establishing five Disability Family Workers; one in each local area
- Responding to a pattern of harmful sexual behaviours in a community by putting on a Parents Project session with the Lucy Faithful Foundation
- Working with schools and youth support services to deliver awareness sessions about exploitation, gang culture and internet safety

Canolfan Ffordd Douglas in Colwyn Bay has been open for a year, and has seen many exciting developments, and Eryl Wen Family Centre in Llandudno opened its doors after a refurbishment this year. More on this below.

## Refurbishing Eryl Wen

Following consultation in 2019-20 we utilised the Welsh Government's Flying Start Capital Funding for our north area Family Centre, Eryl Wen in Llandudno, to be fully refurbished.

The doors closed in February 2022 and re-opened to the public in October 2022. We now have more space to welcome families, including:

- Welcome area
- One to one rooms
- Playroom
- A kitchen for family cooking activities
- Multi-agency meeting rooms
- Training rooms
- Great outside space to play
- Lovely garden area with fruit trees
- Car parking



We included features to reduce running costs and reduce our carbon footprint, such as a high standard of insulation, energy-efficient heating system, and energy-saving lighting.



## What were the challenges?

Refurbishment took longer than expected due to supply chain issues and difficulty obtaining the contractors for the works.

Encouraging families back into the centre for group activities following Covid-19 restrictions was difficult. We started our groups with reduced numbers to increase confidence, and now that families are more confident, group numbers are increasing.

## What's next?

We'll be engaging with the local community to identify what families need. We'll then work with local partners to develop sessions for families, based on what they have told us.

We plan to develop a small allotment area to grow our own fruit and vegetable to share and cook with families.

## Support for Carers

One of the priorities in the Welsh Government strategy for unpaid carers is around improving carer assessments, specifically to enable local authorities to deliver timely, effective statutory assessments that are responsive to individual needs of unpaid carers.

Carers Wales' national "Carer Aware" scheme has provided a valuable opportunity to work with staff at all levels of the Social Care and Health systems throughout Wales, to create meaningful cultural change to benefit unpaid carers in Wales. To date, 17 Conwy staff have participated in their training sessions. The scheme has funding for a further two years and therefore will continue to positively influence staff towards more effective support for carers.

Unlike other authorities, Conwy has an in-house Carers Team which can undertake carer assessments in cases where it may be beneficial for someone other than the Social Worker of the cared-for person to do it. This has been an advantage within Conwy, and is recognised by third sector partners who work across the region, as being a particular strength within Conwy in terms of how carers are supported. We also commission

Hafal (now part of Adferiad) to undertake carer assessments and provide support in relation to mental wellness, and Credu to undertake assessments and provide support for young carers.

However, demand has been steadily increasing and our in-house team has been carefully managing a growing waiting list since the Covid-19 pandemic, and have begun a pilot scheme to work more closely with the multi-agency Community Resource Teams. This will elevate the importance of supporting carers, and provide a more holistic response. Initial findings are positive, in that a wider range of qualified staff are now taking on more carer assessments, our Community Wellbeing team are supporting more with low-level support and signposting, and the waiting list was reduced by one third in just a couple of months.

Pre-pandemic, analysis had shown that on average, more carers refuse the offer of an assessment than those who accept one. This is often due to the difficulty people have in self-identifying as a carer, when they see themselves as simply being a family member, and fulfilling expectations of 'duty' as a wife or husband, son, or daughter, etc. This appears to have shifted, in that throughout 2022, 330 assessments were completed, with just 198 being declined. The post-pandemic demand may have skewed this trend somewhat.

Getting a carer's assessment can help you to discuss the help you need as a carer, and lead to some extra support being available to you.

## Find out about getting a carer assessment

### Consultation with carers regarding support for those living with dementia

Conwy has a Dementia Forum, which is attended by key players from Social Care, Health and third sector partners. The group has recently begun what will be a series of regular meetings with a group of carers, in relation to their experiences of caring for someone living with dementia. One of the issues the group highlighted in our first meeting was around the support provided following a diagnosis of dementia. These issues will be explored and used to influence the way services (both local and regional) are delivered, to hopefully achieve the right balance between providing the right information at the right time, in a way that feels right for each individual carer.

### Digital inclusion within disability support networks

The North Wales Together Technology and Digital Strategy was developed in 2021 and is now being rolled out across the region. The strategy identified the barriers to digital inclusion and steps required to address those barriers. In short, digital inclusion is impacted by access to equipment and connectivity, access to support to use equipment, and poor levels of confidence amongst those who support people with learning disabilities and their families and carers.

Paul Mazurek, Planning and Development Officer has worked alongside Conwy Connect (who have been funded both through operational services and via the programme) to promote use of technology and access to technological approaches. He has worked with Conwy Connect to loan or gift equipment to individuals, support individuals on a one to one basis to develop skills and confidence, and support individuals to access online resources and activities.

Paul is in the process of working with Conwy's Workforce Development Team to roll out training that addresses, for example; online vulnerability, radicalisation. This area has been identified as an issue and concern across the region. This begins in March in Flintshire and will be quickly rolled out to all. They will look to create further training on the back of this set of sessions.

The 'Online Harms, Grooming, Learning Disabilities and Autism' workshop is designed to raise awareness of online harms, especially grooming, for those with a learning disability, and autistic people. It looks at how to intervene and support those at risk. Online modules are delivered via Zoom, with an experienced tutor.

The online sessions are highly interactive and comprise tutor input, discussions, case studies, polls, small group work and reflections on assignments.

The Conwy Connect Transition project has worked with individuals by delivering:

- Two hybrid youth club sessions per month to encourage digital inclusion
- Six online information sessions with professionals to discuss transition topics
- Stop it Now training from the Lucy Faithful Foundation, looking at digital resilience for parents and carers
- Two disability managers have trained around the Active Support apps and discussed introducing them to two projects

### **What were the challenges?**

People are keen to engage but particularly within services, staff struggle with time and capacity to build up skills and confidence. Pressures on the workforce mean workers understandably have to prioritise direct care tasks, meaning technological development falls down the list of jobs to be done. Reach and access to support staff and networks is a challenge due to dispersed settings. This impacts on engagement and people's ability to embrace and utilise technology, as they will not always be aware of the programme and its potential resources. Increased access to technology brings increased risk of inappropriate behaviours online and increased vulnerability to exploitation and radicalisation, hence the need for the training highlighted above.

Once digital access is provided, support needs to be ongoing to help individuals maintain engagement with technology. Equipment will be gifted or fitted. The first time it stops working there is a risk of dis-engagement.

### **What's next?**

The programme is piloting a suite of training for individuals, families and the support workforce. That will be rolled out in Conwy next year.

Paul will revisit setting up a digital group in Conwy. Care Connect have now identified someone to take over the tech work within the transition project (funded by programme). Care Connect are a key enabler to getting this work done because of their community contacts.

# Partnerships & Integration

Quality Standard 5: Effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver fully integrated, high quality, sustainable outcomes for people

## Supporting and monitoring our residential homes

In Conwy County we have the highest number of care homes in north Wales and a programme of regular monitoring is needed to ensure quality of care and to support delivery. Our Monitoring Service has resumed a programme of visits to care homes, domiciliary care agencies and community-supported living projects who had previously received regular support from us over the phone. The monitoring visits focus on the quality of care and support delivery within the home settings. They can also highlight any concerns that the home may be experiencing, and make recommendations for improvement.

### What were the challenges?

Unfortunately we are still experiencing the after-effects of the Covid-19 pandemic in this sector, compounded by the cost of living crisis, increased costs, and ongoing recruitment challenges.

We recognise our role in providing continued practical support and guidance for homes in Conwy to enable them to deliver high quality services in challenging circumstances. You'll find more information on what we've done to help them further on in this report.

### What's next?

In addition to bi-annual monitoring visits, we continue to hold regular monthly online meetings with Conwy care home managers to share information and discuss issues, including workforce development. We also offer regular telephone support to the homes on a fortnightly basis.

## The Domestic Violence Panel

The Domestic Violence Panel was initially a pilot project aimed at establishing a multi-agency partnership to provide advice, support and therapeutic interventions to those victims of domestic violence who are most at risk of their children entering the care system.

The Domestic Violence Panel was a three-month pilot introduced in April 2021 on the back of the Domestic Violence Forum that was established by the Vulnerable People Team. As a result of the forum, the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU) and the Strengthening Families Team began discussions about working collaboratively with victims of domestic abuse from trauma-informed and child-centred perspectives, integrating the Safe and Together Model and its principles. Since this initial pilot, the panel continues to meet bi-monthly, and provides consultation sessions with DASU to share information about those victims most at risk, the children and the perpetrators and make plans for increasing safety.

This collaboration with DASU has helped to integrate specialisms from Children's Services, DASU, Y Bont and Family Centre members to develop outcome-based intervention plans for some victims and their children. From this panel, the Strengthening Families Team has provided therapeutic support to perpetrators of abuse, to help change behaviours and increase safety for victims and their children.

As of February 2023, representatives from the DASU team have been working from our Colwyn Bay offices once a fortnight, within the Children, Families and Safeguarding services. They are available for general advice if domestic abuse is, or may be, a concern for individuals and families we're supporting.

## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

We have mentioned our MASH team in previous reports and can now confirm that it is in phase two of the pilot. We have invited additional agencies to be part of MASH, including the National Probation Service, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Regulatory Services, Youth Justice Service and



Education. We have found that having additional agencies around the table has offered the opportunity to allow for better information sharing and more informed decision-making.

Work has been completed with North Wales Police to look at the CID16 process and to improve the content within these reports. Feedback has been provided to officers about the information that should be captured when they are completing a CID16. As a result we have seen improvements in reports, and evidence that Police staff are gaining a better understanding of the definition of Adult at Risk, Child Protection and Early Help.

We have seen an increase in Social Workers attending our daily MASH meetings to discuss safeguarding concerns, seek advice and clarify actions to manage concerns.

We have worked closely with our in-house Assessment and Support Team and other teams to manage the cohort of individuals who arrived at the Hilton Hotel to ensure that all safeguarding concerns were addressed and appropriately responded to.

We have recently taken part in an independent review which was undertaken by Liverpool John Moore's University. The review aimed to look at 'front door' provision across Wales, we are currently awaiting the formal feedback specifically for Conwy.

There is a piece of work ongoing to improve responses to report-makers (as per the procedures). This will ensure that all report-makers understand the outcomes of the safeguarding reports that are submitted.

### What were the challenges?

As we are still operating in a pilot phase we have not been able to expand the team to cope with current demand. We also had to relinquish our Police Researcher in April 2023, and at this stage there are no plans to replace them.

### What's next?

- We hope to expand the team by recruiting to additional posts, and include Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board at some point in the future
- We'll be making further improvements to processes
- We have plans to develop a dedicated intranet page for MASH, as well as a direct line and e-mail address, so that all safeguarding enquiries can be managed and contained within the hub

## Conwy Disability Service Employment Pathways

Bryn Euryn Nursery has operated from the site at Dinerth Road for around 30 years. The re-development of the site to provide a new café, shop and nursery area has provided the impetus to re-design our offer, raising people's aspirations and supporting them to gain paid employment. The Council are in the process of tendering the café to a third sector organisation which will provide opportunities for people with disabilities to understand what they might like to do in relation to work, and to gain skills and experience in the workplace. Service delivery across the café, Bryn Euryn Nursery, Tan Lan and Gardens Etc will align models of support to focus on enabling people who are furthest from the workplace to access paid work wherever possible.

The Disability Service Manager chairs the regional supported employment strategy steering group which oversees the co-production of a regional supported employment strategy for people with learning disabilities. The strategy proposes that the six County Council learning disabilities services put in place a supported employment service to support more people with learning disabilities to be in paid employment, including funding for specialist job coaching. The current employment rate for people with learning disabilities known to adult social care is only 4.8%.

We hope to secure funding from the Regional Integration Fund (RIF) for the next three years to implement this model across the region. To prepare for the new approach, the transformation programme has funded 'Introduction to Supported Employment' sessions for all of the operational teams, and seven members of the Conwy team completed the training with good feedback. Following on from this, the transformation

programme is funding a Supported Employment Techniques course which provides the underpinning knowledge and skills to be a job coach and five staff from the Conwy Work Opportunities Team will be attending. Transformation has also provided funding to employ an in-house Employability Coordinator to lead on this work. The appointment is pending.

Significant progress has been made to implement a 'work first' approach within the service. Staff have a better understanding of what works to help people with learning disabilities find, get, learn and keep a job via the supported employment model. Additional funding via the RIF will enable the service to scale up this approach and put in place quality-assured pathways so that people can be in paid employment if they choose. The Disability Service are also bidding for the Shared Prosperity Fund to support our overall model delivery.

This regional work will complement and enhance the Disability Service offer based around the development at Bryn Euryn, Tan Lan and Gardens Etc, providing a key pathway to employment for those supported within the service.

The Disability Service has also developed closer working relationships with the Conwy Employability Hub and have commissioned jointly with Denbighshire, Project Search, supported internships.

The vision is to provide a range of pathways for people with disabilities, as no one size fits all. The Employment Pathway Co-ordinator is key to the success of the re-modelling of services.

### **What were the challenges?**

We experienced delays in the delivery of the site and budget pressures. Poor engagement from service users and families in relation to the initial stages of the development of the strategy were likely due to the timescales of the project being during the Covid-19 pandemic.

A key challenge has been the recruitment of the in-house Employability Coordinator to lead on this work, but this is now progressing. To drive forward this transformation in culture and attitude whilst coordinating access to the most appropriate employment support service (including the Conwy Employment Service) does require a dedicated focus and a lead, due to operational pressures on the team.

### **What's next?**

A workshop for the regional steering group to review the draft Supported Employment Strategy and input into the action plan. The regional transformation team is leading on this and will work with All Wales People First to do this with citizens.

Following the workshop we will know if additional resources are to be made available via RIF for the supported employment service model. If successful, the aim is for the Supported Employment model to go live from September 2023 and to be independently evaluated

In relation to Bryn Euryn, Tan Lan, and Gardens Etc, we'll be piloting the Employment Pathway Coordinator, undertaking a review of the existing job descriptions, and re-structuring the service to deliver our overall new model.

We see a key aspect of raising aspirations to be providing opportunities for young people with disabilities to have paid Saturday jobs. As a result we will pilot this within the café and Bryn Euryn Nursery once the service is established.

### **Bron y Nant Respite Centre**

There are two elements to the project at this site, incorporating the respite building at Bron y Nant, and the nursery, shop and café at Bryn Euryn. Bron y Nant is progressing well, but there has been some slippage and the keys are expected to be handed over during the first week of April, five months later than originally planned.

At Bryn Euryn, the site has been made available to the Bryn Euryn Nursery team to prepare for the public opening in the spring. They will run the shop and garden centre once they open, and we're currently working

on setting up the shelving, counter and cash machine. The café will be tendered out following a successful 'meet the buyer' event.

We have been working with partners in the crematorium and cemetery to create a joint entrance with Bryn Euryn Nursery, and we're pleased to say that the nursery was handed over to the team at the beginning of March 2023.

## Foster Wales Conwy

In September 2021 Foster Wales was launched; the union of 22 Local Authorities working together, sharing knowledge and recruiting local foster carers to care for children locally. The focus this first year has been to inform and educate anyone considering becoming foster carers on why fostering for your Local Authority is advantageous to children and young people. We've kept our social media channels active sharing local posts, as well as Foster Wales messaging.



Face to face recruitment activity has returned, as well as the need to re-engage with the community following the re-branding. These community recruitment events have proved successful in engaging with the public, promoting community support, and getting Foster Wales Conwy talked about.

Retaining foster carers is equally important, as word of mouth remains the best way to recruit. This past year saw the return of much-needed face to face gatherings, and our bi-monthly support group for general foster carers are well attended. These are an opportunity for informal support, developing peer support, and networking with other colleagues, such as the Education and Health Looked After Coordinators, Principal Psychologist and the Workforce Development and Learning Team.

In October 2022 we held our first ever Appreciation Day to recognise our foster carers' achievements and contributions on a day of reflection and celebration. Councillor Liz Roberts, Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Safeguarding, was in attendance to thank the foster carers for their commitment and care to Conwy's children and young people.



Foster Wales has developed a Learning and Development Framework, and in 2022 our workforce officers devised a learning plan to support foster carers to achieve the framework. Conwy foster carers receive a thorough plan that meets all 16 core learning areas identified by Foster Wales. Foster carers continue to be supported through eight-weekly supervision sessions, which take place both virtually and in-person following feedback from the foster carers themselves. If requested, additional face to face supportive visits are provided.

The cost of living crisis has significantly affected our foster carers. Every attempt is made to seek additional resources to help them, be it discounted tickets for Venue Cymru, free tickets to concerts or the Under 20s Six Nations rugby matches. Foster carers continue to receive a Ffit Leisure pass, a Max discount card (specifically for children who are fostered or have a disability), and CADW membership, all of which are invaluable during this difficult financial period.

2022 saw the Welsh Government share their 'eliminate profit' agenda, and in response we produced a Placement and Commissioning Strategy. One element covers the recruitment and retention of foster carers, focusing on targets and outcomes required by 2026. The 'eliminate profit' agenda has opened up the opportunity of grant funding to achieve our strategy, as this would not be possible without additional financial support.

### **What were the challenges?**

The overwhelming challenge this year has been the cost of living crisis. Foster carers have been vocal about the impact it has had on their daily lives, and have requested further financial support. Managing the feedback has been quite challenging, and the situation has impacted on foster carers' morale during support groups, their motivation to attend training, and the messaging they share through word of mouth to recruit new foster carers. Maintaining consistent support and unity from the staff team has been essential during this time.

### **What's next?**

Implementing the 'eliminate profit' grant funding in response to the Welsh Government agenda has enabled us to consider an uplift to the foster carer fees. The new Enhanced Payment allows Foster Wales Conwy to be a real alternative to the profit-making independent fostering agencies.

We'll be undertaking targeted recruitment campaigns in response to our enhanced payment model and the 'eliminate profit' agenda.

We'll continue with our consistent support, learning and retention strategies to retain our existing foster carers.

## **Youth Justice Service – working in partnership**

The Youth Justice Service is regularly scrutinised by a Local Management Board. The Board Membership includes Chief Officers from each organisation and is chaired by the Conwy Strategic Director for Social Care. Two elected members also sit on the Local Management Board who are representative leads on Children and Safeguarding from both Conwy and Denbighshire Local Authority.

The Conwy and Denbighshire Management Board holds the responsibility to ensure that the Youth Justice Service is adequately resourced and able to meet both the statutory requirements for the local authority and our ambitions to support children and young people in both counties to reach their potential and achieve crime-free lives.

Funding for Conwy and Denbighshire Youth Justice Service is made up of contributions from statutory partners, Children's Services, Probation, NHS, Police, Youth Justice Board, and the Police and Crime Commissioner's Community Safety Fund. Probation, Police and NHS resources are notionally allocated, based on staff seconded to the service. The terms and conditions of the Youth Justice Board Effective Practice grant and Welsh Government funding sets a clear expectation of how the allocation may be used.

Quality Standard 6: People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners

### Children and Adult Forums

The Conwy Adult Participation Network has now resumed face to face meetings following the Covid-19 pandemic. Membership is open to anyone who is interested in the work of the Conwy Social Care Department and would like to share their views or those of any community groups or societies.

The Loud Voices Group for younger children who are looked after re-started in the summer of 2022, facilitated by the Independent Safeguarding and Reviewing Officers, WCVSC and the Quality Standards Team. Meetings are arranged per term or half term and offer activities as well as time to consult with the children on topics such as the introduction of the Mind of My Own app, and What Makes Me Feel Safe, during National Safeguarding Week.



The Shaping Futures Group for young adults face to face meetings were suspended during the pandemic and the Conwy Vulnerable People Team are currently coordinating engagement with young care leavers via:

- Use of the Mind of My Own App
- Care Leaver week held with young people in October
- A new website for Care Leavers: <https://smallstepsbigfuture.wales/>

## What were the challenges?

The main challenge was facilitating face to face meetings once more and encouraging adults, children and young people to attend after a prolonged period of time with no meetings.

## What's next?

During 2023 we intend to review our Participation and Engagement Strategy with the involvement of people who use our services and who regularly attend our forums.

## Small Steps Big Future Website

In the last year The [Small Steps Big Future](#) website for Care Leavers in Conwy has continued to grow and develop. To date there have been 1,779 page views, 778 visits and 571 visitors on the site. Young people are now able to apply for the St. David's Day Fund via the website, giving them greater autonomy and flexibility. There is also the functionality for young people to comment on each article and page on the website.

Within the Personal Advisor team, we devised as a project for the student in the team to gather Care Leavers' views on developing the site further, ideas for activities for Care Leaver Weeks and how they wish to engage with their Personal Advisor. The information, views and opinions of young people gathered has been extremely valuable and is influencing how the team practice.

## What were the challenges?

The challenge is to find ways to continue to engage young people and keep them involved and interested in implementing improvements – without their input it would be very difficult for us to develop the service.

## What's next?

Co-production with young people is an ongoing exercise, we will shortly be sending a survey to young people in relation to:

- What people would like to see on the website
- Interest in walking or other group activities
- How people want us to celebrate care leaver week this year

## Care Leavers Week

National Care Leavers Week is an annual event held in October, offering the opportunity not only to highlight and focus on the ongoing challenges faced by care-experienced young people, but also showcase their incredible achievements and help make their voices heard. The week was a huge success with approximately a quarter of the young people we support popping into and or contributing to the event.

## What has been done?

This year we decided to hold an event all week in Coed Pella that gave our young people the chance to demonstrate their skills and talents, which they did through a display of art work, a Morris Dancing demonstration and a daily presentation on local history. A wide variety of agencies also came along with information stalls, giving a range of support to young people, such as employment, training, mental health, and volunteering, to name a few, and in the process we aimed to reduce the stigma related to being in care. We also partnered with Voel Coaches who offered vouchers for the care leavers to book a trip of their choice, giving the young people the chance to enjoy special outings with friends and family, which has often not been experienced by them before. In addition, one young man created PowerPoint presentations on the history of the Great Orme Tramway, Colwyn Bay pier and his own journey through care. Another young lady prepared a presentation which showcased all of her own successes and how she 'gives back', for example through her work with Child Line.

## What difference has it made?

Throughout the week the young people also spoke to us about what it is like for them to be in the care of the Local Authority and some of the stigma and discrimination they face. Their feedback will now be used to help us improve the delivery of the services we offer.

The week was a real success and the feedback we have received from the young people, their families and the services who attended the event has been so positive.



## Developing Bron y Nant respite services

With the new respite centre at Bron y Nant opening this year, we contacted families who use our short breaks services to ask for their views on how provision should look in the future, and what should be included in the brochure required by Care Inspectorate Wales. We also asked families, people who use the service, and parents and carers to be part of the interview process for new staff being recruited into the service.

## What were the challenges?

Some families were difficult to get hold of, and others didn't want to give information as they are not able to be offered a service at the moment. Most, however, were happy to help with the consultation and the interview process for staff.

## What's next?

Once the recruitment process is complete, a service brochure will be completed, including photographs of the new building and a description of the services that will be offered there.

## Llys Elian Residential Home: Harnessing the views of family members

In March we conducted a survey with the family and friends of individuals who live at Llys Elian residential home. We asked questions about the quality of support their loved ones receive at the home, and how involved they feel in planning and delivering care and support. The responses were overwhelmingly positive, with 100% of respondents agreeing that:



- They are listened to by Llys Elian management and staff, enabling them to make choices about the care and support received and the opportunities available to their loved one
- Their loved one is able to take part in meaningful activities at Llys Elian should they want to
- Their loved one is happy and supported in relation to their health and overall wellbeing and has access to health services and nutritious meals
- Residents feel safe and protected from abuse and neglect
- The service maintains the privacy, dignity and confidentiality of the residents
- Llys Elian is a comfortable environment where residents can personalise their space
- When friends and family visit their loved ones at Llys Elian, they are made to feel welcome
- Friends and family feel able to contribute to their loved one's care and support

Additional comments made by respondents reveal the peace of mind that the high quality support at Llys Elian gives to family and friends:

Llys Elian is an excellent place with amazing staff that put 100% into caring.

The staff are always so kind and caring, we're really grateful for what they do for mum. It's clear mum is not just a 'service user' to them, and that really means something to us all.

In my humble opinion Llys Elian is the best place I could ever want for my dad. They are like family and treat him as such. I am so thankful to them.

### **Gaining feedback on the Mental Wellness Service**

This year our Mental Wellness Team carried out a survey of individuals who access the service, selecting them at random to provide feedback on the support they receive. The survey was carried out over the phone and participants were given the option to opt in or out. Their level of involvement with the team was varied, with some allocated to a social worker, and others to an intervention worker.

Of the 13 individuals contacted, 11 consented to provide feedback. The comments we received were, overall, positive and complimentary.

He's helped me to achieve so much. I can do what I want to do, because of him.

Well, she's really good to be honest. She supports me, and is always there for me to talk to her.

My life has changed. I'm just living a normal life. It's that good, I got to speak with [my case worker] recently and tell her that I don't need her anymore. She can help someone else now.

## Gaining feedback on our Family Centre interventions

We run an ongoing survey, asking people who have received support from the five Family Centres to share their experiences and views. The questions are linked to our [Family Support Standards](#) and we encourage participants to help shape our services. Here is a flavour of the feedback we've received this year:

88% agreed that we get in touch with people needing support from us within a week of them first making contact. Feedback suggests that, even if we aren't able to assign a Family Worker straight away, we keep in touch with the families to check on their welfare, until we link them up with their designated worker.

98% found us to be friendly, honest, respectful and professional:

Easy to talk to and very friendly whilst being 100% professional.

Everyone is so helpful, friendly, and approachable. They all seem like they genuinely care about me and my daughter.

90% of responders felt that their voice is important, they are listened to, and able to look at different areas of family life with their Family Worker:

To be honest, at the start I was lost and didn't know what to do for the best. But once speaking to my family support worker, her reassurance of what I was actually doing was right, and she is helping me build bridges and get control of my life.

95% agree that, once they feel in control, we help them to move forward in their family life:

I feel we are on the right track, and still have a bit to go, but looking at every positive rather than a negative.

I would not hesitate to contact the service if I ever felt I needed to. It's very comforting knowing that I can access support again.

It's clear from the additional comments that the Family Centres continue to offer valuable support to families in Conwy who may be struggling. We'll continue to ask for feedback from the people who access our services, strive to meet our high standards, and develop services that provide meaningful support.

I'm just thankful in a world where you have to scream to be heard, there are support systems like this, where they will stand and scream with you and effectively get the job done better and quicker. Thank you so much!

## Informal group activities

Our Family Centres have been holding informal group activities at each locality, including playgroups, nurturing, coffee and a chat, and baby groups. They've asked participants to tell us what they have attended and rate their experiences.

100% of participants so far have enjoyed taking part in the activities, and in the additional comments we received, there has been enthusiastic praise for the event organisers and facilitators.

What can I say? Having the team at the centre are all amazing in every way. The help and support they have provided for myself and my son, as well as the other families is immense, and they do so much for families to take part in and just being able to pick the phone up or drop in for a quick chat is a life saver. Absolutely amazing team.



71% stated that the group has made a huge difference to their family lives, with a further 26% indicating that it has had a positive impact. For some parents, the group activities help them to feel less alone, and others have made friends at the sessions.

It has been so helpful having somewhere to go with other parents who understand your everyday life.

Attendees have given us some ideas for future group activities, which we'll be considering for next year.

## Gaining feedback on our Reablement Service

Our Reablement Service provides short periods of intensive support to people who have been discharged from hospital and need help to regain confidence, skills and independence at home. At the end of each period of reablement, we ask the individuals we've supported for their views and experiences. This helps us to ensure that the service is fit for purpose and continues to meet people's personal outcomes.

Here is a flavour of the results from 2022-23.

- 91% of respondents agreed that they, their friends, family and professionals were involved in agreeing and planning their support
- 99% felt that their expectations of the service were met
- 91% stated that outcomes were agreed at the start of the service
- 92% felt that at the end of the intervention period, they had met their identified outcomes
- 97% of people who had cultural or religious wishes felt that they were taken into account and provided for during the intervention
- 95% thought that the support they had was flexible, e.g. visiting times and duration
- 94% felt that the support received was consistent, i.e. the same team of support workers visited them
- 99% felt that the support enabled them to do as much as they could for themselves
- 100% agreed that our staff were pleasant, kind and courteous

In addition to the positive ratings, we also received lots of encouraging comments about the reablement service:

I couldn't be happier and more pleased. The staff made a world of difference to me, always helpful and willing.

The support in the morning was helpful, enabling me to get stronger as the weeks went on.

All so pleasant and helpful, especially during the first few days when I needed a lot of assistance.



# Wellbeing

Quality Standard 7: People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect, and any other types of harm

## **The Safe and Together Model**

The Safe and Together Model has been introduced in Conwy, with Vulnerable People resources taking an active lead in its implementation. It is a practice model that aims to improve how child welfare systems and practitioners respond to domestic abuse. It is a perpetrator pattern-based approach to domestic abuse cases involving children, and focuses on addressing behaviours of the abusive person rather than the traditional narrative of the victim failing to protect their child.

In March 2022, the Safe and Together Institute delivered a two-day overview of the Safe and Together Model. Participants were provided with information about creating a domestic violence-informed child welfare system, the principles and components of the model. In addition, an introduction to the framework behind competency-building around domestic violence. Many partner agencies attended these sessions including Police, Education, Health and the Domestic Abuse Safety Unit (DASU). A total of 110 people attended. The feedback was very positive, with many partner agencies requesting to progress to the next level of training (Core Training). This element of training was prioritised for Social Workers and Intervention Workers and took place as online virtual training between April and June 2022.

The Strengthening Families Team has used the practice model and the tools to deliver positive changes for children. This involved engaging with perpetrators, understanding their patterns of abusive behaviours and the impact of those behaviours on children.

## **Multi Agency Child Sexual Abuse Forum**

Conwy's Multi Agency Child Sexual Abuse Forum (MACSAF) continues to grow. Throughout the year we have been able to bring more professionals on board to the Forum from more diverse teams such as the Youth Justice Service and the Youth Services.

### **What has been done?**

Our main work is focused on the Welsh Government Child Sexual Abuse action plan and creating a Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway for all agencies to access in Conwy. We are working on ensuring that our web pages and internal intranet pages are an effective resource for both professionals and parents and carers. We also provide regular consultations to staff who require support with complex cases with elements of child sexual abuse.

### **What difference has it made?**

We have been able to establish a group of professionals who are assisting with the national action plan. The ongoing work on our website means that professionals and parents have a free online resource. Staff have felt more confident and supported when involved in consultations on complex child sexual abuse cases.

### **What were the challenges?**

MACSAF is something that all Forum members do on top of their day jobs meaning that it can be difficult to keep high attendance at meetings. The promotion of the Forum has been challenging. Although we have used various channels of communication such as newsletters and talks at larger conferences, this again is on top of our main responsibilities.

### **What's next?**

We will be working on more training and promoting our work through various channels. We will also be embedding the Harmful Sexual Behaviour Pathway.

## Tackling exploitation in partnership

During the pandemic we noticed a significant increase in the number of children being exploited or at risk of being exploited, both criminally and sexually. Our Family Centres worked together with Education, North Wales Police, Youth Justice and the Local Health Board, setting up a small working group to try to tackle this increase.

- We completed a mapping exercise to see which areas of the county were 'hot spots', overlaying information from different agencies to create a full picture.
- We've held regular multi-agency contextualised child exploitation form meetings to share information and update services.
- We held online sessions in September 2022 for parents, young people and professionals about gang culture and county lines activity with Matthew from 1 Message. He told us about his experience of being groomed into gang culture and county lines, how he managed to leave that lifestyle behind, and going on to support young people to not become involved or turn their lives around.
- In October 2022 Matthew visited four secondary schools to speak to young people, tell them his story, and answer any questions they had. A number of young people opened up about things that had happened to them, and are now receiving support.
- In the same month we held an online safeguarding workshop for parents around online safety. This complimented sessions provided in schools, and we plan to continue the parent sessions in the future.
- North Wales Police facilitated exploitation sessions in Family Centres across Conwy for communities to understand what to look out for and how to report something unusual, or have a gut feeling that something isn't right. We'll continue to offer these sessions within our communities.

## What were the challenges?

It has taken time to bring the right agencies together, although all are supportive and eager to work together to make a difference. It has helped to focus on a smaller core of attendees for regular working groups, inviting agencies that have specialisms into the discussion topic for that meeting. We've also found it challenging to dispel the myths, making sure the right information reaches communities, and to the most vulnerable children and young people.

## What's next?

We'll continue to meet as a small multi-agency group to identify new topics to meet the needs of young people in our communities, and we'll put a plan together to get the correct information out to them. We are asking people and their families what they would like to know more about to make sure we offer targeted and relevant advice.

We'll be considering whether an 'Ask for Angela' type campaign would be suitable for children and young people to enable them to ask for help in a tricky situation.

We'll consult with local communities, as a community approach to stopping exploitation is key.

## The Early Concerns and Escalating Concerns Process

Our Quality Standards team have conducted over 100 monitoring visits to care homes, domiciliary care providers and supported living settings over the last twelve months. Some of these visits were conducted jointly with our partners at the Betsi Cadwaladr Local Health Board and others with our social work teams. The purpose of the visits is to review the quality of the service being provided, considering issues such as staffing, training, safeguarding, personal wellbeing and the quality of the environment. The outcomes of these monitoring visits are shared with the provider and together, if needed, we agree an appropriate action plan.

Each month we host a 'circle of quality' meeting where officers from our Quality Standards and Safeguarding Services, and Social Workers meet with partners at the BCUHB, Care Inspectorate Wales and neighbouring Local Authorities to share intelligence on the different providers we all commission and to coordinate our activity and interventions.

Over the last twelve months we've needed to support four different care homes through the Escalating Concerns process. This is a pan north Wales procedure that enables Local Authorities and Local Health Boards to work with commissioned care providers to address areas of significant and escalating concern. The Quality Standards team worked closely with these providers, along with our partners at the BCUHB and CIW to see the areas of concern addressed and standards improved.

Alongside this work, the Workforce Development and Learning Team has continued to support the care homes and domiciliary care sector to access essential training and, in particular over the last twelve months, has supported them with the registration of adult residential care home workers with Social Care Wales through a dedicated member of staff.

### **What were the challenges?**

We continue to see the after-effects of the Covid pandemic, further exacerbated by the global economic situation and cost of living crisis. Care providers continue to struggle with staff recruitment and retention, with a small number of providers significantly relying on agency workers, which can be very costly and doesn't provide the consistency of care that is needed. The cost of living crisis has resulted in significant increases in food, utility and fuel costs incurred by care providers. After receiving representation from the care home sector about the impact of rising inflation, we took the decision to conduct a mid-year review of our fee levels and incorporated a small increase in our care home fees to account for inflation at the higher level of 10.1%. We also reviewed our fees paid to domiciliary care providers and made use of Welsh Government money to give an extra £1 per hour to support the rising fuel and staffing costs affecting this sector.

### **What's next?**

We are very pleased with how these processes are working in Conwy and the partnership working with the BCUHB, CIW and independent care providers.

We are committed to continued meaningful consultation and engagement with care home residents and their families. We have recently started to plan a new reminiscence therapy project for 2023, with Denbighshire County Council and [bookofyou.co.uk](http://bookofyou.co.uk) which will involve volunteers, residents and their families in creating life stories using words, pictures, music and film.

### **Youth Justice Service and Safeguarding**

The Youth Justice Service has adopted a Scaled Approach on all cases to ensure that interventions are tailored to the individual, and based on an assessment of their risks and needs. The intended outcomes are to reduce likelihood of reoffending for each young person by tailoring the intensity of intervention to the assessment, and more effectively managing risk of serious harm to self and others.

### **New Chapter / Pennod Newydd**

This year has seen a new intervention established in Conwy to support families experiencing abusive behaviours from their children. Child to parent/carer abuse is a growing issue, and although it remains very hidden and stigmatised, more families are seeking help.

We worked with Dr Ceryl Davies from Bangor University to adapt her evidence-based programme for Conwy. We now have a toolkit with a clear pathway for support, a screening tool, safety plan template and a nine-week programme of interventions which can be delivered in a group setting or one to one. By the end of March 2023, more than 80 staff in Conwy have been trained to deliver the interventions with parents and carers, and with young people. A range of multi-agency professionals are now available to deliver the interventions, including Family Workers, Social Workers, Therapeutic Workers, Youth Workers, the TRAC team, Youth Justice, Domestic Abuse Service, Pupil Referral Units, Education Officers and more.

We named the programme 'New Chapter' to reflect the positive new beginnings for these families. The first group intervention started in March for a group of parents and carers and a parallel group of young people. There is plenty of support for practitioners using the interventions, with regular reflective sessions with Dr Ceryl Davies.

# NEW CHAPTER

This is a group for parents/carers  
and a group for young people,  
to help start a new chapter in your family life  
if you are experiencing abusive behaviour  
from a child in your family



Starting 7 March 2023 for 9 weeks  
Parent/carers group - 10:00 - 11:30 am  
At Canolfan Ffordd Douglas, Colwyn Bay

If you would like to know more, or book a space,  
speak with your Family Worker, Social Worker, or Youth Worker  
or email

[familycentres@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:familycentres@conwy.gov.uk)



Ariannir gan  
Llywodraeth Cymru  
Funded by  
Welsh Government



## **Safeguarding Week 2022**

National Safeguarding Week took place between 14 and 18 November and once again, we coordinated activities to raise awareness of safeguarding adults and children at risk. We particularly made use of the North Wales Safeguarding Board's 7-minute briefings, which were distributed to staff across all Council services every day over the course of the week. Each day we explored new themes, such as safeguarding in sport, online bullying, professional curiosity, and coercive control.

**We believe that safeguarding is everybody's business, so if you have concerns about an individual, please tell us.**

Quality Standard 8: People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own informed decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible

## Community groups and sessions

Our Staying Well Team organises and promotes community-based activities throughout Conwy County for older people to improve their physical and mental wellbeing. Individuals are encouraged to connect with their communities and learn new skills. This year we identified the need for several new activity sessions, and these are now set up and running self-sustainably:

- Singing for fun sessions in Llanrwst, in partnership with Cartrefi Conwy County Borough Council
- Seated exercise sessions in Rhos on Sea, with local provider Matt Freeman
- Nature sessions and walks in Colwyn Bay, in partnership with Coed Lleol
- Art afternoons in Llandudno, in partnership with Mostyn Art Gallery



One of our main aims this year was to promote our existing provision, so we relaunched our community timetables, and will continue to update them every quarter. Between April and December 2022 we delivered 74 different sessions which were attended by 682 people. We have offered a range of social events, educational walks, arts and craft sessions, carer, intergenerational and dementia-specific sessions, to name but a few.

We ask for feedback from people who attend our sessions, and for those delivered between April and December, we found that:

- 55% said they were more active as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 97% said they had connected with others as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 75% said they were more likely to give their time to others as a result of attending one of our programmes

- 93% said they had learnt something new as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 85% said they had taken more notice of themselves, and others around them, as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 75% reported an improvement in their overall wellbeing as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 53% reported an improvement in their state of health as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 32% said they felt less lonely as a result of attending one of our programmes
- 81% said they had achieved what truly matters to them after attending one of our programmes
- 98% said they would recommend our service to others

### What were the challenges?

We have experienced staff shortages whilst awaiting the outcome of funding bids to recruit to vacant posts. Our team's capacity was reduced by 59% for over six months which impacted hugely on our ability to deliver our aims and objectives and hindered our ability to make long-term plans.

### What's next?

We now have three full-time Wellbeing Officers in post who have been allocated their new focus areas of Kinmel Bay and Towyn, Rhos on Sea, and Dwygyfylchi and Penmaenmawr. Work has already started in these areas and we're currently focused on delivering some informal consultation sessions, such as wellbeing mornings, awareness stands and walks. These sessions will enable us to promote existing provision whilst engaging with older people living in these areas to help identify if there are any gaps in provision. We hope to then support the set-up of new, sustainable activities to support the health and wellbeing of older adults living in these areas.

### Basic income pilot for care leavers

In July 2022 Welsh Government launched the 'Basic Income Pilot'. This is a scheme for care-experienced young people that turn 18 years old in a specific time period. The Basic Income pilot provides £1600 each month for a two year period. This is taxed at the source and is in lieu of benefits.

In Conwy we will have nine young people eligible for the scheme. Currently, there have been four young people eligible to sign up with three accepting the opportunity. One young person has been able to focus on starting a business, which has been positive.

### What were the challenges?

There was a short launch period for the pilot which impacted on our ability to take a planned approach to implementing the pilot.

Due to the uncertainty with the economic crisis there is no guarantee that this will continue beyond this initial pilot period.

### What's next?

Young people will be encouraged to partake in research to consider the effectiveness of the Basic Income Pilot.

### St. David's Day Fund

The St David's Day fund is a relatively small amount of funding totalling £33,205 annually with the aim of supporting children who are looked after, and care leavers from the age of 16 to 25 years.

The purpose of the grant is to provide additional support towards independent living, focusing on areas such as:

- Help with employment; for example, DBS checks, travel, licences.
- Training and education; for example, laptops and text books.
- Accommodation needs such as household goods, and support towards deposits and removals.
- General health and wellbeing like clothes and healthy living.

As well as supporting individual applications, the St David's Day funding has been utilised to develop a website specifically for Care Leavers in Conwy entitled Small Steps Big Future. To date, we have received 53 applications via the website to the St David's Day fund.

### What were the challenges?

The key and ongoing challenge in managing the grant is ensuring that we are as equitable as possible and the funding is utilised to maximum benefit for each individual. We have a weekly panel, which includes a young person, so that there is a quick turnaround of decisions and each request is reviewed on merit and in context of previous applications. We were very pleased to receive high assurance at the latest audit inspection.

### What's next?

We will continue to manage the grant fund as efficiently and effectively as possible whilst also providing a range of opportunities for care leavers. We have made connections with Can Cook, a charity dedicated to supporting people to eat well and going forward will be offering a slow cooker course for care leavers so they can learn how to eat healthily and cost-effectively.



### Increasing capacity at our children's 'front door'

To increase our ability to process cases within our Assessment and Support Team, we have developed a new Assessor and Support Worker role to assess, plan, review and deliver care and support plans. This provided an opportunity for candidates without Social Worker qualifications to develop their skills, and essentially replaced Social Worker vacancies that we were unable to recruit to. Now four months into the pilot, we can see that this arrangement is working well. The post-holders are effectively moving cases on from our children's front door team to either universal support, or longer-term care and support from our social work teams. The skills that these candidates brought with them from previous Family Intervention roles have

proved invaluable, and their input has freed up Qualified Social Workers to concentrate on higher end care and support and safeguarding work.

### What were the challenges?

Most challenges were of a human resources nature, including a change in culture and management style, the amount of work involved in creating brand new posts, and extracting and sharing out the work, suitable to their grade, from the remainder of the team. Recruiting to our permanent roles is a continued challenge and this is partly behind our decision to try something new with skills we already have in our workforce.

This shift has been taking place at a time when the county took on a significant number of Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children, who require input from Qualified Social Workers. So the Assessor and Support Workers were not able to provide the expertise needed to process these particular cases.

### What's next?

We plan to make the Assessor and Support Worker role permanent and consolidate it into a wider social care practitioner role. We need to consider whether they permanently replace Qualified Social Workers, so we'll continue to monitor the demands on the team as a whole to make that decision.

## Providing appropriate accommodation for children and young people with disabilities

We are committed to enabling children and young people who are looked after by the Local Authority to remain living in Conwy in appropriate accommodation with the right support. The Disability Service vision is that provision of accommodation and care should be seamless across the transition to adulthood. As a result we have worked with First Choice Housing to source a property that is flexible and will allow us to provide on-going accommodation post 18 years through de-registration and the creation of supported living services as each young person becomes an adult.

First Choice Housing Association have sourced and completed acquisition on a property in Llandudno for three children with disabilities currently living in out of county residential placements. Welsh Government have awarded Housing with Care funding to the value of £741,048 for acquisition and construction costs, plus FCH private finance of £399,027.

Architect plans have been drawn up, maximising the space of the property to house three separate apartments, a staffing area and suitable outside space to cater for sensory play. Consultation has taken place with the Planning Department and final plans have been submitted for approval.

A 'Planning My Home' document has now been completed what on what the apartments need to look like, bespoke to each child living there, and queries finalised for the architect to put the specification out to tender for a contractor to complete the works. Project documentation is well underway, and the project board and groups have been identified.

Care Inspectorate Wales have confirmed that the property will need to be registered as a children's residential home and as each child turns 18, each apartment can be de-registered and re-registered as a domiciliary care setting, allowing the child or young adult to have a tenancy on their apartment.

All families have been consulted with and all are in agreement with their children returning to Conwy. Current residential providers have also been consulted with; they are supportive of the moves and will take part in identifying and implementing transition plans. Education are engaged in terms of the provision of school places for all three children on their return to the County.

### What were the challenges?

- Getting the project started, as no dedicated Project Manager was in place to lead on this. The Project Manager later identified is managing this in addition to their current job role.

- Architects have had to be creative to maximise the space of the property to accommodate all of the needs required for the children, but equally some compromises have had to be reached between the Wish List versus the Must-Have List.
- Timescales are tight on completing some of the work streams to ensure the home becomes operational by January 2024.

## What's next?

We have identified the following areas to prioritise:

- Completing an option appraisal to decide whether the support provider should be internal or external
- Waiting for the Planning Department to approve plans for construction works
- Awarding construction works to a contractor following tender process
- Identifying transition plans for each child
- Consulting with all key stakeholders that are not part of the Project Board or project groups

We aim for the accommodation to be operational from January 2024, and will provide an update in our next report.



QS8: People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own informed decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible

# How we do what we do

## Our partnership working, political and corporate leadership, governance and accountability

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act came into force in April 2016. It 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. The fundamental principles of the Act are:



The associated [Code of Practice](#) sets out a framework for measuring the progress that local authorities make against their duties under the Act as a whole. This process also enables us to continuously improve services. As required by the Code of Practice, we have arrangements in place to collect and return data on statutory performance measures to Welsh Government on an annual basis. Measuring performance activity is carried out in line with each of the quality standards which focus on people, prevention, partnerships, and integration and well-being.

Conwy has governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of Social Care. The Council has implemented a Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and has appointed two Portfolio Holders to represent Children, Families and Safeguarding, and Integrated Adult and Community Services. We submit various reports to Scrutiny Committee for review and challenge and have a robust internal process for performance oversight and challenge. Meetings are held with our inspectorate throughout the year and we routinely and actively review our own practice to ensure continuous service improvement.

The Welsh Government's [Wellbeing of Future Generations \(Wales\) Act](#) 2015 outlines a set of national outcomes and places a duty on public bodies to put sustainable development at the heart of decisions. This Act ensures that the environment, social, and economic considerations are central to decision-making.

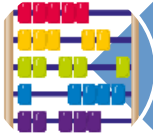
In Conwy we incorporate these objectives into our [new Corporate Plan which will run from 2022 until 2027](#). It sets out our ambitions to make a difference for the people of Conwy over the next five years, in order to meet our long term citizen outcomes.



People in Conwy value and look after the environment



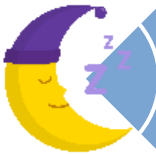
People in Conwy live in a county which has a prosperous economy with culture at its heart



People in Conwy are educated and skilled



People in Conwy have access to affordable, appropriate, good quality accommodation that enhances the quality of their lives



People in Conwy are safe and feel safe



People in Conwy are healthy



People in Conwy live in a county where the use of Welsh is thriving and people can participate in all aspects of community life through the medium of Welsh



People in Conwy are informed, included and listened to and can actively contribute to a community where their background and identity are valued and respected



Conwy County Borough Council is resilient



As a service we reflect how we are contributing to these priorities through our six-monthly Service Performance Review process.

The [Social Services and Wellbeing Act \(Wales\) 2014](#) and [Code of Practice](#) set out a framework for measuring the progress that local authorities make against their duties under the Act as a whole. This process also enables local authorities to continuously improve services. As required by the Code of Practice, we have robust arrangements in place to collect and return data on statutory performance measures to Welsh Government on an annual basis. Measuring performance activity is done in line with each of the quality standards which focuses on people, partnership and integration, and prevention.

Conwy has robust governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of Social Care. The Council has implemented a Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee. The Council has appointed two Portfolio Holders who represent Children and Family Social Care and Adult Social Services and Leisure. We also submit various reports to Scrutiny Committee for review and challenge. In addition, we have a robust internal process for performance oversight and challenge. Meetings are held with our inspectorate throughout the year and we routinely and actively review our own practice to ensure continuous service improvement.

## **Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (RISCA) Responsible Individual (RI) Responsibilities Project**

The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act places the quality of services and improvement at the heart of regulation. It strengthens protection for those who need it, establishes a regulatory system that is in line with the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) act 2014, and creates a regulatory system that is centred on people who need care and support, and the social care workforce.

The associated project is undertaking an option appraisal to recommend permanent organisational changes/arrangements to implement RISCA "Responsible Individual" (RI) duties. This is for current and developing in-house service provision of domiciliary care, fostering and residential placements across Social Care. The RI duties are set out in Care Inspectorate Wales' statutory RISCA Guidance on meeting service standard regulations. In short, the introduction of the enhanced RI role is a very important development in promoting, monitoring and improving service quality.

### **What were the challenges?**

Through our various projects and service developments to deliver 'care closer to home', which includes increasing our local in-house provision of supported living, extra care housing, respite and children's residential provision, we need to also increase our capability to deliver the duties of the enhanced Responsible Individual roles. This will ensure that we continue to promote continuous promotion, monitoring and improvement of service quality for all existing, in-the-pipeline and future developments across Children's, Disability and Older People services.

## **Regional Integration Fund**

The Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund (the RIF) is a five-year fund to deliver a programme of change from April 2022 to March 2027. It builds on the learning and progress made under the previous Integrated Care Fund (ICF) and Transformation Fund (TF) and seeks to create sustainable system change through the integration of health and social care services. The aim by 2027 is to have established and mainstreamed at least six new national models of integrated care so that people in Conwy, and throughout Wales, can be assured of an effective and seamless service experience in relation to:

- Community-based care
- Emotional health and well-being
- Supporting families to stay together safely and supporting care-experienced children
- Home from hospital services
- Accommodation-based solutions

Utilisation of the RIF will closely align to existing legislation and programmes, including the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, the Well-being of Future Generations Act and A Healthier Wales.

In Conwy we have been awarded £3.2 million of funding and we'll be using it to support 21 different project areas across all our service areas in partnership with Denbighshire County Council, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, and the Third Sector. They include:

- Bwthyn y Ddol Children's Residential Assessment Centre
- Strengthening Families Team
- Local Integrated Family Team
- Conwy Single Point of Access Team
- Community Wellbeing Team
- Disability Support Workers
- Dementia Support Teams
- Community Resource Team
- Work, Live, Do: supporting people with complex disabilities
- Step up, Step down beds to support older people
- Step up, Step down enhanced foster care model
- Third Sector Grants through CVSC
- Third Sector projects supporting children with a disability

## Working with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

### Llys Elian residential home

In August 2022 CIW carried out an inspection of Llys Elian Elderly Mentally Ill residential home in Colwyn Bay. The resulting report highlighted that the staff team are happy in their work, enjoy their jobs and are proud to work at the home. They noted that care is unrushed, calm and respectful and activities are varied and arranged daily. Care staff are well trained in the field of dementia care and are supported by a management team which is proactive in seeking ways to improve the service. We were really pleased to hear that there were no recommendations for improvement following this inspection of Llys Elian.

The findings from the CIW inspection were very positive, and were mirrored in the responses to a survey of Llys Elian staff that we undertook in March 2023. Scores and comments confirmed that staff feel supported and appropriately trained to carry out their roles, and as a team they support residents to live fulfilled lives in a safe and respectful environment. All respondents scored Llys Elian highly in terms of performance and many gave examples of how this is achieved.

There are many ways in which Llys Elian gets things right. The strength of the management ensures every issue is dealt with speedily. The way they care about individuals and their staff has led to [my] five star rating. The residents going to sit in the office for a chat with them says it all.

I think staff at Llys Elian do an amazing job at supporting residents to make their own choices.

A similar survey was sent to colleagues in the Council and Health Board to gain their perspective of working with the Llys Elian team. They too agreed that the residential home provides an excellent level of service to its residents, going "over and above to cater to everyone's individual needs". All agreed that residents' privacy

and dignity is respected, they are protected from abuse and neglect, and the management team provide correct and timely information to stakeholders.

I have never seen a home like it, it's amazing in every way. The environment is home from home and comfortable.

We are currently preparing for a CIW thematic review of care planning and support within our Children, Families and Safeguarding Service. The review will measure progress and quality of practice in relation to care and support planning for children and young people subject to the Public Law Outline pre-proceedings.

### **Llys Gogarth accommodation for children and young people with disabilities**

In June 2022 CIW undertook an inspection of Llys Gogarth in Llandudno which provides accommodation, care and support for children and young people. The inspection report was very positive, observing that:

- The facility supports young people to achieve positive outcomes and make progress.
- Young people are encouraged to make choices, be active and healthy and be independent where possible.
- Care staff are enthusiastic and experienced, and are clear about how to care for the young people they support.
- The close working relationship with the on-site school means young people's needs are thoroughly assessed prior to admission.
- The premises are welcoming and there is sufficient internal and external space to meet young people's needs
- Leadership and management provide a high standard of governance and direction for the service, and as a result, young people's outcome are positive and care staff feel supported.

The full report details areas of good practice, such as multi-agency working, effective safeguarding procedures, well trained staff and management, and a positive culture of putting young people at the centre of everything at the service. No areas of non-compliance were identified at this inspection.

### **Feedback from staff and stakeholders**

In February we asked the staff who work at Llys Gogarth and staff from other CCBC and Health teams for their feedback on the facility, and the quality of the services delivered.

Reflecting the feedback from CIW, the overall responses were very positive. Staff feel that they are sufficiently trained to carry out their job roles, and they receive regular supervision from line managers to discuss their health and wellbeing and caseloads. All staff who completed the survey agreed that, as a team, they:

- listen to the children and young people, and their families, ensuring they have rights and choices
- support children and young people to develop and support their health and wellbeing
- support children and young people to stay safe and protect them from abuse and neglect

All respondents rated the service at Llys Gogarth four or five out five, and the supporting comments show how highly the staff regard their colleagues and environment. There is a sense that Llys Gogarth is well on the road to recovery, post-Covid, and there is a renewed opportunity to improve and develop the service further as a team.

We are all enthusiastic about our jobs and really have a passion for the children in our care. We strive to give them 100% all the time.

[The children and young people] have good healthy meals.....they go for lovely walks and participate in after-school activities.

Stakeholders from the Disability Under 25 Team and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board unanimously agreed that Llys Gogarth:

- listens to the young people they support, enabling them to make choices about the care and support they receive and the opportunities available to them
- responds in a timely manner when stakeholders contact them with an enquiry
- responds promptly when concerns are raised about young people who access the service
- supports young people to stay happy and healthy
- supports young people to protect themselves and stay safe from abuse and neglect
- is flexible and adaptable in order to meet the needs of the young people they're supporting
- provides a safe and suitable environment for children and young people who use the service
- treats the children and young people with dignity and respect
- employs staff who are professional and approachable with any concerns or queries

44% rated Llys Gogarth as very good at meeting the outcomes for young people and 56% rated it as good.

I feel strongly that Llys Gogarth listen and enable the young people in their care to [have] their say on how they are cared for. They also provide the young people with a say in the type of activities they would like to access.

### **More Than Just Words: Delivering the 'Active Offer'**

The Welsh Language (Wales) Measure introduced by the Welsh Government in 2011 became law and this gave the language official status and underpins the More Than Just Words Framework.

The Mwy Na Geiriau / More Than Just Words Framework is a five-year plan from 2022 to 2027. The framework emphasises that Welsh belongs to us all and we recognise the concept of language need. Receiving services in Welsh, especially when we are at our most vulnerable should be an integral component of person-centred care. Professional standards in health and social care services note that effective communication is a key requirement, highlighting the need to maintain dignity and respect. Adoption and delivery of More Than Just Words should therefore help improve the quality of care for individuals living in a bilingual country.



The overall vision of the framework: "More Than Just Words is for Cymraeg to belong and be embedded in health and social care services across Wales so that individuals receive care that meets their language needs, leading to better outcomes, without having to ask for it. All workers in health and social care services will appreciate they have an active part to play in realising this vision".

The framework sets out how together we will drive forward progress under the overarching themes of Welsh language planning, supporting and developing Welsh language skills within the current and future workforce, and sharing best practice and an enabling approach.

A steering group has been established for the preparation of the launch of the framework and will assess the social care position against seven key objectives, some of which include promotion and engagements and Welsh in the workplace.

## What were the challenges?

The challenge was to ensure that whole workforce, including commissioned services, has the opportunity to shape our action plan.

## What's next?

We will continue to implement the five-year plan of Mwy Na Geiriau. Our aim is that our action plan continues to evolve and is owned by services and the workforce.

## North Wales Population Assessment

The North Wales Population Assessment report is an assessment of the care and support needs of the population in North Wales, including the support needs of carers. It aims to improve our understanding of our population and how it might change over the coming years to help us provide better public services in the area. Created by the [North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Services Improvement Collaborative](#), they review statistics, speak with communities and make use of a wide range of information collected by local councils, health services, charities and other organisations that provide services.

The report covers children and young people, older people, health and physical disability, learning disability, autism, mental health, unpaid carers, and other groups, providing key messages and recommendations around each topic based on the evidence gathered.

You can [read the latest, and previous reports here](#).



## North Wales Market Stability Report

The [North Wales Market Stability Report \(2022\)](#) includes information about the availability of care and support across the region and recommends ways to make sure enough support is available in future. This includes care homes, domiciliary (home) care, children's homes, fostering, adoption, advocacy, and support for unpaid carers.

## North Wales Regional Partnership Board

Part 9 of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires local authorities to make arrangements to promote cooperation with their partners and others, in relation to adults with needs for care and support, carers and children. Its purpose is to improve outcomes and the well-being of people, as well as improving the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. The key aims of cooperation, partnership and integration can therefore be described as follows:

- Improve care and support, ensuring people have more say and control
- Improve outcomes and health and wellbeing
- Provide coordinated, person-centred care and support

- Make more effective use of resources, skills and expertise

Local Authorities and Local Health Boards are required to establish Regional Partnership Boards to manage and develop services, to secure strategic planning and partnership working between Local Authorities and Local Health Boards, and to ensure effective services, care and support are in place to best meet the needs of their respective populations. The North Wales Regional Partnership Board (NWRPB) aims to ‘work together to improve the wellbeing of people and communities’ in the area, and is comprised of colleagues from local authorities, emergency services, the Health Board, and Third Sector organisations. You can [find out more about the work of the NWRPB here](#).

## **Placement Commissioning Strategy for Children who are Looked After**

In 2022 we created a strategy to set out how we will provide sufficient, quality placements to meet the individual and diverse needs of children in our care. Over the next five years we aim to reduce our dependency on commissioning independent placements, and instead invest a percentage of the money we save into increasing the number of in-house and local resources. This will benefit children who are looked after by keeping them in their local area, accommodating them appropriately, and linking them with carers who can meet their needs, particularly during the transition to adulthood.

We aim to reduce the number of children in Conwy who are looked after, and in line with the Welsh Government’s Programme for Government 2022-2027, [remove profit from the care of looked after children](#). In Conwy our agreed approach is to:

- Shape our internal services to maximise the benefits of public sector provision in terms of quality, value for money and care plan implementation and monitoring.
- Work in collaboration with public sector partners across the region, where this offers identifiable benefits.
- Increase the number and choice of placements to ensure that there are always options to suit the needs of children.
- Co-produce outcome-focused services, acknowledging that there are a range of different methods for strategic commissioning with multiple partners, who may be co-operatives, charities or commercial partners.

The desired overarching outcome of this strategy is to achieve improved outcomes for the children who are looked after by Conwy, and to achieve best practice delivery of our Corporate Parenting functions, with children placed in high quality and value-for-money placements, which safeguard and promote their wellbeing, build resilience and enable and develop positive relationships.

- Children should be included in decision-making and not confused by it
- Periods of accommodation should be a positive experience for children
- Children should not be disadvantaged due to being looked after
- Children should leave care with the same opportunities as the general population

The overarching intention and principle of the strategy is to develop a sufficiency of placement resources to ensure the best possible outcomes for the child. Placement choice and matching are fundamental to achieving this aim.

## **No Wrong Door**

The Children’s Commissioner has created the No Wrong Door approach for children, young people and their families in navigating what is perceived as a complex system when seeking support. The Commissioner believes that services should wrap around families and offer early help to prevent escalation into services. Within Children’s Services in Conwy we have created our vision on the principles of the No Wrong Door approach. This will be a collaborative approach, working with partners to progress the implementation of the North Wales “No Wrong Door” strategy.

## What's next?

Each integrated Children's Area Sub Group is putting together a proposed plan of work which could include expansion of existing projects or identification of new projects to ensure there are effective single-access arrangements and hubs working together in local areas, supporting a child and young person's journey to services.

We are soon to be holding our first workshop to share experiences of how children, and young people engage and interact with services, and the organisations that support children and young people.

## Managing the budget and planning for the future

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) sets out the Council's strategic approach to the management of its finances and outlines some of the financial issues that will face the Council over the next four years. The delivery of the strategy is dependent on the resources made available through Welsh Government (WG) settlements and on the success of the Council in aligning resources to its aims and priorities.

In 2022-23, the outturn for Social Services is projected to be overspent by £3,097,831. For 2022-23, Social Services has, via the business case process, applied for, and been awarded, additional funding for anticipated increased cost pressures relating to Care Fees (£2,730k), Domiciliary Care (£2,070k), Direct Payments (£285k) Supported Living (£620k) and Looked After Children (£2,990). The department has also had to identify budget savings of £1,919k.

## Social Care Employment Pathway

WeCareWales.Conwy (employment support service) continues to promote Social Care as a career path of choice. Hosting monthly virtual job fairs, each event focuses on the skills and knowledge required for Social Care and the roles available within the sector. Participants meet our Community Employment Mentor and hear about the support they can offer to individuals working in Social Care.

This approach has been successful in supporting individuals through the employment process. Participants have welcomed the one-to-one support of the mentor, who tailors support according to the needs of the participant. We've received some positive feedback from participants:

Having met my Employment Mentor over a period of a few weeks she helped and guided me to a successful application within the Disability Team, from filling out the application, mock interviews and constant ongoing support. I can't thank her enough, she is always at the end of the phone with support and guidance.

I found the whole process of applying for a new job lot less daunting with the way I was helped and supported. After deciding to apply, my Employment Mentor helped me with my application with suggestions and best information to highlight my strengths and abilities in my own care role which helped me a lot. It's the small things that helped as well - such as a good luck message for my interview and a well done when I had been offered the position.

I realise after talking to you that my application form is nowhere near detailed enough and is too informal. The advice you have given me has been honest and has been invaluable, I think I can nail this with your help.



How we do what we do



# Performance Management Framework

The new Welsh Government Performance Management Framework was implemented in April 2020, which includes a new set of performance targets and measures. These measures underpin all aspects of the work we do, by informing our management teams of progress, good practice and emerging trends. The purpose of these measures and targets, both at a national and local level is not just to monitor performance but also allows us to plan the delivery of our services going forward. As a result, we can proactively manage any potential issues, mitigate against risks, and use the information to drive our future services.

<b>Quality Standard 1 - All people are equal partners who have voice, choice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them.</b>		
<b>Performance Indicator description</b>	<b>2021-2022</b>	<b>2022-2023</b>
The total number of packages of reablement completed during the year (AD/010)	749	609
The number of contacts for adults received by statutory Social Services during the year (AD/001)	5,571	5,275
<b>Quality Standard 2 – Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled, well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision.</b>		
The number of vacant posts that were advertised during the year	258	215
The number of vacant posts which were successfully recruited to	183	144
<b>Quality Standard 3 – The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented, whilst ensuring that the best possible outcomes for people are achieved.</b>		
The total number of children looked after who returned home during the year (CH/045)	13	19
The number of children looked after at 31st March who have had three or more placements during the year (CH/043)	24	19
The total number of initial Pathway Plans due to be completed during the year (CH/049)	12	30
<b>Quality Standard 4 – Resilience within our communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively encouraging and supporting people who need care and support, including carers, to learn, develop and participate in society.</b>		
The total number of children looked after on the 31st March who have experienced one or more changes of school during the year (excluding transitional arrangements, moves associated with adoption or moves home) (CH/044)	9	17
<b>Quality Standard 5 – Effective partnerships are in place to commission and deliver fully integrated, high quality, sustainable outcomes for people.</b>		
The total number of children with a care and support plan at 31st March (CH/015)	712	737
The total number of children with a care and support plan where needs a met through a Direct Payment at 31st March (CH/016)	60	56
The total number of adults with a care and support plan where needs are met through a Direct Payment at 31st March (AD/013)	141	212
<b>Quality Standard 6 – People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners.</b>		
The total number of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 12 months since leaving care (CH/054a)	8	7
The total number of care leavers in categories 2,3 and 4 who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in the 13 – 24 months since leaving care (CH/054b)	26	25
The total number of care leavers who experience homelessness during the year (As defined by the Housing (Wales) Act 2014) within 12 months of leaving care (CH/052)	25	26
<b>Quality Standard 7 – People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect, and any other types of harm.</b>		

The total number of enquiries completed within 7 days from the receipt of the reported alleged abuse ( <i>AD/024</i> )	746	701
Of those children who were placed on the child protection register during the year, the number that has been previously registered under any category, at any time during the previous 12 months ( <i>CH/024</i> )	0	0
The average length of time for all children who were on the CPR during the year ( <i>PMC28</i> )	225.45 days	247.22 days
<b>Quality Standard 8 – People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own informed decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible.</b>		
The number of young people leaving care who move into a 'When I am Ready' placement ( <i>CH/055</i> )	2	1
The total number of young people during the year where a personal adviser was allocated as required - within 3 months if they become cat 1 or 4 see guidance ( <i>CH/051</i> )	10	10

# Looking forward to 2023-24 and beyond

## **Direct Payments Service**

Direct Payments are cash payments paid to individuals so that they can organise their support to meet their assessed social care needs. This gives them flexibility, choice and control over how their care is delivered.

A mini restructuring of the Direct Payment section is to be concluded during 2023-2024. The responsibility of the new section will be to raise the profile of Direct Payments with all eligible citizens known to Social Care who wish to take control over how their support is provided. This will be done by development of web pages, social media, community talks and ensuring that front line staff are skilled and confident to discuss the benefits of Direct Payments with citizens.

The team will provide a support, information and advice service to those interested in learning more about the scheme, scheme recipients, department staff and Health colleagues involved in the process. They will keep abreast of the changing national political agenda, ensuring that all changes are incorporated into scheme developments.

## **RISCA**

As mentioned earlier in this report, work has been ongoing around the introduction of the enhanced Responsible Individual (RI) role. The associated project will continue into 2023-24, gathering information from Local Authorities across Wales on different models and best practice for delivering the Responsible Individual duties. The information gathered will form part of an option appraisal, to be undertaken with a number of stakeholders, to assess a list of models to determine the preferred option. With greater focus on developing our in-house care provision, the introduction of the enhanced RI role is a very important development in promoting, monitoring and improving service quality.

## **Transforming residential placements for children and young people**

Support (through our Social Care and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet) has been given to establish a new programme of work to transform the way we deliver residential placements for children and young people.

Care homes and placements for children and young people ensure that their needs are met when they cannot live with their own family. Children and young people may be resident in a care home for short periods, including respite care or short breaks, or in the longer term, with a view to moving on to adulthood and more independent living. They are a place for children and young people to be supported to develop and grow.

We aim to increase the number of local placements to enable children and young people that are currently out of county to return to the area, or closer to home, enabling them to retain their local roots, schools, culture, friends and known support networks. This will also increase the opportunity for staff to support children and young people locally, enabling better relationships with children and young people to be developed.

The transformation programme is supporting the delivery of our 'Placement Commissioning Strategy 2022-2027', which has the aspirational aim to "provide sufficient placements to meet the individual and diverse needs of children looked after".

We have already started on this journey through local developments that are currently in progress, such as a new sub-regional Assessment Centre Bwthyn Y Ddol, (a joint venture between Conwy and Denbighshire Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board), which creates new short-term planned and respite placements, and Sylva Gardens residential home, creating new flats and a support service for three children with complex care needs. Proposals have also recently been supported to redevelop our existing in-house residential provision, Glan Yr Afon, to increase capacity to provide accommodation for up to four individuals. This will involve the demolition of the existing building and construction of a purpose-designed facility.



There are a variety of factors influencing the pressure and challenges faced by our services, which are not unique to Conwy, but being observed nationally:

- Increase in demand for placements
- Growth and complexity of care needs
- Lack of in-house foster placements and local residential placements
- Increased costs per child per week in the independent care sector
- Departmental savings target
- Pressures in Betsi Cadwaladr University health Board and other partners, also exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic

To support the service with this significant programme of work, we are appointing a dedicated Transformation Programme Lead (supported through Welsh Government funding). The aim is to have one co-ordinated programme to progress existing developments and consider new and different models for providing local residential placements. The engagement of a range of stakeholders such as other local authorities and public sector organisations, not-for-profit organisations, independent providers, and young people that are looked after will be a key feature to develop options to meet these challenges.

### **Youth Justice: child first and trauma-informed approach**

You'll have read about the work we've undertaken so far in this area earlier in this report. In the next few months we'll be reviewing the staffing structure within the Youth Justice Service to create specialised roles to develop and progress aspects of this work further. We also plan to source a building within the authority to create a Community Hub where children and young people can:

- Pop in to gain independent living skills through 'cook and eat' projects
- Attend appointments with the Youth Justice Service and partner agencies
- Attend specialised intervention on an individual or group basis
- Have a safe and warm place to congregate



# Accessing further information and key documents

Director's Annual Report (previous years)

<https://conwysocialservicesannualreport.org.uk/>

Corporate Plan 2022-2027

<https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Council/Strategies-Plans-and-Policies/Corporate-Plan/Corporate-Plan-2022-2027.aspx>

How we commission services

<http://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Care-and-Wellbeing/Policies-Plans-and-Reports/How-we-Commission-Services.aspx>

Care Inspectorate Wales

<https://careinspectorate.wales/>

Social Care Wales

<https://socialcare.wales/>

The Wellbeing of Future Generations Act

<https://gov.wales/well-being-of-future-generations-wales>

Conwy Family Centres

<https://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Care-and-Wellbeing/Children-and-families/Conwy-Family-Centres/Conwy-Family-Centres.aspx>

Corporate Safeguarding Policy

<http://www.conwy.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Care-and-Wellbeing/Im-worried-about-somebody/Corporate-Safeguarding-Policy.aspx>

North Wales Social Care and Well-being Services Improvement Collaborative

<https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/>

Measuring Social services performance: code of practice

<https://gov.wales/measuring-social-services-performance-code-practice>

Wales Safeguarding Procedures

<https://www.safeguarding.wales/>

A Healthier Wales

<https://gov.wales/healthier-wales-long-term-plan-health-and-social-care>

Foster Wales

<https://fosterwales.secure.conwy.gov.uk/static/en/index.htm.htm>  
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# Concerns about an individual

If you are aware of an individual who is at risk of abuse or who is being abused, it is very important that you inform the Council or the Police.

If the individual is in imminent danger, call the Police immediately on 999. If they are not in imminent danger, call Social Services as soon as possible to share your concerns.

## Reporting an adult at risk

Telephone: 0300 456 1111

Out of hours telephone: 0300 123 3079

E-mail: [wellbeing@conwy.gov.uk](mailto:wellbeing@conwy.gov.uk)

Visit our website: [Report an adult at risk](#)

## Reporting a child at risk

If you wish to make an enquiry, or you are concerned about a child's safety please contact us:

Telephone: 01492 575 111

Out of hours telephone: 0300 123 3079

Visit our website: [Report a child at risk](#)

