

# **Director of Social Services Annual Report 2019 - 2020**

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# Director of Social Services Annual Report 2019 - 2020

## Introduction

Denbighshire County Council's Director of Social Services Annual Report demonstrates how we have promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. Within the report we will clearly lay out the improvement journey we have taken in providing services to those citizens who have accessed information, advice and assistance and those individuals and carers who receive care and support across Denbighshire.

The report will provide an evaluation of Denbighshire County Council's performance in delivering social services functions over the last year. In producing this report, we have engaged with a range of key stakeholders including citizens who have shared their experiences of receiving care and support from our Social Services and partners who have been working with us.

We will explain how we have achieved the Welsh Government's 6 quality standards for well-being outcomes:

1. Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve
2. Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health, and emotional well-being
3. Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs
4. Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships
5. Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society
6. Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

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## 1. Director's summary of performance

I am pleased to present Denbighshire's Social Services Annual Report 2019-20. The purpose of the report is to give a fair assessment of what we set out to do this year, what we actually have done and achieved and what we still have to do.

Little did we know when we started this year, that we would see major disruption towards the end of the year as the Covid-19 pandemic started to affect us all in March 2020.

However, we achieved a lot during 2019-20 with 2 of our Community Resource Teams really embedding seamless health and social care services in Rhyl and Ruthin. The other 2 Community Resource Teams planned for Denbigh and Prestatyn are at different stages of development but the willingness for health and social care colleagues to work together is driving this on.

We have seen a significant improvement in adult protection enquiries completed within statutory timescales, which is testimony to the efforts the whole service has put in to achieve this increased performance. The development of the Education Safeguarding Forum also provides a platform for Education and key Children's Services practitioners to meet on a termly basis to discuss and share safeguarding practice issues.

Whilst we have plans to continue developing our services, our priority for the coming year will be to keep all of our citizens safe and continue to provide services to the most vulnerable in our communities. Projects that we will be focussing on include:

- To ensure information, advice and assistance to support Carers is available digitally as well as through other channels.
- Improve access, skills and confidence of vulnerable citizens who could benefit from digital technology based care and support solutions.
- Introduce a peripatetic multi-agency team across Denbighshire and Conwy to work with children and families who are at risk of having children placed in long-term residential care.
- To ensure the Safeguarding theme is embedded in everyone's practice, which includes embedding any lessons learnt from Safeguarding audits and / or Adult Practice Reviews.
- Implement the Moving with Dignity Programme

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- Further develop and review services that meet the needs of Denbighshire carers, working with partners and carers to identify / reduce gaps in support

**Nicola Stubbins**



**Corporate Director for Communities and Statutory Director for Social Services**

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## 2. How people help us to shape our services

During 2019-20 we maintained high levels of engagement with a wide range of stakeholders to ensure we were delivering services that supported the needs of our citizens. We take many different approaches, from ensuring the citizen is fully engaged when agreeing care and support needs, through to them helping us recruit our staff and providing feedback, either through our compliments and complaints procedures or through general discussion with a wide range of staff and elected members. However, during the last quarter of the year when the spread of Coronavirus was starting to impact, the ways in which we could engage became very limited but we continued to keep the citizen at the heart of our services.

Our Single Point of Access handled over 15,000 enquiries during the year, with 70% of those receiving information, advice and assistance or being referred for some level of care and support. 1850 citizens went onto receive an assessment that led to a care and support plan being developed with the citizen.

During 2019-20 our team have attended 344 Talking Points and supported over 3000 Citizens. By providing Information, Advice and Assistance:

- Information to 2,875
- Information and Advice to 1,347
- Assistance to 826

100% of all feedback received from citizens attending Talking Points was positive and complimentary.

During 2019-20, 234 citizens made contact with Customer Connections of which 23% raised concerns or a complaint and 180 citizens complimented or thanked either Children's or Adult Social Services teams. Examples of contact received include:

- Following discharge from hospital a citizen complained that they had not had a Key-safe fitted. This was because the complainant had not signed the form for the process.

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- Complaint that a Social Worker had not carried out a Section 47 safeguarding process correctly in going to the school and speaking to the complainant's daughter about alleged abuse - he was unhappy with the result of the process
- "Thank you to all staff at Llys Awelon. Thank you so much for your kindness towards Mum whilst she lived at Awelon. Moving to Llys Awelon was the making of her and she couldn't have done without the fantastic care she received."
- "The support I have received has been above and beyond. They have always gone out of their way to help and advise with any issues or difficulties and are always approachable, nothing is ever too much trouble and they always make time to listen. Working so closely with this team has been an absolute pleasure and this has in turn been beneficial for the young person we have then supported to move on."

Following evaluation of the complaints received during 2018-19 we implemented Conflict Management / Complaints Training across Community Support Services. As a result, the numbers of complaints have dropped and there appears to be a greater awareness amongst customer facing staff of how to deal with complaints correctly.

Wherever possible we will invite citizens to participate in the recruitment of Social Services Staff. For example, when recruiting Housing First staff we ensured that someone with Lived Experience of Homelessness was an integral part of the assessment centre and fed into the recruitment decision. Also within our care homes when recruiting the new Team Manager residents interviewed the applicants and provided feedback, which helped with the decision making process of appointing the candidate.

Below are various ways in which we have engaged citizens to help shape our individual services within both Community Support Services and Children's and Education Services.

## Older People

Llys Awelon Extra Care Housing Development, Ruthin - There is continual engagement with existing tenants regarding the changes on site and the impact this may have on their environment and services / meals. This is done through our partners Grwp Cynefin and our Denbighshire County Council Carer Team. There will be more formal engagement meetings with tenants and their families during 2020-21.

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Age Connects run regular meetings with older people across Denbighshire.



In many of these meetings participants have engaged in discussion around local issues and new developments and services, as well as local and national consultation and engagement events, such as Action on Elder Abuse Cymru and Denbighshire's engagement on Vision Support / RNIB Living with Sight Loss.

## **Carers**

A Carer's survey was carried out through the County Conversation Engagement portal during the year to understand how informal carers accessed information, the difficulties they have in undertaking their caring role and what advice and information did they feel was missing. The number of respondents was lower than we had anticipated but we were able to gather very useful data which has helped us progress our work to support Carers in Denbighshire.

### **Quotes from carers:**

- I have found out just how little information is given to you when you become a carer and while you are working there is little time to search for it.
- Respite for unpaid carers is so valuable. It keeps me going in my caring role and the staff are so supportive of both of us.

As a result of the survey we also consulted with individuals and carer groups to develop a Carer's Information Booklet which was launched during Carer's Week in June 2019.

## **Learning Disabilities**

A review of day and work opportunities was undertaken at the end of 2019 which took into account the views of all key stakeholders. This included citizens already participating in day and work opportunities, their parents/carers, the staff employed in those services and members of the Complex Disability Team. Over 150 individuals participated in the review, detailing what was working well within the service and giving their thoughts and ideas of how it can be improved.



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Following this review, recommendations have been put forward to modernise the service to allow it to meet the needs of people with Learning Disabilities to promote their independence.

As part of the review we held an event in November 2019 which was co-produced and co-presented with citizens involved in Day and Work Opportunities. 35 citizens attended and participated on the day.

This has influenced the Project Search pilot and many of the participants told us what they really wanted was paid work.

## Quotes from participants in Work Opportunities:

- I like to work for McDonalds and get a proper wage.
- I enjoy working with the team, some of the tasks are really enjoyable, work that requires design and editing.

## Children's Services

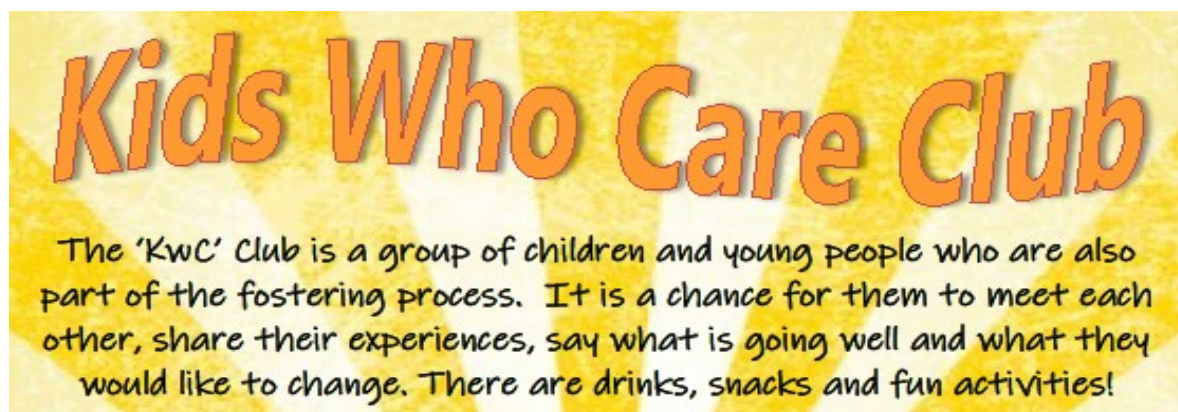
The Kids in Care (KIC) forum established for Denbighshire's Looked After Young People (aged 8 to 15) continues to meet.



This is a forum that enables children looked after to meet each other, share their experiences, say what is going well and what they would like to change. We regularly consult with this key engagement group to shape our services. They have influenced a range of our processes, the structure and content of key documentation and contributed to the training given to our Foster Carers. The young people came up with their own logo and the club's name and on an annual basis publish a newsletter of their activities.

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This year the service also established the KWC (Kids who Care) forum. This forum is an opportunity for birth children within fostering families to meet, share their experiences and gain peer support. We recognise the impact that fostering can have on families and want to offer children who foster the best support and training possible, we believe that this group will help shape the future support and preparation offered to children who foster.



The Quarterly Assurance Framework report continues to be produced and its findings presented to senior managers within Education and Children's Services. This report brings together citizen feedback from multiple sources including End of Placement reports from children, parents and foster carers, Have your Say surveys, Foster Carer self-assessments, Young Carers and Care Leavers.

### **3. Promoting and improving the well-being of those we help**

#### **a) Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve**

**This is what we said we would do**

- Look at innovative ways to ensure our citizens know who to contact about their care and how to contact Single Point of Access (SPoA).
- We will continue to adapt and improve SPoA in line with the development of Community Resource Teams and to ensure we have a well-trained and competent team to deliver good quality Information, Advice and Assistance to the citizens of Denbighshire.
- To conclude our review of the roll out of Support Budgets, developing processes and guidance from lessons learned; embedding a positive risk taking approach; and work closely with our partners and providers to ensure that our citizens have full choice and control over their care and support needs.

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- Children Services will continue with their implementation of revised practice and processes in line with Social Services and Well-Being Act 2014. During the next 12 months' focus will be given on identified training needs including; collaborative conversations and assessing eligible needs being the priority for 2019.
- In addition, Children's Services are currently reviewing a range of operational functions to ensure value for money and leaner systems. These individual projects have their own terms of reference and are chaired by officers from across the service.

## This is what we have done and achieved

- 71% of adults who received support from the information, advice and assistance service have not contacted the service again during the year. This has increased from 69% in 2018-19.
- 80% of assessments were completed for children within statutory services, which is slightly down on the previous year.

We introduced an innovative way to promote SPOA and Talking Points, through the Talking Point prescription pad produced in consultation with GPs. GPs simply rip off a slip containing details of the local Talking Point and SPOA contact number and give it to the citizen during surgery. The pads were distributed but we have been unable to evaluate the impact owing the measures we have introduced due to Covid-19.



To ensure we upskilled the team in line with the implementation and development of Community Resource Teams, a weekly training session called Power Hour was introduced. Topics covered during these sessions are wide and varied and incorporate different learning techniques including The Stages of Change and Health Beliefs Model.

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Different agencies including Third Sector Organisations, a range of teams and staff roles have delivered the Power Hour sessions often in informal ways such as through quizzes, games and relaxation techniques to help maintain well-being. One staff member quoted; “The power hours with quizzes are light-hearted and fun!”

During the year we continued to engage with a wide range of stakeholders including staff, citizens and their families / carers to develop the business case to roll out Support Budgets in the most appropriate way. A decision was taken to implement Prepaid Cards from March 2020 as the best solution that would:

- Remove barriers for people accepting direct payments and this is supportive of Community Support Services strategic objectives in relation to direct payments.
- Improve access, skills and confidence of vulnerable citizens who could benefit from digital technology based care and support solutions
- Ensure resources relating to financial assessment are available and accessible on-line.
- Aid the implementation and roll out of Support Budgets across all operational teams to give citizens more choice and control over the planning and delivery of their care and support.
- Ensure information, advice and assistance to support Carers is available digitally as well as through other channels.
- Strengthen the ‘Information, Advice & Assistance’ offer throughout the citizen’s journey, enabling citizens to develop resilience and maintain independence.

Edge of Care Service was strengthened with the utilisation of Integrated Care Fund (ICF) funding. This enabled the recruitment of additional therapeutic workers to support intensive interventions for those families with complex safeguarding issues and family dynamics. A referral pathway was developed that gave practitioners ease of access to the service in a crisis situation, alongside referrals for planned pieces of work.

In March 2020 when the Covid-19 lockdown was introduced all service delivery was subject to risk assessment with in person meetings continuing for those at highest risk. The workforce adapted to ‘compulsory’ home working very quickly. The use of virtual means of contact allowed for statutory meetings to continue. This was not without some problems in the first few weeks due to the different IT platforms used across the region and the inability of some staff to host their own virtual meetings.

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However, it should be noted that attendance at Child Protection Conferences, Core Groups, Looked After Statutory Reviews and Fostering Panel has been excellent.

## **This is what we still have to do**

To ensure information, advice and assistance to support Carers is available digitally as well as through other channels.
Improve access, skills and confidence of vulnerable citizens who could benefit from digital technology based care and support solutions.
To strengthen the 'Information, Advice & Assistance' offer throughout the citizen's journey, enabling citizens to develop resilience and maintain independence.
To develop a new integrated Early Years' Service and Pathway.

## **b) Working with people and partners to protect people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being**

### **This is what we said we would do**

- We will continue to develop and implement our Community Resource Teams, learning from our established teams in Rhyl and Ruthin and introducing new teams in Denbigh and Prestatyn. Developing a more seamless health and social care service within Denbighshire should help us to reduce the number of delayed transfers of care from hospital.
- Within our Mental Health service, we will be developing a learning programme with a recovery and well-being approach where sessions are held in appropriate and accessible settings in the community as a means of efficiently and economically delivering low level services. The Denbighshire Learning Partnership has been established to support this development and we are currently exploring areas of good practice through the North Wales Learning for Well-being Network.
- We will implement the findings of the Learning Disability Day Services & Work Opportunities review.
- We will continue to work in partnership with our citizens to ensure they are involved in decisions about their care and support at every opportunity.

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## This is what we have done and achieved

The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons was 2.27 per 1,000 of the population aged 75 or over – this has increased from 1.95 in 2018 -19.

The average age of adults entering residential care homes (Excluding nursing) was 81 years – this has dropped from 83 years in 2018 -19.

100% of looked after children were registered with a GP within 10 working days of the start of their placement..

During 2019 - 20 we have made great strides in implementing and developing our Community Resource Teams (CRT) across Denbighshire. One social care staff member commented; “It is nice having health staff co-located in the same office. Joint discussions are being held; much quicker and efficient face to face conversations.”

We are seeing a more joined up approach at various levels across the Health and Social Care sector within Denbighshire, from setting strategic direction to operational delivery of services. For example; the Dementia Social Care Practitioners have regular meetings with the Older People’s Mental Health Team to review citizens and discuss new referrals. Also the Occupational Therapists from Health and Social Care hold Complex Moving and Handling Meetings.

We implemented tri-partite meetings at citizens’ homes when domiciliary care was being commissioned, to ensure that the care and support plan was person-centred and captured the individual needs of the citizen. Social Workers or Occupational Therapists and Social Care Practitioners would meet with the domiciliary care provider, the citizen and their carers in their own homes to ensure that the assessment and resulting care and support were effectively communicated and agreed.



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The Ruthin CRT members of staff had a Team Building Day in Woodland Skills Centre. Primary purpose of this was for relationship building with a total of 24 CRT staff attending, this included representation from Social Care, Therapies, District Nurses, Health Care Workers, Administration and Older People's Mental Health team. At the end of the session lots of feedback had been gathered on the positives, the challenges and their thoughts and ideas on how the CRT can be further developed.

Work continues to source suitable premises in Prestatyn and an area of Denbigh Hospital has been identified for the Denbigh CRT. It is anticipated Denbigh CRT will move into their offices during the coming months.

In the meanwhile, the teams are carrying on working together to provide seamless health and social care in these areas, learning from the established teams in Rhyl and Ruthin.

As part of the development and implementation of a learning programme with a recovery and well-being approach in our mental health services The Denbighshire Learning Partnership held some taster sessions and fun activities aimed at promoting good mental health and wellbeing.

A mapping exercise was also carried out to identify activities organised and held by various stakeholders and following this a short programme of events was developed and run between November 2019 and January 2020.

The structure of The Learning Partnership developed slowly throughout the year, with feedback from the taster sessions helping inform discussions and shaping of the service.

Ty Mor Mental Health Service staff were delivering the 5 Ways to Well-being sessions and Recovery Workshop. The aim of these session was to introduce the attendees to strategies that they could use to increase their sense of well-being, confidence, self-esteem, to reduce isolation and to set future goals that they could work towards.





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Links were established with Bangor University, resulting in 2 students volunteering for the Council and delivering 2 groups per week to citizens who attended the centre. As they were volunteers we were able to deliver the courses to our citizens at no extra cost to the service.

Day Services and Work Opportunities – we began to implement the findings of the review, identifying alternative locations for some services and engaging with providers through a meet the buyer event. Work will progress in 2020-21 to complete the findings of the review.

Our Children's Service invested in Collaborative Conversations training for all staff across social care with senior managers also undertaking the training, and attending facilitated workshops to look at how to embed this model across the service.

In a rapid response to the Covid-19 lockdown we undertook risk assessments of all open cases and made plans about continued contact. Face to face visits have continued for the highest risk cases with staff adhering to appropriate health and safety advice. All statutory processes have continued by use of technology with excellent attendance at Looked After Children reviews, Fostering Panel, Adoption Panel, Case Conferences and Core Groups.

In looking at the issue of no children being seen by a registered dentist within 3 months of becoming looked after, we identified the following contributions to problems in this area:

- Continued poor, or non-attendance of some families – we will continue to encourage and support families in this regard
- Families reported difficulties in the identification of and registration with dentists – again we will endeavour to support individuals with this issue
- Some local dental practices reported recruitment problems which led to cancelled appointments
- Appointments in March 2020 were cancelled due to Covid-19, which is also likely to impact on 2020-21 performance.

## **This is what we still have to do**

To progress developments to establish 4 co-located & integrated Community Resource Teams across Denbighshire to ensure citizens receive a seamless and responsive service.
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To continue to develop and review services that meet the needs of carers across county through ongoing dialogue and consultation with partners and through carer fora.

Introduce a peripatetic multi-agency team across Denbighshire and Conwy to work with children and families who are at risk of having children placed in long-term residential care.

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

### This is what we said we would do

- Given the revised National Guidance the Head of Service Group are developing a Multi-Agency Policy and Practice Guide, to compliment the National Guidance and support its application across North Wales. This will include an information sharing protocol, agreed distinction between children being reported as missing and a child being reported as absent, and clarity on the shared purpose of Return Home Interviews and appropriate multi-agency response.
- Audits identified that we need to continue to improve quality of care planning including child protection plans. We will continue to develop workers' standard of analysis and subsequent identified outcomes through both training and embedding the new reporting formats that assist in the focus on outcomes.
- During the next 12 months we will be introducing at least one safeguarding reflective practice from every practitioner in Adult Services.
- We will be evaluating implementation of the Self Neglect and Hoarding Protocols

### This is what we have done and achieved

91% of adult protection enquiries were completed within statutory timescales – this is an increase of 23% compared to 2018-19.

4.7% of children on our child protection register were re-registrations, which is an increase on the previous year.

The average length of time that children were on the child protection register during the year was 311 days – increased from 253 days in the previous year..

Exploitation is a key priority for Denbighshire's Education & Children's Services and features across practice from initial referral through to assessment and coordinated support for children and families. To review those high risk cases a monthly Multi-Agency Exploitation Panel is held where those most vulnerable children and young people are considered.

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The meetings are well attended across a number of agencies and professionals and share good practice, local intelligence and monitor high risk children and young people.

Safeguarding in schools has included a review of the new policy and procedures and ensuring that Safeguarding Leads in all schools are confident in their role. This has included a comprehensive training package across the schools for Head Teachers and Designated Safeguarding Leads facilitated by Barnardo's Safeguarding Trainers. The development of the Education Safeguarding Forum also provides a forum for Education and key Children's Services practitioners to meet on a termly basis to discuss and share safeguarding practice issues.

During 2019-20 we introduced practice whereby professionals within our Operational Services Teams in Adult Social Services were required to complete 2 reflective practices pieces over the year, with at least one of them having a safeguarding focus. Here are how the teams performed, work will continue to ensure we achieve 100% within all teams:

- Safeguarding - achieved 100%
- Reviewing Team – achieved 100%
- South Locality – achieved 100%
- North Locality – achieved 65%
- Complex Disabilities – achieved 90%

The evaluation process of the implementation of the Self Neglect & Hoarding Protocol was undertaken by the safeguarding team. There was evidence that practitioners across the locality teams had some knowledge of this protocol, confidence in its use was further enhanced with the direct support from the Safeguarding team. Practitioners found this document useful and there is evidence that this protocol had been used to support some citizens in Denbighshire.

## **This is what we still have to do**

Ensure all practitioners are meeting the 7-day deadline for completion of safeguarding enquiries.
To ensure the Safeguarding theme is embedded in everyone's practice, which includes embedding any lessons learnt from Safeguarding audits and / or Adult Practice Reviews.
Embed revised All Wales Safeguarding Procedures across Children's Services..

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

### This is what we said we would do

- The Reassessment Project continues, we have appointed an experienced Occupational Therapist to take the project to the next stage which is a review of citizen's who have complex needs and packages, with a view to see if we can reduce dependency on care and support with specialist equipment, thus promoting independence, dignity and delivering on what matters.
- We want to see our Community hubs in Complex Disability mature and deliver the best possible outcomes for the citizens. We want to see our Community Navigator service develop, a Community Navigator is integral to each Community Resource Team. We want to see more examples of citizens being connected with their local communities and more examples of exciting joint initiatives with libraries, Arts and Schools.
- This year we will be acting on the findings of the Talking Points Pause and Review in making our 8 Talking Points across Denbighshire even better for the citizens of Denbighshire. We want our Communities to 'own' Talking Points. Together with partners we want to see the set -up of more Well Being Information points at the heart of communities and the identification of champions in post offices, hospitals etc.
- Work with Supporting People commissioned projects to establish better mechanisms and support offers to encourage and allow young people in supported housing to take up employment.
- The review of work and day opportunity services (Learning Disability services) is due to be completed by June 2019.
- We will continue to investigate options for Lifespan services for people with learning disabilities. We have bid for funding to allow an Occupational Therapist to join the Community Living Cluster to work with individuals who are transitioning from youth services to carry out assessments and early planning to secure more sustainable activities and accommodation.
- To develop a toolkit to allow the Work Start Scheme to be replicated to a further 14 individuals in 2019-20.
- To review and enhance access for Looked After Children (LAC) and Care Leavers in Denbighshire with the opportunity to participate in a local authority work placement and/or traineeship scheme.

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- To develop a 2 or 3-day residential placement for a total of 40 LAC which will involve Life Skills e.g. cooking, budgeting and finances, employment, mental well-being and social interaction skills.
- To demonstrate an increase in the number of young people leaving care who have been supported into employment, education or training.

## **This is what we have done and achieved**

11% of looked after children experienced one or more changes in school during periods of being looked after that were not due to transitional arrangements. This is increased on the 2018-19 figure but still below the almost 14% figure for 2017-18.

Since January 2019, an Occupational Therapist has been in post to work on Right-Sized Care and Support (known as the Moving with Dignity project) within the Adult Social Services Review Team. The Occupational Therapist is moving forward with practical plans to implement changes to the way Denbighshire residents are assessed for and receive moving and handling support.

For the first 12 months the project has been tasked with scoping the issue, researching best practice, and identifying ways of providing effective training and reaching the right staffing groups (including Local Authority, NHS colleagues and Independent Providers).

The training and implementation programme will begin during 2020 - 21.

The benefits of the project can be briefly summarised as follows:

- It could free up capacity within care agencies to support more clients if there are fewer double-handed care packages needed as it is the double packages that are harder to commission.
- This potentially has the benefit of speeding up the hospital discharge process and throughput.
- It could reduce the need to deploy enhanced care staff and District Nurses to support citizens whose care needs cannot be met by outside providers
- It could have a positive impact on the well-being and sense of control of citizens and their carers, increasing resilience and engagement.
- A common approach for all citizens, regardless of their source of care & support funding would streamline processes and reduce stresses on Community staff.

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- A shared approach and common knowledge base would enhance the services we provide to our citizens and promote continuity throughout the citizen's journey if their care and support needs move from social towards more health focussed.
- Common core knowledge of equipment and processes across all community staff groups will enhance continuity of care and support and co-working.

Within our Complex Disability Service, we have established an intake element to the team which allows for all assessments to be carried out in a timely and multi-disciplinary way.

Any immediate support or advice is offered at this first contact. The Hwb Siarad team now work together to ensure more complex Information Advice and Assistance, signposting or short term work is allocated and completed in a timely way. This approach also enables the staff to ensure all reviews are actioned without need for unnecessary waiting lists.

Processes are still new and developing and the planned co-production work around groups and development of community resources and resilience has been slowed down as a result of Covid-19, but plans are afoot to revisit this work as part of Covid-19 recovery.

To help us to move to Lifespan services for those with complex disabilities, the team initially scoped the services of other authorities in Wales to identify good practice and gauge the developments of teams adapting to meet the needs of the Additional Learning Needs Bill. Currently we are evaluating the information gathered and reviewing the 0-18 and 18 plus team separation within Denbighshire County Council.

A project has been set up to enable citizens to have the right level of supported accommodation as early as possible in any major transition of their lives, whether this is moving out of the family home or re-assessing whether residential accommodation, especially if out of county, is still required. This project involves developing new models of integrated and collaborative service delivery which promotes progression from existing settings.

There is also a focus on preventative working through specialist input at the planning stage. Working with families at the earliest opportunity allows us to promote more local, cost effective and person centred supported living placements as an alternative to short term out of county residential options. This also gives us the opportunity to increase investment in social value models of delivering care, moving away from the residential model of support towards proportionate delivery of support in community settings using community resources.

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We have continued to work with our Supporting People providers to establish better mechanisms / support offers to encourage and allow young people in supported housing to take up employment.

This is what has been achieved up to now:

- We have continued to work with our commissioned providers to develop more outcome focussed ways of working, and employment/training/education are key outcome areas for the young people in our supported housing.
- Partnership working with organisations like Prince's Trust, and our Working Denbighshire Team, has been very beneficial in opening up more work opportunities for young people in our supported housing projects.
- We work with projects wherever possible to try to come up with individual solutions, but we are continually up against a fundamental barrier here.  
Supported housing projects that charge rents at rates equal to / much closer to the Local Housing Allowance rate significantly reduce this barrier. There are however very few examples of projects such as this. We will need to continue to explore opportunities for more provision like this, which will be financially viable for providers.
- Providers will often work with young people who secure employment to try to move them onto independent accommodation (with floating support as needed) as soon as it is viable, but there are significant barriers here too.  
Many young people are priced out of the rental market (despite earning a wage) or excluded by other landlord or letting agent policies, particularly around age.
- Work has continued around building relationships with landlords, and our Single Access Route to Housing gives priority to individuals moving on from supported housing – however, social housing stock remains extremely low across the board.

We remain in an extremely difficult position because of the reality of supported housing rents alongside national policy on housing benefit entitlement. It unfortunately remains the case that young people in employment in our supported housing in many cases stand to see very little financial benefit in earning their own wages. In some cases, young people will actually be financially worse off, and may accrue arrears. Work is ongoing to develop innovative solutions to this situation.

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As a result of the Covid-19 lockdown, the use of technology to interact has been welcomed by young people and is in some cases a preferred form of communication.

In readiness for a possible nationwide school closure, schools were requested to provide details of pupils that they considered to be vulnerable. This list was considered by staff from across Education and Children's Services. All names were cross referenced on Children's Services client database and relevant information noted.

Plans were put in place for all the identified children to have contact over the lockdown period that resulted in school closure, utilising staff from across Education and Children's Services and school staff. An escalation procedure was also agreed should contact with vulnerable children prove problematic.

A pathway was agreed across Education and Children's Services that ensured that open cases were allocated places at school hubs and vulnerable children were appropriately assessed to ensure that places were available to those most in need.

## **This is what we still have to do**

To build on existing and develop links with DWP, Working Denbighshire and other potential employers to create opportunities for work experience for younger homeless people.
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Improve access, skills and confidence of vulnerable citizens who could benefit from digital technology based care and support solutions.
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Implement the Moving with Dignity Programme.
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## **e) Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships**

### **This is what we said we would do**

- We will learn from the experiences of our local carers by making information more accessible and ensure we have 1 Carer Assessor in each Community Resource Team to continue building on the links between Health and Social Care and break down barriers for carers.

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- We will continue to implement and widen delivery of our Supporting Parent project to offer the 'Solihull Understanding Comes Before Change' approach to promote positive parenting to all parents in Denbighshire.
- Increase capacity (in house and third sector) for preventative services to support greater number of carers coming forward for support as a direct result of the Supporting Carers in Denbighshire Project.
- To implement and embed recommendations and actions from the Welsh Government's Measuring the Mountain Initiative.

## This is what we have done and achieved

8% of looked after children returned home from care during the year, which is an increase on previous years.
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The percentage of looked after children on 31st March who have had three or more placements during the year remained at 10%, which is the same as last year.
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During this year we recruited 4 carer assessors who have now become established within each of our Community Resource Teams and they continue to build strong relationships with all staff within these teams.

They are now also an integral part of the regular Peer Forums where the teams together agree strategies for care and support plans and determine need and levels of support.

We continue to have Guest Flats available within the Extra Care Housing Facilities for carer respite. The take up of this facility varies across the year and is regularly promoted to operational teams to encourage its use.

We started to develop a new initiative called STAHS (Stay at Home Service) to reduce the need for hospital admission but this has currently been put on hold because of Covid-19.

Towards the end of 2019-20 we have had to become much more reliant on technology and virtual meetings to engage with Looked After Children and Care Leavers. We have utilised grant funding where appropriate to provide suitable technology solutions. As a result of this approach we have seen positive engagement of foster carers and in many cases improved relationships between birth parents and carers.

We have also introduced a messaging system as a means of peer support.



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Within Denbighshire we reviewed the recommendations coming out of Welsh Government's Measuring the Mountain Initiative and we invited citizens to join our Community Support Services Advisory Panel. 10 citizens showed an interest in forming the Advisory Panel and work continues to engage with them and agree how the Panel should work.

## **This is what we still have to do**

Review the provision of childcare and respite for parents with children with additional and complex needs, and grow that provision within existing childcare settings.
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Development of an improved and expanded Edge of Care Service, focussed on supporting children to remain at home or return home as part of the strategy to safely reduce the number of looked after children.
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Further develop and review services that meet the needs of Denbighshire carers, working with partners and carers to identify / reduce gaps in support.
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## **f) Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs**

### **This is what we said we would do**

- Embed the role of Dementia Social Care Practitioner within each of the 4 Community Resource Teams and look to see how these roles can support the development of dementia friendly communities and organisations in Denbighshire.
- Actively work towards a Dementia Friendly Denbighshire County Council
- Continue to develop Talking Points as 'safe places' based on feedback from the recent Pause and Review.
- Continue to work with both Registered Social Landlords and Private Rented Sector Landlords to identify suitable accommodation for supported housing projects - this would include those young people with complex mental health needs.
- Aim to develop a programme of work, including a DVD presentation developed by young people for use in schools, identifying the issues and challenges of homelessness for the individual, and the impact on the emotional health of the young person.
- Continue to work towards increasing numbers of foster carers in an extremely competitive market.

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## This is what we have done and achieved

50% of all care leavers were in education, training or employment at 12 months after leaving care and this increased to 62% at 24 months after leaving care.

15% of all care leavers have experienced homelessness during the year, which is a similar figure to last year.

## Dementia Friendly Council (DFC) Project

The DFC Project Team, made up of a range of staff across the Local Authority, successfully secured recognition from the Alzheimer's Society in working towards becoming a dementia friendly organisation. We committed to:

- complete our Action Plan for activities and maintain an annual recognition process.
- invite individuals living with dementia, and their carers, to our forum.
- share good practice with all council services.
- link colleagues to appropriate training (e.g. Dementia Friends awareness training).

We have already raised awareness of Dementia throughout the Council, and our activities in the future will continue to educate personnel about this disease. Staff and councillor Dementia awareness / Friends training has been provided. We will continue to host free training from the Alzheimer's Society and will seek to train up Dementia Champions who will then train colleagues within our organisations.

## Dementia Social Care Practitioners

To develop our 4 Community Resource Teams (CRT), we added 2 specialist Dementia Support Workers to each. These workers linked with the Older People Community Mental Health Team, existing mental health workers and the Third Sector to increase the level of professional support for citizens living with dementia and their Carers.

Comments from CRT staff regarding the work of Dementia Support Workers:

- Some of the innovative and creative ideas that are being utilised or discussed have been fab! I love that we are utilising places like Bodfari Woodland Skills and Loggerheads as resources rather relying on formal day care services – it is massive progress for us as a service but so beneficial to the person we are working with!

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- Dementia Support Workers have made a very positive impact – not only to the Team and CRT but most importantly to the citizens they are working with who are living with Dementia.
- They have the time to research new equipment, resources, services that are out there.
- to support our citizens living with Dementia and already have introduced Dementia Dolls, Dogs etc. into our Community Equipment Service which have had great success with some of our citizens.

Providing flexible outreach support in the form of a ‘team around the individual’, the long term outcome is for citizens living with dementia and their carers to be supported by a team that is knowledgeable and has specialist skills in dementia. The result being that citizens living with dementia will maintain their independence and remain at home for longer.

## Supported Housing

Parhawyd i weithio gyda Landlordiaid y Sector Rhentu Preifat a Landlordiaid Cymdeithasol Cofrestredig i nodi cyfleodd i gynyddu'r ddarpariaeth tai â chymorth ar draws y sir.

Work continued with Private Rented Sector Landlords and Registered Social Landlords to identify opportunities to increase the provision of supported housing across the county. During 2019-20 the Regional Transformation Project sought legal advice that will now allow sub-regional accommodation planning for people with Learning Disabilities & complex needs. This will allow us to start working with citizens living out of the area to return back to the local area and planning for those coming out of Children's Services transitioning into Adult Services. Denbighshire have around 10 people on that list and the work will continue in 2020-21.

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## Talking Points Vision – summary of key achievements

### April 2019

Single Point of Access increased booked appointments.

South Locality met to agree on a generic system.

Membership of the Talking Point Steering Group was reviewed.

ICT resolved WiFi issues in Llangollen.

### May 2019

Continued to develop South Talking points.

Engagement by all parties to develop more collaborative working.

Produced a Talking Points newsletter.

### June 2019

Talking Point prescription pads within GP surgeries.

### July 2019

Awareness raised amongst elected members and town councillors.

### August 2019

Communications team raised awareness amongst all council staff.

### September 2019

Successfully increased use of Skype and WebEx to increase accessibility.

### January 2020

Recruitment of volunteers from local communities.

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## Fostering Service

Our Fostering Service collaborated with the National Fostering Framework to enhance fostering across the county and improve support and training offered to foster carers. They continued work to move children into adoptive placements, using guidance and risk assessments provided by the National Adoption Service.

### **This is what we still have to do**

To roll out Ready for Work programme to develop young people's skills for employment.
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Continue to develop work on Assistive Technologies.
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Further improve support for young people at risk of homelessness through the Young People's Positive Pathway.
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## **4. How we do what we do**

### **a) Our workforce and how we support their professional roles**

#### **Workforce Development**

During 2019-20 we had just around 2000 statutory training places available for staff to attend and we had 92% of those places filled. A variety of training took place to upskill the workforce in both Adult Social Services and Education and Children's Services, including:

- Collaborative Conversations training for the whole of Children's Workforce.
- Understanding Mental Health, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Prevent - working with Young Carers.
- Age assessments & Working with Unaccompanied Children – Children's Services and Foster Carers.
- Supported the implementation of the new Local Authority Fostering Services (Wales) Regulations 2018. Denbighshire County Council Workforce Development Team took a lead on regional events to raise awareness.
- Implementation of the National Fostering Framework (NFF) 2019 and the standardisation of Foster Carer training.

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- Supporting new ways of looking at Learning & Development for Foster Carers and promoting the use of informal learning to evidence competence.
- Dementia courses included experiential learning opportunities such as the Virtual Dementia Tour bus.

## **More Than Just Words**

Within our internal Residential Care Homes, we continued to embed More than Just Words – all residents' doors now display a symbol with their chosen language, case files also carry the same symbol so it is easy to identify Welsh Speakers and offer a service in their language of choice.

A presentation was given at a Care Providers Conference and items on More than Just Words and the Active Offer are included in quarterly Provider Newsletters. Iaith Gwaith posters and lanyards are distributed as well as Working Welsh stickers.

All Council internal staff are expected to complete an e-learning module on 'Welsh Language Awareness' and staff new to the Department receive a presentation on More Than Just Words as part of their induction.

A similar presentation is given to Authority based Social Work students. We have also updated the 'placements' form for Social Work students so that they can identify their language skills for the purpose of matching with specific Assessors.

A half day course has been run for 'front line' staff and the Single Point of Access service that aims to give individuals the skills to greet and meet the public in Welsh and make the Active Offer.

The Council is committed to promoting the use of Welsh in the workplace and is in the process of collecting information on the skill level of staff - in accordance with the Welsh Language Standards. The information will help us identify if there are any gaps in provision, as well as identify any training needs.

A short Welsh taster course has been offered to Care workers, as well as a 'Try your Welsh' course tailored for Care staff who have received bilingual education but who need to gain the confidence to use their Welsh.

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4 members of staff have attended a Residential course at Nant Gwrtheyrn. In addition, 'cuppa and chat' sessions are held to give internal staff opportunities to practice their Welsh.

A 'More Than Just Words' course was run for Children and Adults Department Managers to ensure guidance and ownership of 'More Than Just Words' by departments.

Promote the Welsh language at the Community Resource Teams Regional Conference.

Promote specific days for the care sector including St Dwynwen's Day, St David's Day, Sumai Shumai Day and Wales Music Day.

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

Monthly financial outturn reports are presented to the executive forecasting the year-end position. Exceptions or pressures are referenced in the reports, with mitigating actions. The annual budget is set following a lengthy process of reviewing of pressures and savings across all services and engaging with elected members and others as part of that process.

In the medium term, the council has a rolling three-year Medium-term Financial Plan which sets out the council's estimated funding position over the period and, working with services, builds in estimates of required savings or additional funding requirements. This medium term planning process helped to identify and secure, through the council's budget, additional funding in 2020-21. This helped to support growing pressures mainly due to annual care fee inflation and the rising costs of homelessness accommodation in adult social care (£2.6m) and children's services (£1.5m).

Main stream financial internal planning takes place on a monthly basis at Service leadership / management team meetings. There is a focus on performance and financial monitoring areas of the areas under greatest pressure. The Service finance officers also meet regularly with Heads of Service and the Management Executive Team..

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

The council has very robust internal governance arrangements in place to support the effective management of Community Support Services and Education and Children's Services.

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Reports are taken to various Scrutiny Committees throughout the year to enable Elected Members to scrutinise policy and performance in relation to social services, including reports to monitor the progress of any actions required in response to the Director's annual report or the Care Inspectorate Wales's annual report.

We also have a very well established service performance challenge process, where each head of service is challenged annually on areas such as service performance and leadership. The panel for each service challenge meeting includes the Chief Executive; Corporate Directors; Lead Members; Scrutiny Members and our external regulators (the Wales Audit Office and the Care Inspectorate Wales).

In addition to the service challenge process, the council also has a very robust performance management framework, which includes regular performance reports being presented to the Senior Leadership Team (SLT); Scrutiny; and Cabinet, and various reports being presented to scrutiny periodically on service specific issues, such as Compliments and Complaints.

Effective partnership working is the success of our community-based Talking Points, where we work closely with organisations such as Alzheimer's Society, Citizens Advice Denbighshire, Prime Cymru, Natwest Banking and Working Denbighshire.

A range of services are commissioned and delivered by a range of independent sector and voluntary or Third sector organisations such as North East Wales Carers Information Service, Age Connects and British Red Cross.

Providing an integrated and collaborative approach to health and social care is not only a statutory requirement of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (Wales) 2014, but a corporate priority. During 2019-20 we have seen our partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Conwy Borough Council as well as 3rd Sector and Independent Sector partners move the integrated Community Resource Teams (CRTs) forward to ensure we are providing seamless services to our citizens.

Early action between Education and Children's Services and schools has been implemented to identify 'vulnerable' learners' who may not be open to statutory services. Plans are then made for a schedule of contact for all the vulnerable learners identified and agreed across the service. There is then an agreed pathway for open cases to ensure allocation at school hubs for the most vulnerable children / young people.



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## Accessing further information and key documents

### Glossary of terms

#### Collaborative Conversations

Child protection practice often brings social workers and other staff into conflict with families. Collaborative conversations start by identifying strengths and what matters most to families. The approach is careful to avoid focussing on deficits or criticising. It aims to avoid families losing their sense of control and becoming defensive.

#### Community Resource Teams (CRTs)

Offer a more holistic approach to community based health and social care with health staff (including community nurses, physiotherapists, occupational therapists and older person's mental health teams) and social services staff (including social workers, occupational therapists and social care practitioners) all based together. There are nine joint teams in Denbighshire and Conwy focusing on working closer together to provide care closer to home, offering better provision for the population and an increased focus and investment on prevention and early intervention. See details in [County Voice](#).

#### Edge of Care

This is support for vulnerable families whose children are on the at risk of becoming looked after by the local authority. Details available on [Welsh Government](#) website.

#### Extra Care Housing

Gives a balance between living at home and having on-site, dedicated care available if needed. Tenants live in a self-contained property, not in a residential home, and have their own front door. This helps people keep their independence. Details are available on [DCC website](#).

#### Housing First

Housing First is a philosophy that values flexibility, individualized supports, client choice, and autonomy. It is not about housing alone. Supportive services are part of the Housing First model. That might include formal support services, like a doctor, therapist, or social worker.

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## Iaith Gwaith

Helps Welsh speakers and learners promote use of the Welsh language in work situations and share resources. Information available on the [Business Wales](#) website.

## Integrated Care Fund (ICF)

Provides integrated support for a wide range of citizens with care and support needs including those with a learning disability, autism and other neurodiversities, children with complex needs, carers and more recently children in care or at risk of coming into care. Across all the regions of Wales, the ICF funds projects and services that are delivering seamless health and social care to people, focusing on prevention and early intervention and helping people to live their lives their own way

## Moving with Dignity

Since 2019, an Occupational Therapist has been working on this project within the Review Team, moving forward with practical plans to implement changes to the way Denbighshire residents are assessed for and receive moving and handling support. She has been tasked with scoping the issue, researching best practice, and identifying ways of providing effective training and reaching the right staffing groups (including local authority, health colleagues and provider services). This potentially has the benefit of speeding up the hospital discharge process and it could have a positive impact on the well-being and sense of control of citizens and their carers, increasing resilience and engagement.

## Regional Transformation Project

North Wales is experiencing unprecedented demand on its health and social care services. The numbers of children being looked after is rising, more people are going into hospital and using our domiciliary care services, the mental health of people in the region is worsening, and people with a learning disability are living longer and with more complex physical and psychological needs. There are serious concerns about the levels of demand and whether the current system can be sustained in a time of shrinking resources and severe budget cuts. Welsh Government has provided short-term funding to Local Authorities and the Health Board to work with a range of partners to transform the way that health and social care support is delivered. Details available on [North Wales Social Care & Well-being Improvement Collaborative website](#).

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## Single Point of Access (SPoA)

The team consists of experienced staff from health, social care, and the third Sector, who are able to provide information, advice and assistance about the services available. SPoA acts as the 'front door to services' to ensure you receive the right care, in the right place by people who have the right skills at the right time, first time. Details available of [DCC](#) website.

## Social Services and Well-being Act (SSWBA) 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act (RISCA) 2016

The SSWBA provides the legal framework for improving the well-being of people who need care and support, and carers who need support, and for transforming social services in Wales. More information available on the [Social Care Wales](#) website. The RISCA strengthens protection for those who need it, establishes a regulatory system that is in-line with the SSWBA and creates a regulatory system that is centred around people who need care and support, and the social care workforce. The Act provides the statutory framework for the regulation and inspection of social care in Wales. More information available on the [Social Care Wales](#) website.

## Solihull 'Understanding Your Child' course

The Solihull approach is a UK programme that aims to increase emotional health and well-being through both practitioners and parents. It does this through resources and training across the child and family workforce. The majority of health visitors in the UK are now trained in this model. Many child and family practitioners from midwives to social workers have been trained in the model. Whole schools have been trained. Some police, firefighters and adult mental health professionals have been trained. More details available on [DCC](#) website.

## Support Budgets (also known as Direct Payments)

Are paid specifically to buy services or equipment to meet individual's eligible need for care and support, or a carer's need for support. This means they don't affect benefit entitlement or income tax. They are intended to improve choice, control and independence for people. Individuals can work with the local authority to decide how their care and support needs will be met using these payments. They can decide who provides that support and control how, where and when it is delivered.

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## Talking Points

Held in local libraries across the county where you can have a face to face conversation about what matters and is important to you. People from a range of local organisations will be on hand to offer information, advice or assistance, and you can find out what help is available to support your health and well-being locally.

## Team around the Individual approach

Multi-agency working across Health & Social Care to ensure that the right professional skills are available to meet the relevant needs of the individual in a timely manner.

## The Stages of Change and Health Beliefs Model

Studies of behaviour change have shown that modifying behaviour typically requires an individual to move through a series of stages of preparedness to change. At the start, an individual is unaware of the consequences of their behaviour and resistant to change. Eventually an individual has sustained the new behaviour for more than six months and shows perseverance in maintaining the change. The model suggest messages will achieve positive behaviour change if they successfully target perceived barriers, benefits and threats.

## The Denbighshire Learning Partnership

A partnership between the Local Authority, Third Sector and Health with a focus on Mental Health & Wellbeing. Aimed at making self-help and development accessible for people with mental health issues.

## Welsh Government's Measuring the Mountain (MTM) Initiative

The purpose is to engage with people in Wales to produce an authentic, experience-based assessment of social care provision. More information is available on the [MTM website](#).

## Work Start Scheme

The scheme is part of the wider Working Denbighshire approach to developing and building resilient communities in Denbighshire with a sharpened focus on tackling poverty through employability. It aims to support the development of a skilled workforce and contribute to the Council's corporate priority - younger people want to live and work here, and have the skills to do so. It does this by providing paid and unpaid work experience opportunities and is open to everyone over the age 16 living in Denbighshire who is in poverty, or at risk of being in poverty.