



Director of Social Services Annual Report 2021 - 2022



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1. Introduction

Denbighshire County Council's Director of Social Services Annual Report demonstrates how we have promoted well-being and accounted for the delivery of well-being standards under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

Since the onset of the Covid-19 pandemic we have seen the demand for social care increase, not only in the numbers of citizens requiring support, but also the complexity of need has become greater. Many more of our citizens have experienced significant social isolation and loneliness during the last 2 years, which has had a detrimental effect on their health. This is at a time when the whole social care sector is experiencing unprecedented recruitment and retention issues.

Wherever possible we have continued with our aims and ambitions to innovate, improve, transform and modernise our services. However, this has been quite limited as we have had to deploy our resources to ensure we deliver our statutory duties and responsibilities in both Children's and Adults' Social Services.

This report will provide an evaluation of Denbighshire County Council's performance in delivering social services functions over the last year. We will explain how we have achieved the Welsh Government's 6 quality standards for well-being outcomes:

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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2. Director's Summary of Performance

During the last 12 months we have seen the challenges presented to us with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic continue. Our Social Services teams and the wider social care workforce across Denbighshire have been stretched to the limit to maintain the delivery of our statutory services, as well as building on the innovative ways of working that were required to help us meet the needs of our most vulnerable citizens.

Against the backdrop of the waves of Covid-19 outbreaks, we have also seen very challenging recruitment and retention issues within all areas of our social care workforce, both internally and across our independent provider network. This has meant that in many of our services we have had to redeploy services to meet our statutory obligations and to ensure that we have kept both adults and children safe.

The demand for domiciliary care continues to increase and Denbighshire is experiencing the same challenges in being able to meet those demands as most other local authorities across Wales. Working with Community Catalysts we are developing micro-enterprises to deliver care within the local community. Interest is growing and this is something we will continue to support to address the shortage of provision for care and support, particularly in the south of Denbighshire.

We have continued to build on the innovation and best practice implemented during 2020 – 2021. For example, in Adult Social Care we have rolled out the volunteering activity that was key to addressing social isolation and loneliness during the Covid-19 lockdowns, making it a key element of support for those citizens on the edge of formal care.

In our Children's Services we saw the establishment of the Local Integrated Family Team (LIFT), offering targeted early support for families experiencing difficulties with managing challenging and unusual behaviour.

In early 2022 we saw the opening of Awel y Dyffryn, our new Extra Care Housing facility, which has been developed in partnership with Grŵp Cynefin, providing 66 units of accommodation for older people and 4 independent units for adults with complex disabilities, as well as a four-person shared bungalow.

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In the coming 12 months we will focus on a range of activity to meet the ever increasing demand for services and complexity of need amongst our most vulnerable citizens.

This will include the Corporate approach to addressing our recruitment and retention issues, whilst also working collaboratively both regionally with our local authority partners and nationally with the Welsh Government.

We will continue to work with the independent sector to ensure that all social care staff are earning at least the Real Living Wage and continue to raise the profile of the social care sector.

Recognising the incredible work unpaid carers do to provide care and support, we will continue to develop our provision for carers and reach out to engage with unpaid carers across Denbighshire.

Whilst it was disappointing that we met significant challenges in beginning construction on Bwthyn Y Ddol, the Multi-Disciplinary Team are now in place and we will continue to forge ahead with the project in partnership with Conwy Borough County Council and BCUHB.

We will continue to build on our early intervention work across both adult and children services to provide information, advice and assistance to prevent, wherever possible, individuals and families having to access statutory services.

As always, whilst this is my Annual Report, I have to acknowledge the hard work, care and dedication of all our staff who continue to go above and beyond on a daily basis – I am truly honoured to be part of the Denbighshire Social Care Team.



Nicola Stubbins

Corporate Director for Communities and Statutory Director for Social Services

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3. How people help us to shape our services

As the opportunity to engage with our citizens started to open up during 2021-2022 we still had to do this in innovative ways to ensure that, wherever possible, we could involve our citizens in shaping and co-producing our services, whilst maintaining safe practice and following Covid-19 guidelines.

Children's Services

Mind of my Own app – Children's Services continue to embed Mind of My Own in order to give children and young people an enhanced voice within their care and support plans / assessments. The focus for the coming year is for enhanced use of this app for those children and young people who are subject to child protection registration, acknowledging that the app is more widely used with Children Looked After and within Early Intervention services.

Consultation with Children Looked After – Children's Services have, in conjunction with care experienced children and young people, commenced a review of language used by professionals when discussing, verbally or in writing, the lives and circumstances of care experienced children and young people. This is in response to requests by Voices from Care, Young Commissioners and the Family Justice Young People's Board who have highlighted the language used by professionals and its impact on children and young people.

Denbighshire are committed to working with our care experienced children and young people to alter the language used and to reflect their wishes wherever possible. Some examples given are changing 'contact' for 'family time', 'placement' to 'home' and LAC (Looked After Children) to CLA (Children Looked After).



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Have your Say Surveys - To gain views of children, young people and parents on the impact Education & Children Services has had on their lives and how useful the service they've received is / has been, a range of Have your Say Feedback surveys have been designed. The results assist in improving the service as well as recognising what has worked well. Accompanying the surveys is a guidance sheet explaining the method and process of each survey and all forms are saved on the child's file.

End of Placements - These are completed by social workers, foster carers, parents and children / young people at the end of a placement (regardless of the cause of the placement coming to an end). These reports provide important information about user and staff experiences of the placement and services they've received and thus provide an important source of information for identifying potential quality improvements.

Looked After Consultation Documents - In preparation for children and young people's Looked After Care (LAC) Reviews consultation forms have been devised for them to complete, as well as parents / carers. They are outcome focussed and tie in with the Social Services and Health & Well-being Acts and National Outcomes.

Young Person's Child Protection Pre-Conference Form - To capture voices of children and young people at Child Protection Conferences, staff are asked to encourage the young people they work with to complete the consultation forms in advance, particularly if they do not want to attend the conference. The consultation documents are available in both Welsh and English.

Capturing the young people's views enables conference members to hear things from the young person's perspective. Sometimes when discussing concerns, the voice of the young person can be missing.

Child Protection Conference Feedback Forms - To gain attendees views on the Child Protection Conference process professionals, parents / carers and young people are asked to complete a feedback form. Before Covid-19, the forms were made available on the day of conferences or accessed via a link to the Children, Young People and Families section of Denbighshire County Council website or the Consultation page. However, an e-mail and electronic link to the surveys are now sent to professionals and parents.

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Engaging with children / young people to shape future contracts

As part of the service specification evaluation process for the following 2 contracts, children and young people have been asked for their views:

- Care Leaver Service (new provider, Barnardo's)
- Regional Advocacy Service (current provider TGP – Tros Gynnal Plant)

Adults at risk

We ensure that those citizens who are deemed as Adults at Risk of abuse and neglect are at the centre of the solution and our approach is person centred. We achieve this by gaining their views and the outcomes that matter to them. This is achieved by contacting them directly or via their advocate where appropriate.

Carers

The views of unpaid carers have been gathered through an Adult Carer Survey via the County Conversation Engagement portal. This is used to influence our strategic approach and commissioning decisions. When monitoring the effectiveness and quality of our social care contracts, we take into account the carer's perspective and commissioned providers carry out their own surveys.

There is established communication and information sharing between the Denbighshire Carer Strategy Group and those member organisations who run their own community groups / fora for families and carers. This includes, The Carers Trust Crossroads Care, Taith Ni, NEWCIS, Prestatyn Carer Group and Adferiad (Hafal) family and carer support. Unpaid carers are supported to have a voice and influence service developments and improvements through the formal communication routes including the local strategy group via North Wales Carers Operational Group (NWCOCG) and the Regional Partnership Board.

Working alongside the Engagement Task and Finish Group convened by the Transformation team, Grant Thornton designed and delivered a range of engagement activities including a session to discuss improved support for unpaid carers. The feedback from local carers was used to inform their report. All citizen engagement activities undertaken between June and August 2021 was recorded by Grant Thornton as part of their wider Whole System Analysis work for Health and Social Care partners in Conwy and Denbighshire.

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The purpose of the report is to provide a summary of each engagement activity and to draw out the key insights and learning points

Denbighshire County Council is also working with Public Health Wales and NEWCIS to improve metrics and data gathering.

Older people

Older people and their families / friends have contributed to engagement exercises helping us to shape health and social care services, particularly in the Denbigh and Corwen areas. As a result of two engagement exercises in the Corwen area, we have developed our plans for older people's housing provision to include access to outdoor space and convenient access / parking for mobility scooters. We are also working with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) to ensure that access to health care will be made easier for citizens in the future.

The Aging Well group in Denbighshire meets regularly and updates an action plan helping to create an Age friendly Denbighshire and to meet the aims specified by the Older Person's Commissioner.

People living with dementia have helped us with the development of plans, evaluation of tenders and the recruitment of staff to help to support other people living with dementia.

Advocates have been able to give citizens a voice where needed and advocacy services are being further developed in response to feedback.



People living with sensory loss have helped us to design a collaborative service which meets the needs of people with different forms of sensory loss. This service started in October 2021 and has already helped to reach large numbers of citizens.

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People with learning disabilities

The team applied for an Integrated Care Fund third sector grant alongside Outside Lives and Flintshire Do-It. The purpose was to co-produce groups with citizens. The project has led to activities such as wellness walks being developed. The Denbighshire Self-Advocacy group will also be co-producing a conference with the assistance of Outside Lives and Do- It.

The Denbighshire Self-Advocacy group have had a number of sessions discussing how we can work better together to meet the outcomes and areas of interest of people with learning disabilities in Denbighshire. One meeting discussed transport and the Self-Advocacy group met with service representatives and local authority staff from the transport department to discuss ways of making transport more accessible for people with learning disabilities.

Ffrindiau Meifod is a group of family members who are actively involved in the steering group for the relaunch of Meifod and redesign of services. Meifod Wood Products is a Denbighshire County Council business that provides a real life working environment for the personal and social development of people supported by the Learning Disability Service.



Care providers

We have worked with care providers to develop and improve services throughout the year. We used many channels, such as regular virtual provider meetings and weekly telephone welfare calls from the contracts and commissioning team, alongside more formal contract monitoring and reviewing. We have also worked with providers to develop a number of recruitment to care pilot schemes using the Welsh Government Social Care Recovery Fund.

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Initiatives included:

- Financial support towards driving lessons for new applicants
- Funding to purchase bikes for non-driving applicants
- A variety of different 'golden hello' and employee referral schemes
- Boosted advertising on social media
- Online application platform

We continue to work with local providers to develop more innovative and creative respite opportunities to meet needs.

Complaints and Compliments

Our Customer Connections Team manage and monitor compliments and complaints that are received for both Adult Social Services and Children's Services. During 2021 - 22 about a third more complaints were received compared to the previous year. Several complaints were received around Christmas relating to services for children with complex disabilities. Although most of these were not upheld, our learning from this included improving communication across services and with families.

There were no interventions from the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales in 2021 – 22.

A total of 136 compliments were received across Adult's and Children's Social Services during 2021 – 22. This is a significant drop from the previous 2 years.

Examples include:

- "The whole team at Denbighshire Telecare are invaluable, my neighbour has fallen many times and the system is great, the Monitoring Centre has helped her many times so thank you to all...."
- "My wife has mobility issues so we sought help from Denbighshire SPOA, and H was the lady assigned to us. It was such a pleasure dealing with H, a genuine lovely person. She had a way of making my wife (feel) at ease. We really can't thank her enough. She really is a ray of sunshine in a dark world. Please pass on our thanks and gratitude and tell her she is welcome round for a cup of tea anytime. Difficult times are made so much easier with people like H."

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- “I want to say a big thank you for going above and beyond for this young person and her son. You have ensured that agencies have worked collaboratively to ensure the little boy (and mum) have been safeguarded as much as possible and enabled everyone to keep up with good communication. You have been honest with mum and because of this she has built a positive, trusting relationship with yourself (in such a short space of time) and this is because of your approach. In turn, she has been open and honest and wants to engage in all support you have offered, which again is credit to you and your approach. You have contacted me during the evenings at times to ensure you have all information prior to your visits. You have been brilliant to work in partnership with.”
- “No one in this world who has ever met you could ever forget you, you’re a Star who leaves a life long impression on everyone you meet. Thank you for believing in me and pushing me.”

Complaints received in 2021-2022	Education and Children’s Services	Community Support Services	Total complaints in category
Stage 1 complaints	19	7	26
- outcome ‘upheld’	2	2	4
- outcome ‘partially upheld’	6	1	7
- outcome ‘not upheld’	11	4	15
Stage 2 complaints	4	4	8
- outcome ‘upheld’	1	0	1
- outcome ‘partially upheld’	1	0	1
- outcome ‘not upheld’	2	4	6

34 total complaints were broken down into 4 areas

- Service Issues 19
- Communication issues 12
- Staff Complaint 1
- Courtesy and Respect 2

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There were 4 complaints made verbally to Community Support Services and 6 to Children's Services; as they were dealt with in less than 24 hours they are recorded as 'concerns', not complaints, under the statutory guidance.

Learning from complaints

A complaint against Community Support Services was partly upheld and improvements were implemented to Red Flag procedures relating to falls, with procedures reiterated to staff within our Extra Care Housing facilities.

Additional Check calls to be made following anyone having a fall. Head injuries will have no longer than half an hour between these calls, or the staff member is to stay with the tenant until emergency services attend.

A partly upheld complaint against Children's Services Highlighted that the service did not always have the correct details for parents on file.

A directive went out to staff to ensure that recording is accurate and able to fully reflect all conversations and to offer a range of appropriate services such as Pause and Reflect to 'out of area' or 'out of reach' parents particularly.



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4. Promoting and improving the well-being of those we help

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

This is what we said we would do

- Further develop care and support to allow people to remain in their own homes
- Promote use of direct payments and support budgets to improve adults and children's choice and control over planning and delivery of their care and support
- Embed use of pre-paid cards to increase efficiency

This is what we have done and achieved

2060 adults had a care and support plan in place during this year. This is a very small increase from 2020-21.
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76.6% of assessments for children were completed within statutory timescales. This is an 5% improvement from 2020-21.

Young carers - Denbighshire's Young Carers Service is jointly funded through Children's Services and the Welsh Government Families First Programme. The Contract was commissioned via a sub-regional commissioning process with Wrexham and Conwy Borough Councils - the service, WCD Young Carers is provided through Credu Cymru. WCD Young Carers support young carers to achieve their best outcomes through:

- One to one support,
- Young carers assessment of need,
- associated plans and reviews,
- groups and activities,
- respite,
- information advice and assistance,
- support to access grants,
- school drop-in service,
- supporting participation of young carers in developing the service and having their voices heard,
- the identification of hidden young carers, and
- working in a positive partnership with Denbighshire County Council.

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The Welsh Government funded Young Carers Identification (YC ID) Card was launched in March 2021 across North Wales, after a year spent bringing this piece of work together regionally. The launch was via video link due to Covid-19. Denbighshire, other local authority colleagues and partners worked with Wrexham Football Club for the launch. This was an evening event showcasing young carers and their stories, with commissioners, council representatives and elected members, further enhanced by celebrity soundbites. It was an excellent introduction to highlight the launch of the YC ID Card, with which young carers can be identified within schools, pharmacies, and local shops - access to supermarkets for young people proved problematic during the early stages of the pandemic. Young Carer Friendly and Young Carer ID awareness sessions have been taking place with schools, internal Denbighshire departments, partners and wider organisations. Denbighshire also continues to contribute to a full regional partnership to improve the YC ID Card offer for all young carers in North Wales. This has commenced with the offer of free swimming lessons, which is now being finalised to ensure an equitable offer across the region.

Ynys Mon and Gwynedd have already developed a Young Carers App which is being trialled. During the year Denbighshire has been working with local authority and Health colleagues across Wrexham, Conwy and Flintshire, together with our commissioned services, to develop a Young Carers App too. It will complement the already established YC ID Card and wristband which will provide choice for our young carers.

In addition to the YC ID Card, Children's Services, Education, Community Support, Communities and Customer Services, Working Denbighshire and Health, together with our commissioned services and partners, link up internally, locally and regionally to support the best outcomes for young carers and their families.

Examples of these include:

- Accessing grants such as Hardship Fund, Carers Respite Grant, Winter of Well-being, for additional delivery directly to young carers and their families, and to provide additional funding to widen the offer through WCD Young Carers
- Identifying and supplying IT equipment for home use during the pandemic
- Support for unpaid carers through respite and short breaks – Denbighshire has two properties which are available to young carers and their families.

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- Ongoing meetings between Denbighshire as joint commissioners, and the provider to ensure needs led support to young carers during the pandemic.
- Membership of WCD on internal groups e.g. Denbighshire Carers Strategy Group, and the Education and Well-being Group where WCD work as part of this group to aid wider awareness across all schools, Young carers in secondary school are supported to apply for part time jobs alongside their education, highlighting links to Bangor University Widening Access Department which promotes the support available to young carers and young adult carers from the University.
- Denbighshire is a member of the North Wales Young Carers Operational Group (NWYCOG) which meets quarterly to work in collaboration to deliver services for carers of all ages which meet the offer for carers, and identify opportunities to work better together.

Denbighshire has developed a Carer's Charter, co-produced with the Carer's Strategy group and local carers including young carers. The focus is on identifying carers at a much earlier point so we can avoid crisis intervention wherever possible.

The Single Point of Access (SPoA) for adults and the Children's Gateway play a key role in identifying carers and initiating the 'what matters conversation', then making a referral to NEWCIS, who are commissioned to provide the carer assessment service. Within adult services there is a Carer Assessor established within each of the four Community Resource Teams (CRTs) across Denbighshire.

The Healthy Carers worker is employed as a health practitioner for unpaid carers. The aim is to empower citizens to improve and / or maintain their health and well-being, including social inclusion. Advice and guidance is provided on issues such as manual handling, back care and accessing other professionals. Increasingly the worker is dealing with crisis referrals, where packages of care fail, are unavailable or much needed support is resisted, because of fear, negative and intrusive thought patterns and the wider impact of constant stress.

Before the pandemic, carers were stretched to the limit, often on call 24/7 and with minimal respite. During and post-lockdown, face to face contact with family and the wider world was significantly reduced. This led to a sense of being trapped, abandoned or under siege for many carers and their resilience was at an all-time low.

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Many of the carers now referred require immediate support with their mental health, either because of sheer fatigue, trauma or grief (either loss of a loved one or disappointment and dashed life expectations). Until these deeper issues have been addressed, we have seen that carers can be limit their engagement to a range of support offered, make healthy life choices or expose themselves to anything outside of their comfort zone.

Through trust building, reducing challenges down to small, manageable tasks and often a fair bit of mediation between the carer and others from their resource wheel, work is undertaken to enable them to gain resilience and control over the factors influencing their daily lives. Then, signposting begins and the support network can widen.

A range of front line staff including Community Navigators, Talking Points and other staff / volunteers who act as a point of contact, proactively help to identify both carers new to a caring role and those who have been caring for longer but are unknown to statutory services and will signpost to community based support.

The operational teams are also working with carers and supporting them in different ways to express their views and preferences, for example; using photographs to encourage conversations about respite opportunities and how they would like to be supported, this was introduced following workshops delivered by Bangor / Swansea Universities.

Working with Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council to distribute the Welsh Government Respite Grant has worked extremely well. A grant panel has been established and awards made to a wide range of organisations supporting carers of all ages including:

- Outside Lives Ltd,
- Prestatyn and Meliden Community Action Group,
- Adferiad,
- Universal Foundation CIC,
- The Denbigh Workshop
- Campfire Cymru,
- Gorfal Dydd Y Waen,
- Neurotherapy Centre
- Voel Coaches

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We have employed 2 Independent Living Advisers (ILA) to support citizens to make fuller use of direct payments. A direct payment gives the individual and their families greater choice and control over how their care and support needs are met. ILAs are working with Insurance Companies, Payroll providers and DBS check providers to support new direct payment recipients with recruitment and employment of Personal Assistants.

Work is ongoing to promote the uptake of direct payments and of pre-paid cards that unpaid carers can use for short-breaks or respite. In addition, we are supporting local providers to develop more innovative and creative respite opportunities to meet needs. The ILAs attend peer forums in North locality to promote and support the use of direct payments in meeting citizen's outcomes.

We are working with Community Catalysts to ensure that people are able to access the kind of care and support that suits them best and allows citizens to provide care and support in a way that fits with their lifestyle.

In managing safeguarding risks relating to abuse and neglect, we work with the citizen or their advocate to developing strategies to achieve their personal outcomes, either during the enquiry stage or via a strategy meeting. These are stages within the Wales Safeguarding Procedures which we monitor through our quarterly quality audits process.

Work is ongoing to finalise nineteen supported living placements for people with learning disabilities with various levels of need.

For example:

- Twin brothers were supported to move to a flat in Prestatyn. They were given a direct payment and chose their own provider.
- A four-person bungalow was developed as part of the Awel Y Dyffryn, Extra Care facility that recently opened in Denbigh for 24hr supported living using a traditional supported living model. Upstairs from that project are 4 semi-independent flats for those that need less than 24 hr supported living but require on-site support.
- Two individuals were supported to set up a home in Llangollen.
- Four independent flats are being developed in Meliden and the individuals nominated are co-producing their own support.

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- We are in the process of developing a jointly commissioned project for people with complex challenging behaviour. This accommodation will prevent up to four young people from having to go out of area to live and will be a locally delivered supported living model rather than residential care.

A co-production toolkit with three stages has been developed. Initially, the individual develops a person centred profile. Once profiles are completed for all participants they are gathered and the required number of support hours will be identified. The individuals will then be brought together in a group to discuss the common elements of that support and they will be taken through the procurement options and support models that could be potentially used. They will then be supported to commission that support themselves, using their chosen model and methods.

The integrated care and support plan has been adjusted to ensure that all citizens are offered a copy of their care and support plan. All requests for formal care and support are subject to peer forum discussions to support improving quality learning and to promote outcome focussed care and support planning.

The Global Resettlement Team supported “Book of You” sessions in partnership with the Community Cohesion Team. Individuals were able to share their culture and heritage, and hopes and aspirations for the future.

Whilst reviewing the support delivered to refugees, refugee representatives were consulted and their views incorporated into the final review. A video was created in partnership with Community Cohesion, this captured the views of the resettled families and has been presented to Denbighshire’s Corporate Executive Team and Cabinet members.

This is what we still have to do

To embed the work of the Independent Living Advisers across both adults and children’s services to support individuals and their families to have their care and support delivered through a direct payment and further develop use of Pre-paid Cards to increase efficiency
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To continue to develop our provision for carers and reach out to engage with unpaid carers across Denbighshire
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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

- Review opportunities for alternative services, share information from Micro-Enterprises and Community Catalyst Project with carers and carers organisations
- To review our information, advice and assistance offer in aiming to increase independence and resilience in hard to reach groups

This is what we have done and achieved

The rate of delayed transfers of care for social care reasons was 3.02 per 1,000 of the population aged 75 or over. This is a significant increase from 0.86 in 2020 - 21.

The average age of adults entering residential care homes in 2021 - 22 was 84. This is comparable to last year.

Local Integrated Family Team (LIFT)

2021 saw the establishment, via Children and Young People's Transformation Programme funding of LIFT, which offers targeted early support for families experiencing difficulties with managing challenging and unusual behaviour.

The team, which includes Well-being Navigators, Occupational Therapists, Behavioural Support Specialists and a Psychologist, works with families to understand the challenging behaviour and act as a source of information and support to help develop and implement positive behavioural plans and to provide specialist consultation when required.

The multi-agency team consisting of multi-disciplinary professionals have developed a specific model of care and a partnership approach to support families in Denbighshire and Conwy. They are now operational and working directly with children and young people and their families.

The programme has also up skilled 78 Local Authority and health staff in therapies that the team will be using, this has encouraged a common approach and shared language, providing consistency across partner agencies and teams.

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Feedback from external evaluator regarding LIFT:

“Strong partnership approach at senior level was a key driver in getting the new services up and running”.

“partner agency staff were impressed at how quickly the LIFT team came back to them in response to referrals and requests for advice and guidance.... opportunities for consultations and joint working which they felt was contributing to learning and development for the children’s workforce”

“Families have engaged well”

Feedback from parents:

“Life is so much better at home now since [staff members] made that video for us”

“M is so much more in touch with his feelings as I am since LIFT has been helping us, his behaviour has also improved”

“It has been lovely to have been listened to and not judged”

Bwthyn Y Ddol

The Bwthyn Y Ddol multi-disciplinary team continues to work with children and young people who are at the edge of care and are at risk of becoming looked after as their parent or carer, for a variety of reasons, is unable to manage a healthy family dynamic.

The team will initially focus on completing a holistic formulation of strengths and difficulties, risks and needs through a consultation process, in order to recommend a program of interventions.

The model of care has been developed through a multi-agency team with a focus on what the requirement and specific needs of the children and young people within Denbighshire and Conwy. This innovative approach to an evidence based model of care, along with the reflective practice adopted by the team, has already seen very positive results with children/ young people successfully completing the intervention and safely remaining at home with family.

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Putting the child or young person at the centre of the clinical formulation and taking a whole family approach has seen multi-agency collaborative discussions routinely taking place which has promoted partnership work across all agencies.

Funding has been secured for a regional assessment centre to support the work of the Bwthyn Y Ddol multi-disciplinary team. This state of the art centre will contain three separate buildings which will comprise of the pre-planned assessment accommodation for four children or young people, short term, unplanned, accommodation for two children or young people and an assessment and intervention centre. The completion of the centre has been delayed however funding remains in place and it is envisaged that the development will be completed in early 2023.



The Single Point of Access (SPOA) team have forged closer links with the Homelessness Prevention Team (HPT) by co-locating the HPT Triage Officers in SPoA. This has improved the access to preventative options, information advice and assistance to those at risk of losing their tenancy or becoming homeless. For example: -

A referral was received from a community navigator for an elderly lady at risk of losing her property. The situation was very complicated and it was necessary to involve Shelter Cymru. The lady is now working with a housing support worker and has re-applied for the housing register, and will hopefully either be able to remain in her property, or find alternative suitable accommodation before emergency accommodation needs to be considered.

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SPOA received a referral for a gentleman who is currently staying on a friend's sofa in Rhyl. Working alongside the Sensory Support Team we made contact with the citizen, who lives with autism and is hypersensitive to audio, so has difficulty with receiving phone calls. We were able to provide the relevant advice over email. This included access to housing advice and support from the National Autistic Society in Wales.

Denbighshire has taken up places in an 8 - week mindfulness based stress reduction course being run by Bangor University and funded by the Regional Learning Disability Transformation team. The programme aims to deliver mindfulness approaches specifically to people with learning disabilities, their carers and family members.

A number of Denbighshire citizens are involved with a regional peer health check project being delivered through Conwy Connect. The project aims to increase awareness and the take up of health checks and screening for people with learning disabilities across the region. The sessions are designed and delivered by people with learning disabilities, known as [Health Check Champions](#), with peer trainers being employed to deliver training.

More people have taken on a caring role during the pandemic. Our Keeping in Touch calls identified hidden carers who were not receiving support from any services and were at high risk of isolation and / or carer breakdown. Our Healthy Carers Worker is continuing to improve or maintain carer health and well-being. She is able to advise and guide on issues such as manual handling, back care and accessing professional support to address other health issues. As well as dealing with crisis referrals where packages of care fail, are unavailable or where support is resisted.

Unpaid carers are identified within the Integrated care and support plan and the care plan for a citizen will now reflect details of the care and support provided by carers to meet the agreed outcomes for the citizen.

Carer assessments have continued throughout the pandemic, including 'What Matters' conversations with carers, to discuss a range of options to boost their resilience and that of those around them. Trained carer assessors are available to support carers to achieve the outcomes that they have identified themselves, in line with the authority's asset-based approach - this encourages the use of family and community wherever possible.

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All carers across Denbighshire have access to the information, advice and well-being service provided by NEWCIS, including the offer of a carer's emergency card. Carers are encouraged to develop contingency plans for when they can no longer cope, or when the health of the person they are caring for deteriorates.

Learning from Covid-19, some carers have benefitted significantly from accessing online support services, but we also need to be mindful of and address people experiencing digital exclusion. Face to face support is slowly resuming but providers remain cautious and are offering a blended approach. Carer assessments continue in the main to be undertaken remotely, however garden visits and outdoor events were conducted where possible last summer, when the weather permitted.

Commissioners work closely with Third Sector partners to reach hidden carers and to ensure support is in place, in particular to identify carers from seldom heard groups and to develop services to respond to specific needs.

Denbighshire County Council has a joint contract with Conwy for independent professional advocacy for adult carers, which is being reviewed during the next 12 months. North Wales Advice and Advocacy Association (NWAAA) is commissioned to provide support for families caring for people with a learning disability Other commissioned services provide low level advocacy.

Weekly complex case meetings are held across our Community Resource Teams, which provide a Multi-Disciplinary Team approach to meetings citizen's outcomes. Representatives from district nursing, pharmacy mental health, social care therapies and Reablement, take part in the weekly meetings and ensure that there is a timely, seamless and coordinated response to citizens with complex support needs.

We continue to support the development of Community Catalyst / Micro - Employers in Denbighshire to benefit unpaid carers and also to provide information to unpaid carers who may be interested in starting a micro enterprise.

Denbighshire County Council's Global Resettlement Team commission a refugee support and resettlement service with the British Red Cross. To date 25 families comprising of 107 individuals have been supported to resettle in Denbighshire.

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This is what we still have to do

To develop further care and support capacity across Denbighshire by continuing to support the Community Catalyst project to develop micro-enterprises.
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To continue to work in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and Conwy County Borough Council to develop and implement Bwthyn y Ddol

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

This is what we said we would do

- Continue to embed the revised All Wales Safeguarding Procedures into all aspects of Children's Services
- Ensure effective implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards

This is what we have done and achieved

100% of all adult protection enquiries were completed within statutory timescales. This is comparable with last year.

Of those children who were placed on the child protection register during the collection year, the number that has been previously registered under any category, at any time during the previous twelve months was 3, and they were from one family group.

The total number of days on the child protection register for children who were removed from the register during the year = 28,281. The total number of children removed (de-registered) from the child protection register during the year = 82. This gives us an average of 345 days. This is a decrease of 100 days from the previous year.
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Liberty Protection Safeguards

The introduction of the Liberty Protection Safeguards to replace the existing Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards has been delayed. A consultation has just started and the outcome of this consultation is not expected until late 2022. We therefore expect to start preparing for the introduction of Liberty Protection Safeguards during the Winter of 2022 with implementation happening in the Spring 2023.

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Integrated Families First / Flying Start programme (IFFFS)

The Integrated Families First / Flying Start (IFFS) programme provides a range of Family and Parenting Support in Denbighshire. We aim to provide early intervention and prevention services for vulnerable families, to avoid escalation and ensure children in our most deprived areas receive extra help.

In 2021-22, our Families First services received 302 referrals. We had an average monthly waiting list of 18 and an average waiting time of 26 days from receipt of referral to allocation of a worker. We supported 369 families and newly assessed 114 families' needs.

The Team Around the Family (TAF) coordinates multiple services and interventions around individual families, securing engagement, assessing need and planning support. Amidst ongoing issues and fluctuating needs around Covid-19, the TAF team have successfully concluded 29 action plans with families. Using a Welsh Government piloted methodology, we estimated the potential cost savings achieved by TAF for other services. The most recent available figures for January to December 2021 show savings of £122,823:

Sector	Saving	Area of action
Crime	£52,272	Antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse & criminal behaviour
Education	£22,264	Absence, exclusion & school readiness
Health	£6,187	Drug misuse
Mental Health	£18,052	Mental health issues in children, young people & adults
Employment	£24,048	Support to gain employment

In 2021 our Flying Start Health Visitors supported 1,182 children under the age of 4 in the most multi-deprived parts of Prestatyn, Rhyl and Denbigh. We supported a further 52 families across the county through outreach. Our speech and language therapists helped 102 children alongside our Early Language Development team, who delivered Portage and Laugh & Learn interventions to 36 children. From January to December 2021 we provided 31,998 free childcare sessions to 366 children, and provided 1,348 additional sessions.

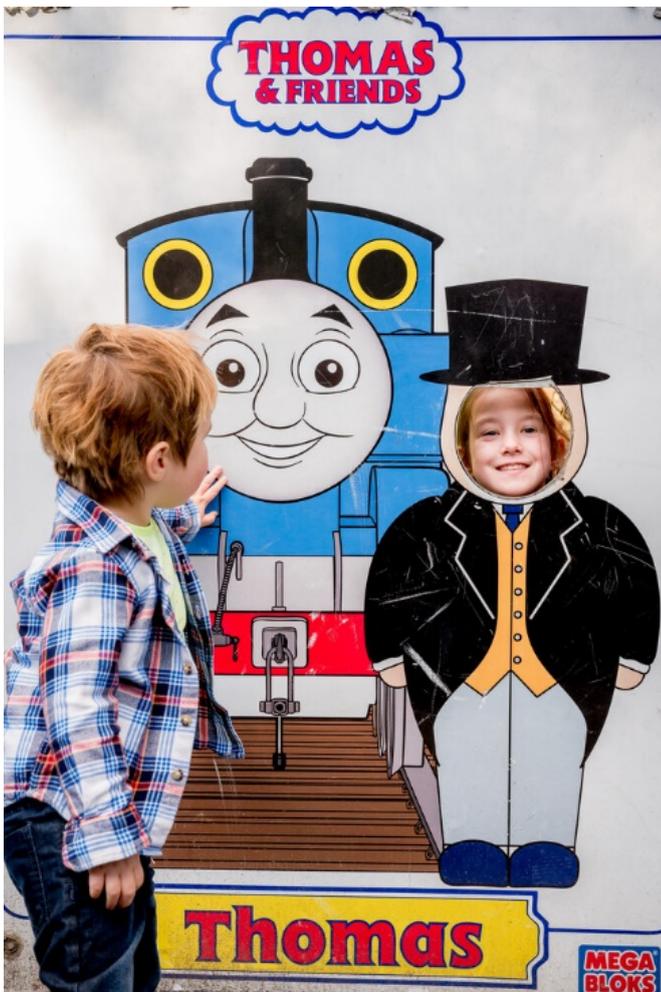
Our Health Visitors contribute significantly to safeguarding children in Denbighshire. From January to December 2021, the team made 218 contacts with children in Child Protection measures, 135 contacts with children with a Care & Support Plan and 115 with Looked After Children. They made 639 contacts with children needing a Tier 3 Intensive service.

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Health Visitors 2021

- Child Protection Referrals - 102
- Court Reports / Police Statements - 12
- Case Conference reports/attended - 77
- MARAC Reports - 26
- Looked After Children Reviews attended - 29
- Safeguarding Pre-Birth Assessments - 97
- Safeguarding related meetings attended - 337

In January we appointed a new Safeguarding Nurse who attended 4 Case Conferences and 6 Professionals meetings (Core Groups / Care & Support Plans / Looked After Children).



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Case Study - Team Around the Family (TAF)

The family was referred to TAF following a part 2 assessment, requesting continued coordination of services (Hafod, Education and Health) and parenting support, as well as emotional support for the child. The parents wanted support with managing their child's challenging behaviour. One parent wanted support with accessing mental health services.

What we did:

- Accessed support from the Disability Well-being Navigator and the LIFT project.
- Referred to the Neuro development service
- Improved communication with education.
- Rebuilt a relationship with Hafod.
- Advocated with the GP
- Accessed advocacy

Both parents have a good relationship with education and received a positive update. The child is doing very well academically and is receiving one to one nurture sessions. Parent A is now accessing fortnightly appointments at Hafod and is also accessing groups at the women's centre as well as counselling support. Both parents thanked TAF for the input and support. They felt that all the help they wanted was now in place.



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Clwyd Alyn Housing Association (CAHA) work with single homeless people with high support needs. With their values of Trust, Hope and Kindness they support their citizens to give them opportunities and choices of what is important to them.

For example: One of our citizens who has tailored support from CAHA, encouraged through conversations with staff was able to make their own choices/opinions about things they can do that matters to them. The citizen is listened to and trusted to make their own decisions without judgement and this has built their confidence which has resulted in volunteering opportunities within CAHA.

16 and 17 year olds placed in Ty Pride LGBTQ+ supported accommodation, state that they feel safe. 68% of this community are rejected by their parents and Ty Pride is a safe place where they can be themselves in a nurturing and trusted place that they can call home

We continue to embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures via a range of training opportunities for all local authority staff as well as independent and third sector providers. The All Wales Basic Safeguarding for Children and Adults courses are held on a regular basis throughout the year with around 3 or 4 being delivered each quarter. There has also been more specific / specialised training available e.g.;

- Domestic Violence,
- Safeguarding Adults for Managers of provider services,
- Understanding hoarding behaviour,
- Contextual Safeguarding,
- Professional boundaries,
- Safeguarding Adults Enquiries and Investigations.

The Adult Safeguarding Team have been working closely with partner agencies in all aspects of safeguarding people from abuse and neglect, with further emphasis on embedding Section 5 process – ‘Safeguarding Allegations / Concerns about practitioners and those in position of trust’. We have developed a quality audit tool to monitor and review this process.

The virtual platforms, such as Microsoft Teams, continue to be very successful for the convening of safeguarding meetings, allowing increased attendance and the ability to arrange them in a timely manner. It will be important to monitor this process, to ensure that it continues to be fit for purpose, as partner agencies and providers look at their own new ways of working moving forward.

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Members of the Adult Safeguarding team periodically attend team meetings to raise awareness of safeguarding developments and provide advice and clarification to team members in Operational Teams.

Case Study – Domestic Abuse Support Unit (DASU)

Mrs A was referred for Floating Support from the Crisis team. She has several children from pre-school age to late teenage years. Mrs A had presented at the Homelessness Prevention Team after fleeing domestic abuse in England. She and the children had been staying at a holiday let in North Wales until the landlord wanted the property back. The LA placed Mrs A in emergency accommodation with her children, where the family were sharing a single room with two double beds. Mrs A had moved between 12 refuges previously as her husband located her each time. They could no longer access a communal refuge as her child was 17. Mrs A was fearful as the abuse was of severe sexual, physical and coercive nature and had been perpetrated towards Mrs A and her children. Mrs A's children were on the Children in Need register in England, but the social worker did not know of their whereabouts. Mrs A was also struggling to afford food and clothing for the children, did not know how to apply for schools and needed to register with a GP for their health needs.

Due to the high level of risk involved with Mrs A's case, given the information she provided verbally and through legal documents the family were referred to a multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC), an independent domestic violence adviser (IDVA) and our Children and Young People worker. We liaised with their social worker in England, submitted a safeguarding referral to our social services and contacted a local family law solicitor.

The emergency accommodation was not suitable for the family so they were assessed for one of DASU's dispersed units; a refuge space for one family and with no age restrictions. The was positive and the family were supported to move in the following day, which happened to be the youngest child's birthday.

The local Food Bank and agreed to provide a large food parcel with some birthday cake and treats and donated clothing was sourced. Mrs A was supported to register for schools and a local GP.

Mrs A stated that she was so grateful and had never been supported as well as she had by DASU and that the staff were 'kind and had empathy'.

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This is what we still have to do

To continue to embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures into all aspects of Children's Services.

Ensure effective preparation of all staff across Adults and Children's Services for the implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards

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

This is what we said we would do

- Sustain and expand the volunteers project set up in response to the Covid-19 pandemic
- Embed the ethos of Moving with Dignity into all the services provided and commissioned by CSS and also to ensure that all relevant staff are suitably skilled to be able to assess for or provide right-sized care.
- Build upon work done so far and further develop assistive technologies to increase access and knowledge within CSS and the community

This is what we have done and achieved

During the year to 31 March, 9 looked after children have experienced one or more changes in school that were not due to transitional arrangements. This is an increase from a figure of 6 in the previous year.

Percentage of children achieving the core subject indicator at key stages 2 and 4 – this data was not available for the 19-20 school year due to the Covid-19 lockdown and the 20-21 data will not be released until August 2022.

Closed Facebook group for foster carers

Foster carers were asked for their views about what information should be in a closed Facebook group - e.g. training schedules, templates of standard forms and notification of upcoming events. A dedicated group has been created and is regularly being updated with information. Creating the group has provided another avenue to obtain feedback. Information is circulated to a larger geographical area and accessibility has been improved.

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The Fostering team arranged for each foster carer to be invited to a virtual coffee morning. Along with the invite was a package that contained a tea bag and some biscuits. So as not to overwhelm the foster carers and to allow for better conversations, the foster carers were split into groups based on their supervising social worker. The virtual coffee mornings were facilitated by the supervising social worker, with drop-in appearances from the Head of Service, Service Manager, Fostering Team Manager and the Placement Commissioning Officer / Recruitment Officer.

The aim of the virtual coffee mornings was to have a relaxed hour-long catch up with carers. From the Fostering Teams perspective, it was a real success with a good attendance and lots of laughter and discussion. Feedback gained from the foster carers who attended was very positive.

The Fostering Service has increased the level of communication with foster carers, with a regular newsletter and the increasingly infamous Denbighshire Fostering Service Competition, whereby children have been asked to design Christmas cards, paint pebbles and grow sunflowers.

Foster Wales Denbighshire website

All 22 local authorities across Wales have come together to form a national network of local fostering expertise known as Maethu Cymru / Foster Wales. It has a clear focus to make a bigger impact on a national level, to work together with each other and with foster carers, and to build better futures for local children. We are sharing one brand and speaking with one voice to make us stronger in recruiting and supporting foster carers.

The Service currently has 2 Children / Young People's forums that meet on a regular basis and although they have not been able to meet over the last year, staff involved in running the forums have been in regular touch with them.

KIC Club (Kids in Care) Young People's Forum

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

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Children / Young People whose Parents Foster

The KWC Club (Kids who Care) is a group of children and young people whose parents foster and who are also part of the fostering process. Similarly, to the KIC Club, they meet during half term and it is a chance for them to get together, share experiences, say what's going well and what they would like to change.

Moving with Dignity

The Moving with Dignity project, which encompasses the role of the Occupational Therapist, is a specialist area. It incorporates promoting independence and appropriate handling techniques for care provision. Using kindness and a gentle, compassionate approach, it involves looking at the number of carers required to attend to a person's needs, when being lifted, transferred or repositioned using specific techniques and items of equipment.

The project has continued to be rolled out during 2021 – 22. During the year 5 sessions were held with Occupational Therapists to refresh skills using bed management systems. As a result, the Nordic bed management system is now core stock and can be ordered directly from our Community Equipment Service (CESI) which has reduced the delay between the initial assessment and providing beds to citizens.

Two formal training sessions were held in October 2021 with 22 care staff from our in-house Independence at Home team. Following on from the training, the team are now working towards ensuring that care packages for those being discharged from hospital are considered within the ethos of Moving with Dignity before the care is transferred to external domiciliary care providers.

A pilot project was implemented with Seashells Domiciliary Care agency, whereby the Manager and Moving and Handling trainer received an awareness training session to discuss the ethos of Moving with Dignity, which they are now rolling out with their care team. The aim is that once all training has been completed, work will be carried out to review all double handed packages of care

Our Moving with dignity Project lead completed a training session with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health board (BCUHB) Moving and Handling trainers to get single handed care discussed in their training sessions to internal BCUHB staff.

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Unpaid Carers have been encouraged and supported to take up a range of training through Denbighshire's Workforce Development Team's training programme. This is funded by the Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) and includes Moving and Handling training for unpaid carers.

Project Search

Denbighshire Complex Disabilities Team has been working jointly with Conwy County Borough Council and the Regional Learning Disabilities Transformation team to develop a Project Search site within Ysbyty Glan Clwyd. Project Search is a scheme which supports people with Learning disabilities into paid employment using an internship model. A local college teaches the skills needed, whilst a local employer provides the internship. Currently we have seven people with either a Learning Disability or Autistic Spectrum Disorder on the programme.

Use of Technology

Technology within our registered residential settings consists of voice activated technology, i.e. Alexa, to allow citizens to select their own music, podcasts or general information. Staff have been trained to use these and to pass their skills on to the residents.

We are using Facebook portal devices and tablets for video calling in and out of our homes. We have also installed 75-inch TV screens alongside the portals. Surround sound speakers mean that residents can hear the TV wherever they are sitting in the lounge.

We have introduced a smart projector. The projector has a library of games and other media that citizens can interact with, either on the floor or on a table-top. This has proved to be extremely entertaining and a means for residents to take part in gentle physical activity.

We have purchased devices for Reminiscence Interactive Therapy Activities (RITA). These consist of a large 24-inch touch screen which has been specifically designed to be suitable for older citizens to use. The interactive touch screen system allows individuals to enjoy relaxation through music, watching archive BBC news footage, viewing old photographs and listening to famous speeches. It helps to spark memories and start conversations.

A unique and very popular piece of technology introduced to the services has been an animatronic seal. This digital companion reacts to touch and sound.

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It communicates back to the citizen by movement, audible noises and heat. If the body temperature of the citizen is low, the digital companion will warm itself. This provides reassurance to individuals living with dementia.

The introduction of virtual reality headsets has given citizens the opportunity to view some of the top attraction in North Wales. It also provides an opportunity for citizens to attend virtual music concerts and theatre experiences, when their physical attendance is not possible.

We have purchased 3 Rem Pod train carriages and they are now in place in one care home and two of our Extra Care Housing Facilities. This is a themed area of the building that replicates the window of a period steam train. There is a screen window which gives the feeling of being sat in a passenger train carriage.

We have introduced a YouTube channel for our day services for people with complex disabilities. 360 degree cameras, lighting equipment, tripods and sound equipment are used to create localised, virtual reality movies for reminiscence purposes. They focus on informative short videos around living and cooking skills. Citizens create, edit and star in these videos.

We have installed two 3D printers to create 3D designs, to allow for more creativity and access to design and technology within our day services. In addition to this we have taken delivery of a laser cutter. This will give day service users the opportunity to be more involved in the practical design and creation of wood products.

Edge of Care Team – Adult Services



The newly created Adult Social Services Edge of Care Team fits with our strategic vision for a modern, more effective way of delivering social care support that strengthens individual and community resilience.

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The Edge of Care team is unique in that it is based within Adult Social Care Services and recruits, trains and deploys volunteers. The Manager is a qualified social worker and outcome focussed mentor. Two Edge of Care Coordinators support the Manager to deliver the project.

The Team has demonstrated how the project can positively impact on planned care pathways, supporting discharge from hospital for citizens, working closely with our Community Resource Teams in delivering a 'team around the individual' approach and reducing demand for traditional planned care.

We have many examples of volunteers providing respite to carers, with careful and considered matching of cared for and volunteer. The result has been an experience that is meaningful and enjoyable for both carer and cared for. We have helped citizens remain on the edge of planned and unplanned care such as Mental Health Services, care home placement and traditional domiciliary care, but have been able to keep citizens in the community.

Although we are slowly coming out of the Covid-19 pandemic, with lockdown restrictions eased and the furlough scheme ended, the project is continuing to attract more volunteers. We have around 70 volunteers and we are continuing to see referrals increase.

The Edge of Care Social Prescriber Coordinator / Monitoring Officer also supports with operational delivery but their main focus is on monitoring and strengthening links with existing Community Led Support Initiatives like the Community Navigator Social Prescribing Service. The Community Navigators are key partners in recruiting volunteers and identifying citizens who would benefit. They also connect citizens to other local community resources that can support them.

The effective matching of volunteer to citizen is key to the success of this project and the starting point is always an effective What Matters Conversation, which is strength based and outcome focussed.

Case studies

Mrs X is supported by her volunteer at least once a week. The volunteer assists Mrs X to continue with online speech and therapy classes, make bill payments, email shopping lists to Mrs X's daughter who lives away, and they play Yahtzee together.

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Her volunteer also supports mum and daughter to co-ordinate online clothes shopping (which often involves taking return items to the post office). Carer's stress is reduced due to companionship and support provided by volunteer. It is important to note that the volunteer is actually a carer herself – she tells us that this gives her a refreshing change from her own significant role at home.

Miss D is in her early 20's and has experienced a life time of physical health needs. She and her mum are very close and sometimes it's been difficult for both to feel confident to do their own thing. Our volunteer (a trainee Social Worker student) has been accompanying Miss D to a lively café/bar in town, and supported her to join a Women's Club where she now attends alone, and really enjoying the activities on offer. Mum is happier developing her own social life again now that her daughter has greater independence.

Close working with practitioners in Denbighshire Community Resource Teams, Complex Disability and Mental Health teams delivers on a 'team around the individual approach'.

The team has access to Denbighshire HR staff to ensure a robust process for volunteer support, training and lone working.

The aim of the Edge of Care Team is to manage the demand and ensure our Health and Social Care planned services are sustainable, by harnessing the energy and talents of local people and merging this with providing support.

The focus is on achieving the right outcome by effective matching of volunteer and citizen. A match that promotes well-being for both and delivers on providing emotional and practical support, addressing issues of loneliness and social isolation and preventing carer breakdown leading to potential admissions into the care system.

To illustrate, read Bethan's story below:

Bethan, who is 20 years old, has a strong relationship with her mother. It is particularly close because of the complexity of health experiences that mother and daughter have shared since Bethan was a child. They have come to realise that whilst there are many positives to their inter-dependency, it is limiting for individual friendships and opportunities. The referrer to the Edge of Care Team (skilled at strength's based conversations), helped Bethan to make sense of her situation and she was able to articulate what had worked well and not so well in the past, within the referral.

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In order to identify a successful volunteer match, we considered personalities and life experience. We were fortunate to have a volunteer who was also studying to be a social worker. Along with her bubbly, kind and friendly manner, the volunteer was able to bring that extra quality which picked up on Bethan's unique set of needs. Bethan and her volunteer have enjoyed coffee and lunch in local bistros and coffee shops, and explored new activities together. Bethan now attends a local Women's Group each week on her own. A follow up call to Bethan confirmed that Bethan has made new friends and she continues to enjoy her new interests. We think Bethan would make an excellent 'community ambassador' for her local Talking Point or chatter table and we plan to explore this with her soon. Bethan's mother is now able to achieve greater peace of mind, knowing that her daughter is out enjoying herself with her own set of friends.

This is what we still have to do

To further expand the work of the Edge of Care team in Adult Services to reduce social isolation, loneliness, improving health and developing independence skills for citizens.

To develop provision that will provide appropriate accommodation with ongoing intensive person-centred support for Looked After Children with the highest complexity of need.

To continue to build upon work done so far and further develop Assistive Technologies to increase access and knowledge within Community Support Services and the community.

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

This is what we said we would do

- Continue the work of Denbighshire becoming a Dementia Friendly Council
- Continue to review and develop services that meet needs of carers in Denbighshire
- Continue with the development of Bwthyn Y Ddol and the multi-disciplinary approach for children on the edge of care

This is what we have done and achieved

18 children returned home from care during the year. Last year's figure was 16 children.
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On 31 March 2022, 19 looked after children had had three or more placements during the year. Last year's figure was 12 children.
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LIFT (Local Integrated Family Team) was established to offer targeted early support for families experiencing difficulties with managing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The team works with families and includes Well-being Navigators, Occupational Therapists, Behavioural Support Specialists and a Psychologist. They act as a source of information and support to help develop and implement positive behavioural plans and to provide specialist consultation when required.

The multi-agency team have developed a specific model of care and a partnership approach to support families in Denbighshire and Conwy. They are now operational and working directly with children and young people and their families.

The programme has also up skilled 78 local authority and health staff in therapies that the team will be using, this has encouraged a common approach and shared language, providing consistency across partner agencies and teams.

The Bwthyn Y Ddol multi-disciplinary team continues to work with children and young people who are at risk of becoming looked after as family dynamics are not healthy.

The model of care has been developed through a multi-agency team with a focus on the requirement and specific needs of the children and young people within Denbighshire and Conwy. This approach to an evidence based model of care, along with the reflective practice adopted by the team, has already seen very positive results with children / young people successfully completing the intervention and safely remaining at home with family.

Strengthening Families – Edge of Care Programme Children’s Service

The Edge of Care Programme sits within the Therapeutic Service of Children’s Service and aims to: -

- Support families to address their problems and make positive changes that can reduce the risks for their children, as well as helping them make a positive contribution to the community in which they live.
- Provide intensive support to vulnerable families with multiple complex problems, where there is, or has been a strong possibility of a child becoming looked after
- Enable a child’s circumstances to improve and to give the family skills so they can sustain their own improvements.

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The service has a clear focus on providing therapeutic support for children on the edge of care and care experienced children, including those who have been adopted, reducing the need for more intensive support. Over a maximum of 12 weeks, the team delivers practical, support and intervention to children, young people and families at times of crisis.

Denbighshire children who have been assessed by their Social Workers as being on a path towards entering a professional foster or residential care have had a range of interventions through the Therapeutic Service. This aims to reduce the risk of children becoming looked after, preventing adoption breakdown and returning children home from professional care. The Therapeutic Team continue with a Parenting Group to work directly with parents of children and young people assessed as being at high risk of exploitation. The Therapeutic Practitioners use the PACE (Playfulness, Acceptance, Curiosity, Empathy) Model. This is based on developmental attachment theory and research and is the primary model for relationship development and trauma resolution.

The Complex Disabilities team within Denbighshire have supported a number of citizens to engage with the Sparc sexuality and relationships courses being funded regionally through Transformation funding and via Integrated Care Fund grants.

Adapted respite and recovery flats are available for use in Corwen, Ruthin, Denbigh and Prestatyn. These have been developed in partnership with Registered Social Landlords and Denbighshire County Council Community Housing and offer flexible short term respite or recovery options with or without care. Despite the interruptions brought about by Covid-19, we have seen an average 50% occupancy rate throughout the last 12 months.

Case Study: Mr R was living with his son and young family following a diagnosis of dementia and being unable to live independently. the family were struggling to meet his care needs and the home was overcrowded. Mr R came to our respite and recovery flat based in an Extra Care Scheme for emergency respite due to carer breakdown. As part of the support offered, a care and support plan was put in place and additional support was given around housing to help Mr R with his own tenancy. Following this short period of support, he was offered a permanent flat within the Extra Care Complex, the housing related support continued for a period of time to help Mr R settle in his new home. Mr R now benefits from an improved relationship with his family and receives the regular care and support he needs to enable him to live as independently has possible.

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Carers assessors attend peer forum meetings in North Denbighshire Community Resource Team to discuss the care and support needs of carers and to present to the Multi-Disciplinary Team their proposals for commissioning care and support for carers. Community Navigators also attend, and this supports discussions which focus upon carer's well-being and outcomes.

Through Working Denbighshire, all refugees who have settled in Denbighshire are offered the support of an employment mentor. They are encouraged to access work and volunteering opportunities. This has led to three people accessing paid employment and three people volunteering. One person is in the process of applying to become an apprentice. All adults are actively involved in English as a Second Language (ESOL) classes.

Denbighshire Countryside Services have given exclusive access to raised allotment beds for refugee families to use. There are five families accessing these allotments and they are the focal point of wider community activities for all refugee families and have led to events such as a 'cook out' and day trips.

Ty Pride is a supported accommodation project delivered in partnership with Denbighshire's Homelessness Prevention Team, VIVA and Llamau. Providing a minimum of 4 LGBTQ+ young people with accessible, psychologically informed support within a safe, secure environment to prevent homelessness and promote ongoing independence. Unlike most supported housing projects there is an emphasis on therapeutic support and education to family to ensure healthy ongoing relationships where possible.

This is what we still have to do

To implement the actions of the State of Caring Action Plan to review and develop services that meet the needs of carers in Denbighshire.
To continue with the development of Bwthyn Y Ddol and the multi-disciplinary approach for children on the edge of care.
Development of an in-county residential short breaks & emergency care provision for children with complex needs and disabilities within Denbighshire.

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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 Young People's Pathway into Youth Services
- Work with partners to focus on recruitment to care and career pathways for young people

This is what we have done and achieved

The total number of care leavers who have completed at least 3 consecutive months of employment, education or training in: a) the 12 months since leaving care was 5 and b) the 13 - 24 months since leaving care was 5.

9 care leavers have experienced homelessness during the year, within 12 months of leaving care.

Work continues to encourage young people to consider care as a career option. Whilst there is still much work to be done, we have had some success within our own care homes in recruiting a couple of young people. One young person really wanted to do care work but was too young to do that role, so has been employed as an ancillary worker in the short term. As soon as they reach the age of 18 they will be supported to become a care worker within the care setting.

During the last 12 months, Children's Services have developed much closer links with housing and homelessness to improve accommodation opportunities for young people. Youth Services have also employed a dedicated Youth Worker and a Homelessness Support Worker to enhance the offer to young people experiencing homelessness. Working together the 3 services have developed a more robust pathway to support care leavers and young people with complex needs. Work is ongoing and during the next 12 months we hope to commission specialist supported housing to support some of our most vulnerable young people.

A joint project delivered by NEWCIS and Citizens Advice Denbighshire has been providing information and advice as well as supporting unpaid carers, particularly those most isolated and living in rural areas, to access benefits and complete income maximisation checks and other services as and when needed.

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Community Resource Team staff make frequent referrals to Citizens Advice Denbighshire and other services to support older people to access their full state benefit entitlements. They also support our citizens to access numerous schemes, such as Warm Homes, Care and Repair and others to support older people and carers to remain living in their own homes.

In February 2022 Awel Y Dyffryn, a new Extra Care Housing Facility in Denbigh opened. It received its first tenants, some requiring care, and others moving into a property that will allow them to remain independent, knowing support is on hand if needed. The development is a partnership between Denbighshire County Council and Grŵp Cynefin.

This is what we still have to do

To commission specialist supported accommodation for young people with complex needs that is person-centred and provides sustained support to mitigate the risk of the young person falling into a future cycle of homelessness.
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To work with partners to promote social care as a career opportunity by building on our recruitment to care and career pathways for young people
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To continue to review and modernise our offer of day and work services for people with complex disabilities.
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5. How we do what we do

a) Our Workforce and How we Support their Professional Roles

Recruitment and retention has been a significant issue within both Adult and Children Social Services since the Covid-19 pandemic, but particularly over the last 12 months. This includes both professional and front-line care staff.

Recruitment to care is a high priority for Denbighshire and during the year we have set up a corporate group to tackle the barriers to recruiting care workers.

We have introduced a number of initiatives to promote care as a career – aligning ourselves with the We Care Campaign, Denbighshire now has a care recruitment brand “Make People Smile” some of the strands of this include:

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- Dedicated Human Resource (HR) support to help with both recruitment and retention
- Denbighshire County Council (DCC) Care Webpage
- Advertising on Denbighshire County Council vehicles
- Care Recruitment Brochure
- Business Cards
- Advertising on staff coats
- Use of TikTok social media platform to reach out to the widest audience possible.
- Regular attendance at career events by HR officer and staff from provider services.
- DCC Service manager and Team Manager sit on a local college employer advisory board.

5 new Lead Care posts have been developed to enhance a care career pathway, these roles will bridge the gap between care delivery and supervisory responsibilities, thus allowing us to grow our own managers for the future.

All posts have now been appointed into Care Homes and Extra Care Housing Facilities. There are strong links between the Edge of Care Team and recruitment; where volunteers are supported and encouraged to enter paid employment.

Case Study: Ffion was 17 when she applied to become a volunteer via the Edge of Care team. She was really keen to work in care and therefore was offered the opportunity to volunteer in one of our care homes. As her confidence developed Ffion was offered a domestic role within the home, which she enjoyed very much and has become a valued member of the care team.

Providing ongoing support to all of our staff within Children's and Community Support Services has been paramount as they have continued to provide high levels of support to some of our most citizens and families across the county. This has included 33 different training and well-being events being delivered for staff, through the WULF funding (supported by Unison, Unite and GMB unions). In September 2021, our HR team launched a Mental Health Awareness E-Learning Module which all staff have access to and provides a basic awareness of what mental health is and what the signs and symptoms are together with some signposting for supporting.

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During 2020 – 2021 we saw a decrease in the number of staff going off sick and the number of days they were absent dropped. However in 2021 – 2022 we have experienced an increase in the number of staff being absent due to sickness and the number of days they are absent from work has increased. In the main, we are seeing many staff suffering from the effects of the pandemic, in relation to increased workload and the isolation of working from home. Work is ongoing to support staff to return to offices for a 1 or 2 days per week, blended with being able to continue to work from home.

Our Workforce Development Team continued to deliver training, primarily through virtual learning, but did reintroduce some face to face training in a safe way to meet Welsh Government Covid-19 guidelines, this included practical Manual Handling and health based topics such as Diabetes and Epilepsy.

The Workforce Development Team were also involved in –

- Launching new webpages, signposting staff to a range of on-line research and learning materials. This is part of our strategy, with the next phase opening up the website further for Foster Carers and the wider social care sector to access information on learning and development opportunities for the sector and specific resources which may support them in their roles.
- We have rolled out Community Care Inform (CCInform) to both Education & Children Services (E&CS) and Community Support Services (CSS). The resource allows workers to access a host of research articles, legal updates and practice hubs promoting new ways of working. As a part of the package we are working in partnership with CCInform to create Denbighshire specific pages for both Adult and Children's services to be able to promote and highlight key messages or practice themes to be developed.
- We have launched ACEducation for use with Foster Carers to support our commitment to the rollout of the National Fostering Framework - Learning and Development. This will allow foster carers the ability to access training remotely at a time that's convenient to them. Face to face training will continue for Foster Carers, but at a much reduced rate which allows us scope to consider costs and the impact of non-attendance, which was becoming an issue.

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- Workforce Development supported the Seed project with Social Care Workers. Working in collaboration with the Community Arts Development Manager from Denbighshire Leisure a successful bid was made to HARP (Health, Arts, Research, People Programme) funded by Arts Council of Wales and Nesta with Cardiff University's Y Lab for funding to look at promoting the well-being of Social Care workers through the promotion of Arts.

“Our staff have been significantly affected by Covid-19, with issues such as **increased workload, trauma and stress**; by working to support their mental well-being we can show that we very much value their work..... “
- The Workforce Development Team led on completing the evaluation at the end of the project.

“Thoroughly enjoyed the tasks. Felt it was nice to have a bit of 'me time'. It's been a difficult 18 months working in a care home during the pandemic. It was a welcome distraction from a difficult time”
- Student placements for Social Workers were particularly challenging in 2021 - 22, but with support from our colleagues across both Operational and In-House Care Services we were able to build placements which met the requirements and filled the shortfall. There were also opportunities for Social Work students to be involved in new projects such as the Dementia equipment projects (Paro seal, RITA etc.) which they rolled out in their respective placements and fed back on the uptake.
- We successfully bid for a suite of Chromebooks which will soon be available for use at our training suite in Morfa Clwyd, Rhyl. These will support access to on-line learning opportunities and allow us to support with on-going registration of key care staff with Social Care Wales.

More Than Just Words

This year we launched our Social Care Workforce website which includes a section on 'Using your Welsh in care'. The website includes information about various resources to encourage, assist and support staff to use their Welsh language skills, to include links and resources to promote the Welsh language within social care and information about the Active Offer and More than Just Words. We've also included information about the availability of free 'Iaith Gwaith' resources to identify Welsh-speaking staff and learners.

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During 2021-22 a member of the workforce team delivered a presentation for Social Care Wales about the support available for care staff to use their Welsh language skills. The workforce team have also worked with Careers Wales to deliver presentations to year 9 pupils about 'using their Welsh language skills in Care'.

We have invested in Welsh language courses for social care with places available for both internal and external care providers who work across both Adults and Children's services. These have included a short online Welsh taster course and workbook and also an online course suitable for staff who understand spoken Welsh with ease but lack confidence in speaking Welsh. We have also commissioned an online course aimed at equipping care staff across Adults and Children's services with the skills to greet and meet the public in Welsh and to make the Active Offer. Staff new to the department receive a presentation about 'More Than Just Words' and the Active Offer as part of their induction presentation.

In addition, we introduced RITA (reminiscence interactive therapy activities) into Care homes and extra care facilities. We discussed content with the company and ensured local reminiscence images were available. The company also included Welsh television programmes, Welsh poetry and hymns. Feedback has been very positive.

During 2021 - 22 we have also promoted events such as 'Use Your Welsh Campaign', 'Dydd Miwsic Cymru' and 'Dydd Shwmae Su'mae Day'. In December, a National campaign was held to promote 'Welsh Rights day' and three colleagues from Community Support Services were highlighted to celebrate their work in using their Welsh with residents. Their stories were posted as part of the campaign through the council's social media network.

Within Community Support Services we also aim to ensure that as part of the re-deployment to care service which was set up in response to Covid-19, that Welsh speaking volunteers are matched to citizens who want support through the medium of Welsh.

We continue promote the engagement of those citizens who are deprived of their liberty, with those who are subject of a Deprivation of Liberty authorisation and who have preferred a language to converse in, we arrange for a welshing speaking Best Interest Assessor to undertake their assessment to support their engagement where possible.

When making a referral or seeking advice over the phone, the Gateway Service offers callers the option to speak to someone in Welsh.

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We keep an up to date list of staff within Children's Service who are fluent / moderate Welsh speakers. This list helps with any queries that none Welsh speaking staff may have and to identify Welsh speaking Social Workers to talk to children / young people, parents and professionals. Referral Forms are bilingual and the question of preferred language is included. Language preference is then recorded on PARIS.

Staff are regularly reminded of the requirements of the Welsh language Standards. All social media posts are bilingual and feedback forms seeking views are bilingual.

If a parent wants a Child Protection Conference to be held in Welsh, the Safeguarding and Practice Quality unit can use a Welsh speaking Conference Chair from another local authority.

'Mind of My Own' is an online platform that allows children and young people working with Denbighshire Education and Children's Services to engage with their worker and share their views on the care they receive, their concerns, concerns and success bilingually.

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.

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c) Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Working together with a wide range of partners is essential to the successful delivery of not only statutory services but the early intervention and prevention work that goes on to support those individuals and families to stop them accessing statutory services.

At an operational level we work with our neighbouring local authorities on joint initiatives and projects such as Bwthyn Y Ddol with Conwy County Borough Council and we are working closely with Flintshire County Council to procure a new finance system to support our financial assessment team in Adult Social Services.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) is a key partner in delivering seamless health and social care and whilst we have established Community Resource Teams (CRTs), made up of health and social care staff, jointly we are constantly reviewing practice, developing and improving the services delivered by these teams. Prestatyn Community Resource Team (CRT) was officially opened in April 2021 and celebrated its first year anniversary on 28 April 22. The CRTs are a core component of cluster development with Primary Care and BCUHB in Denbighshire partnership meetings, providing the strategic overview and direction for services.

GPs have become key delivery partners within the CRTs across Denbighshire and have agreed funding for a Health Promotion Co-ordinator role to support targeted health promotion campaigns and messages across health social care and the third sector. The aim is to improve the health and well-being outcomes of the adult population in North Denbighshire.

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A Memorandum of Understanding has been developed between homelessness prevention services and CRT's to improve and streamline referrals and joint working arrangements to help prevent homelessness in the older population. This is currently in draft form, but will hopefully be agreed shortly.

Within our Children's Service, health colleagues are integral partners in much of our delivery of services such as Flying Start, where the delivery team are made up of a combination of health staff including midwives and health visitors and local authority family support workers and community nursery nurses. Health colleagues are also integrated within our Looked After Children and Therapeutic services.

Regular meetings are held with the BCU Child and Adolescent Mental Health service (CAMHS) to review waiting times of complex cases.

Through our partnership with Conwy Borough County Council and BCU we successfully deliver the Local Integrated Family Team providing targeted early support for families experiencing difficulties with managing challenging and unusual behaviour.

Working in partnership with health colleagues, police and a range of providers is an integral part of both adult and children's safeguarding and we are integral partners in the North Wales Safeguarding Board. This is maintained during the enquiry stage, strategy meetings, adult protection case conferences and strategy discussions/meetings.

Our Third Sector partners are wide and varied and have played a key role in supporting some of our most vulnerable citizens since the Covid-19 pandemic hit in March 2020. Building on the lessons learned and feedback from citizens much of this work has carried on and the relationship with many of our voluntary sector partners has been strengthened during this time. For example, Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council are supporting us in administering the Welsh Government's Social Isolation and Loneliness Grant and are a key partner in our work to support those citizens with Dementia and their families and carers.

Third Sector Organisations are commissioned to deliver a range of services across both adult and Children's services. For example; we commission Barnardo's to deliver our Personal Advisor Service to Care Leavers up to age of 25 whereby the Personal Advisers provide information, advice and assistance to the young people as part of their Pathway Plan.

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Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Glossary of Terms

Carers Charter

The charter had been produced in consultation with local adult and young carers and Denbighshire Carer's Strategy Group to ensure all carers receive understanding and the best quality support. See details available on [DCC](#) website.

Community Navigators

Work alongside the local authority's Single Point of Access and conduct a What Matters assessment to determine what help they can provide and/or signpost you to suitable support in the community. See details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

Community Resource Teams (CRTs)

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

Denbighshire Voluntary Services Council (DVSC)

Aims to promote, support, enable and develop a sustainable Third Sector in Denbighshire. Supports organisations to deliver their services in an effective and sustainable manner by provision of low cost training courses, funding advice and information, supporting volunteers to enable them to get more involved in their communities. See details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

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Edge of Care Team - Adults

The Edge of Care team is based within Adult Social Care Services and recruits, trains and deploys Volunteers. The Team has demonstrated how the project can positively impact on planned care pathways, supporting discharge from hospital for citizens, working closely with our Community Resource Teams in delivering a 'team around the individual' approach, reducing demand for traditional planned care.

Edge of Care Service - Children

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

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](#).

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.

Liberty Protection Safeguards

Planned to come into force in April 2022, they will provide protection for people aged 16 and above who are, or who need to be, deprived of their liberty in order to enable their care or treatment and lack the mental capacity to consent to their arrangements. People who might have a Liberty Protection Safeguards authorisation include those with dementia, autism and learning disabilities who lack the relevant capacity. Details available on [Gov.UK](#) website.

Mind of My Own app

A mobile phone app that makes it easier for children and young people to talk to their social workers and other practitioners and have their voices heard. Details available on the company [website](#).

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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.

North East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)

Deliver information, one to one support, training and counselling to unpaid carers in North East Wales. Details available on [DEWIS Cymru](#) resource.

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](#).

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.

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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.

