# Providing support now and in the future

## North Wales Market Stability Report

GIG CYMRU NHS WALES
Bwrdd Iechyd Prifysgol Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

CYNGOR GWYNEDD COUNCIL

CONWY
CYNGOR BWRDEISTREF SIROL COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

sir ddinbych denbighshire
Cyngor County Council

CYNGOR Sir y Fflint Flintshire
COUNTY COUNCIL

wrexham
COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

# Hello

We are the North Wales Regional Partnership Board. Our aim is to improve health and well-being for everyone across our area. On our board there are people from:

- across the six councils
- the Health Board
- the third sector
- care providers
- carers representatives
- people who use services.

We want all social care and support to be the best it can be. We want it to meet people's needs now and in the future.

In 2021-22 we looked at and assessed the social care and support across North Wales:

We ran consultations to gather people's views.

We studied local and national data.

We collected evidence from the councils and the Health Board.

We looked at research.

We looked at local, regional and national plans and policies.

We gathered evidence as part of our North Wales Population Needs Assessment.

This report tells you what we found across:

1. **Residential services (adults)**
2. **Home care services**
3. **Residential services (children)**
4. **Fostering services**
5. **Adoption services**
6. **Unpaid carers**
7. **Advocacy services**

# Why this is important

**We need to understand what's happening across North Wales so we can plan for the future.**

It helps us see which services are run by councils and which are commissioned from other organisations.

It helps us see the different levels and quality of services.

It helps us see if there are enough services to meet people's needs or if there are any gaps.

It helps us see if services are stable and can keep meeting people's needs in the future.

## Commissioning services

Sometimes councils and the Health Board buy in services. They are delivered by businesses, organisations, or charities. It's important we pay these providers for the right services, and that they have the right staff to meet people's needs in the right ways.

## Following the law

Checking services and making sure they meet people's needs helps make sure we are following the law. That includes:

- The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2017

# Snapshot of North Wales

There are a lot of services across North Wales. They have well-trained staff and deliver good quality care. They are run by the councils and independent providers, but demand for services is growing, and there are already gaps in support.

**We need more services to care for and support people in their own homes.**

**We need to give new staff better support.**

**We need more care options so people can choose their support.**

**We need more support for unpaid carers.**

**We need council commissioners and service providers to work together better.**

**We need to find ways to take the pressure off home care services.**

**We need more care homes for children and young people with mental health, learning disability and emotional needs.**

**We need more places in care homes including places that support people with mental health needs, learning disabilities and dementia.**

## Recruitment

Recruitment is the biggest challenge across all care services. Lots of staff are leaving the workforce because of low pay, long hours and feeling a lack of respect for what they do. After Covid some decided to leave or retire early. We need:

- to recruit more staff across all services and at all levels — that includes respite care workers, social workers and managers
- to raise the profile of careers in care to attract new workers including young people
- to improve the pay and working conditions for care workers.

## The cost of living – inflation

Services are having to do more with less money. Fuel, electricity and food cost more. Lack of staff and Covid has meant providers have to use agencies which has increased their costs. Lots of providers are finding it difficult to manage.

## Direct payments

These give people more control over their support and care. But there aren't always enough options to choose from.

## Community support

There are lots of different businesses, organisations and charities running services and support in the community. Professionals need to know about this support and connect people to it.

Reporting on...

# Residential services (adults)

Care homes across North Wales vary in size and support adults of different ages. Some are run by the council, others by independent providers. Some are in older buildings that cost more to maintain, others are new or recently refurbished.

Demand for placements in homes is increasing.

More people are living longer.

People aged over 65 in North Wales in 2020

**164,700**

By 2040 we expect it to be

**207,600**

That's an Increase of 42,900.

We think by 2035

**7,000**

more people will have dementia in North Wales.

The pandemic put pressure on care homes staff and funding.

We have around

**220** residential care homes with **4,100** residential care placements and

**60** nursing homes with **2,500** nursing placements.

There was lots of positive feedback from care home residents.

Everyone said they felt safe in the buildings.

**24%** of social care staff can communicate in Welsh.

Staff were very caring, had time for people and supported them well.

# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

We need more residential services, including specialist services, to support older people:

- with dementia
- who face loneliness and isolation
- with learning disabilities
- with complex disabilities
- who need specialist nursing placements
- who need mental health and autism support
- who need a temporary residential place
- who want their support in Welsh
- who come into care later in life.

There is a need for more services, including specialist services to support young adults with:

- physical and sensory needs
- learning disabilities
- complex disabilities
- physical health needs
- severe mental health issues.

**Fees for care homes must stay affordable but the costs of placements keep going up.**

Some residential home buildings are older and need repairs.

## Some challenges in each area

### Anglesey

In March 2022, one residential home closed. (15 beds)

### Gwynedd

Four homes have closed over the last few years:

- two residential homes
- two nursing homes.

### Conwy

In the last year two homes have closed in the county.

- One was a smaller provider and closed because it cost too much to maintain the building.
- The other was larger and successful, but the owner wanted to retire.

### Denbighshire

One small provider closed because it could no longer cope financially.

### Flintshire

Early in 2020, a residential home went into administration and closed.

### Wrexham

No homes have closed. But lots of providers have made losses and have very little funds.

When these homes closed all the residents were relocated to new places and supported to settle in.

Reporting on...

# Home care services

**People are living longer. They want to stay in their homes and live independently for as long as possible.** They often need support from home care services for day-to-day tasks, personal care and even specialist care.

The number of people across the region who need home care is increasing. We expect it to keep going up

from **45700** in 2020

to **60,900** in 2040.

An increase of 15,200.

The average hours of home care support per week is across North Wales is

**44,558**

Over **70%** of this home care is delivered by independent providers.

Councils have good relationships with providers and support them.

Some areas are using Community Catalysts, an organisation that works across the UK to fill gaps in home care services.

Other councils have set up a new way of working to meet demand. They set up home care packages that include 50% council employed care workers and 50% independent providers.

# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

**There are some real challenges.**

We need more providers to meet people's needs.

Providers can't fulfil the demand for support there is now.

Staff are leaving because of poor pay and difficult working conditions. In some areas people aren't getting support because there aren't enough staff.

Providers can refuse to give care to new people or stop caring for someone if they have staff issues.

Even when people get Direct Payments to arrange their own care, there often isn't a choice.

Providers are feeling under financial pressure from business costs and tighter budgets.

Rising inflation, fuel costs, and living pressures are making it harder to recruit staff because of low pay.

There isn't enough emergency care for older people who fall and are injured.

There often isn't support available for people when they leave hospital.

We need more care workers who speak Welsh.

It's hard to get support for people who need two carers at once to help them with tasks.

## Some challenges in each area

### Anglesey

Budgets and other money pressures means providers are struggling to keep up.

### Gwynedd

Providers are refusing to take on care for more people as they don't have enough care staff.

### Conwy

Providers have handed back some care packages to the council because they can't supply the care people need.

### Denbighshire

The council is struggling to commission support and to give people choice. It's harder to get care support for people who live in rural areas.

### Flintshire

There is a need for more home carers, especially to support people who need some extra help following a hospital stay.

### Wrexham

There are not enough home care providers or workers in the area. The workforce has reduced by 30% from April 2021. The council relies on some providers from England.

Reporting on...

# Residential services (children)

There are lots of services working together to keep children and young people healthy and safe. Residential services are part of this. They support children aged 0 to 18 and some young adults up to 25. Residential services include:

- **Care Homes (Children)** – care in a home with paid staff
- **Secure Accommodation** – a secure safe place
- **Residential Family Services** – accommodation where parents and children stay together

The number of children needing residential placements in North Wales increased from:

There are **17** independent providers of residential care for children, across **42** homes providing **180** places (beds) across North Wales.

The number of children is predicted to decrease, but the number needing care and support is expected to increase.

In 2021 there were **1,470** local children and young people looked after by councils.

# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

There are not enough residential home providers so there is not often a choice.

There are not enough placements, including emergency placements.

Some children are sent to homes that don't fully match their needs.

Some are placed outside their local area which makes it harder to keep links to family and friends.

There is a shortage of specialist support for children and young people with complex behavioural and emotional needs.

Providers do not always give the best results or value for money.

Providers have challenges recruiting and keeping staff.

Providers are finding the rising costs of energy, food and other things challenging.

There is no secure accommodation for children in North Wales. There is one in South Wales that has places for children aged 12 to 17 years.

We need more providers who can deliver services in Welsh.

Social workers find it difficult to place children with intensive needs. These placements have very high fees.

There is still a stigma attached to living in a children's care home.

## Some challenges in each area

### Anglesey

There are 3 small group homes that can offer 5 bed spaces for children. All these spaces are regularly full. A new home is being renovated and will be finished by August 2022. This will give another 3 bed spaces.

### Gwynedd

Homes are small and full, which means children often have to go to England to get the support they need.

### Conwy

Costs for placements have almost doubled from an average per week of £3,500 in 2017 to between £6,000 and £7,000 in 2021/22.

### Denbighshire

There are 20 children in care homes. More than half have had to be placed outside of Wales to meet their needs.

### Flintshire

There are 39 children in care homes, with half of them living in homes in England and Scotland. The council plans to increase the number of homes available locally including opening the first Multisystemic Therapy (MST) home in Wales (in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council), a four bed residential children's home and its first small group home.

### Wrexham

There are no care homes run by the council in Wrexham, but we are changing this. 33 children and young people were placed in England and other parts of Wales.

This year, we secured three properties, and more are planned under the new and expanded Welsh Government capital grant schemes.

Reporting on...

# fostering services

Foster carers can make a big difference to the lives of children and young people. They give them stability, care, love and support at difficult times in their lives. Across the region there are lots of great foster carers helping children and young people.

In 2020
**945**
children were looked after in foster care.

Councils have their own paid foster carers, but they also use independent fostering agencies.

**40%**
were living with an independent foster carer.

# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

There are not enough foster carers.

Lots of foster carers are older and are retiring.

Sometimes children have to be placed in foster homes outside their county.

There are issues finding places for:

- respite care
- young offenders
- refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers
- young parents
- sibling groups
- emergency situations
- children with disabilities.

Foster carers need training on:

- working better with local services
- the dangers of children being exploited by gangs through County lines
- trauma and the impacts of Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs)
- planning for emergency situations
- the Welsh language.

## Some challenges in each area

### Anglesey

In 2020:
**80** children were in foster care inside the county
**20** were in placements in other parts of Wales.

### Gwynedd

In 2021:
**135** children were in foster care inside the county
**50** were in placements in other parts of Wales
**15** were in placements outside of Wales.

### Conwy

In 2021:
**100** children were in foster care inside the county
**35** were in placements in other parts of Wales
**5** were in placements outside of Wales.

### Denbighshire

In 2021:
**90** children were in foster care inside the county
**20** were in placements in other parts of Wales
**10** were in placements outside of Wales.

### Flintshire

In 2021:
**90** children were in foster care inside the county
**45** were in placements in other parts of Wales
**20** were in placements outside of Wales.

### Wrexham

In 2021:
**150** children were in foster care inside the county
**75** were in placements in other parts of Wales
**25** were in placements outside of Wales.

Reporting on...

# Adoption services

Adopting a child is a big step but it's very rewarding for the adults and the children. The North Wales Adoption Service works across our region and helps find new families, place children and give support.

In 2020/21

**44**

children were adopted in North Wales.

The highest number of people adopting are from the East of the region.

# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

**There are more children than approved adopters.**

We need:

- more support for families that adopt
- more adopters who speak Welsh
- more adopters from the West of the region
- to reduce the number of children waiting for an adoptive family
- more workers to support families and to fill adoption panel vacancies.

Reporting on...

# Unpaid carers

There are around **79,000** people providing unpaid care in North Wales. What they do is of huge value to society. They have the same rights as those they care for. This means councils have a duty to assess their needs and promote their well-being.

**The number of carers is increasing.** Most of them give 20 to 49 hours of care each week, but some provide 50 or more hours of care. Short breaks for carers can make a big difference.

# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

There are gaps in the support unpaid carers get especially for carers who live in rural areas. We need more support for unpaid carers including:

- support for their health
- support for their mental health and well-being
- support for older carers
- support for families to have a rest from caring for children with disabilities.
- more specialist respite support
- counselling services
- home care support
- respite and breaks away from caring
- more options for respite and breaks throughout the year and in rural areas
- better information and advice.

We need more staff to support unpaid carers across all services.

We also need to support day centres to re-open that closed during Covid.

We need to make sure young carers are connected to support and have breaks.

## Some challenges in each area

**Anglesey**

We are engaging with unpaid carers to see how we can meet their needs in the best ways.

**Gwynedd**

We need to increase the offers of respite care and short breaks.

**Denbighshire**

We need more flexible respite care and breaks including covering weekends, overnight or pre-planned periods.

**Flintshire**

We need more respite care and support for parents who care for children with multiple health conditions and disabilities.

**Wrexham**

We need services that are available long-term and that unpaid carers can rely on.

Reporting on...

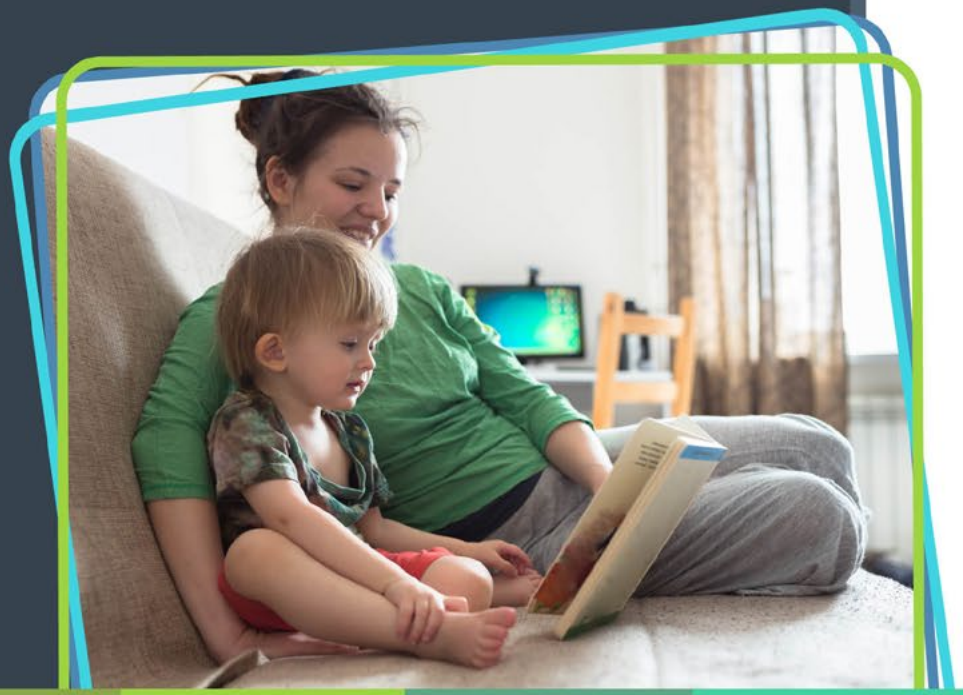
# Advocacy services

There are lots of advocacy services that work across North Wales.

**Advocacy services give a person support to have their voice heard. They help them be listened to in decisions that affect their lives.**

By law, all councils in Wales must have advocacy services for children and young people to use. An active offer of advocacy must be made to:

- children in care
- young people leaving care
- children and young people who need extra support.



# Stability

## Challenges across North Wales

### Children and young people

Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) provides advocacy services to children and young people.

Young carers need more advocacy support to have their voices heard. They get support from different providers but the number of young carers is increasing.

### Adults

Adults need advocacy services at different times during their care and support including assessments and decisions on keeping someone safe.

Older people need to be told about the support available from advocacy services.

### Mental health

People with mental health issues need to be told about the support available from advocacy services.

### Learning disability and autism

People with learning disabilities need to be told about the support available from advocacy services.

### Self-advocacy

We need more ways for people to get involved in self-advocacy groups and forums across the region.

# Next steps

This report helps us see what's happening across North Wales.
It helps us plan for the future.

**Thanks for reading this.**