THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS IN SOCIAL WELFARE LEGAL ADVICE ON ANGLESEY

REPORT AUTHORS:

Dr Sarah Nason (Bangor University) and Dr Sara Closs-Davies (University of Manchester)

RESEARCH TEAM:

Dr Peter Butcher and Sarah Worth (Bangor University); Lindsey Poole and Faith Osifo (UK Advice Services Alliance); Dr Lorien Jasny and Susanne Hughes (University of Exeter); Dr Susanne Martikke (GMCVO)

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Research Team:

Prifysgol Bangor University

University of Exeter

Manchester 1824 The University of Manchester

advice services alliance

GMCVO Research

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THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS IN SOCIAL WELFARE LEGAL ADVICE ON ANGLESEY

Executive summary and recommendations:

Introduction

This report is part of a research project that looked at how people from different localities and communities access social welfare legal (SWL) advice.

SWL advice includes advice about people's rights and entitlements in areas including welfare benefits, debt, employment, housing, immigration, education and community care. This kind of advice, often known as social welfare rights advice, is based on the law, but does not need to be provided by qualified lawyers. The demand for such advice is growing, but the capacity of the advice sector is shrinking and changing to more remote advice delivery (over the telephone and online). This project analysed the role of locality and identity-based organisations in helping people access advice, in four case-study areas: Anglesey, Rochdale, Hackney, and South Hams. This report presents findings from **Anglesey**.

The project investigated:

- Relationships between access to SWL advice and community connectedness, (in)equality and wellbeing;
- how community attitudes, attributes and affiliations affect SWL advice-seeking behaviour; and
- local informal and formal organisations, models and channels of advice delivery.

Anglesey.

Methods

The project used a variety of methods to collect data from organisations and individuals on **Anglesey** and across **North Wales**, including meetings with key stakeholders, workshops with advice providers, and work with a community in **Bryngwran**, including 39 one-to-one interviews. Bryngwran was chosen as a rural community with a large proportion of Welsh speakers, impacted by several trends experienced on Anglesey such as the outmigration of young people and an ageing population. Bryngwran is also impacted by Anglesey's two key economic sectors, tourism and agriculture. Further, Bryngwran Cymunedol, an organisation serving the local community, is exactly the kind of body our research was interested in. The research aimed to examine relationships between access to SWL advice and community characteristics, within and across a diverse set of communities of geography, socio-economic make-up, language and ethnicity.

THE ROLE OF COMMUNITIES AND CONNECTIONS IN SOCIAL WELFARE LEGAL ADVICE ON ANGLESEY

Key Findings

Communities are key to effective advice: centralisation and digitalisation does not reflect or meet people's needs

Communities and connections are key to effective advice services. Communities of place, culture and language are crucial to understanding how people experiencing problems connect with help and advice.

Across our research we found that communities and connections are key to effective advice services, and that communities of place, culture and language are crucial to understanding how people experiencing SWL problems connect with help and advice. The data across our research indicates that the case-study community someone lived in appeared to have a greater effect on what people did (or did not do) about their SWL problems, and the likelihood of their receiving help and of having problems resolved, than people's individual characteristics (e.g., age, gender, employment, disability). This finding was especially clear on Anglesey.

Social networks of people in Bryngwran on Anglesey were the second largest and most connected in our study.

Social networks of people in Bryngwran on Anglesey, were on average the second largest in our study (after those of people living in Dartmouth, South Hams). They were also on average the most closely connected social networks of people in the four case-study areas. The social networks of people in Bryngwran tended to be more diverse in their range of sizes (number of social connections) and make up (who these social connections were, e.g., friends, family, work, colleagues, neighbours). Sharing information in social networks was key to seeking help, and interviewees in Bryngwran were more likely than those in the other case-study areas to report having shared their problems with people who had faced similar experiences.

Interviewees in Bryngwran had on average the highest sense of wellbeing across our study and were generally confident that people in their community were willing to help each other.

Interviewees in Bryngwran had on average the highest sense of wellbeing across our study and were more likely to report that people in their community were willing to help each other as compared to other case-study areas. Bryngwran interviewees were also the least likely across our case-study areas to report having experienced SWL problems in the last two years, and when problems were experienced the occurrence of multiple clustered problems was lower

when compared to other case-study areas. This should not, however, be taken to downplay the prevalence of problems or their complexity and impact on the community. Interviewees were clearly experiencing problems relating to money and the cost-of-living crisis, problems accessing benefits, problems with low pay, insecure jobs, problems finding suitable housing, problems relating to health, accessing social care and additional learning needs support, and concerns about reductions in public services, poor public transport links, and the impacts of rising fuel costs. Our workshops with advice providers and community organisation across Anglesey showed that these problems were prevalent in many communities across the Island.

People in Bryngwran had experienced a range of problems, including relating to the cost of living, benefits and housing, and public services such as health, education and transport.

The organisation/service most often mentioned by our interviewees as providing help and support was the Iorwerth Arms (a community-owned and run pub and community hub), which was seen as a "lifeline" for the community. The data demonstrates that the Iorwerth Arms acts as a facilitator to help expand, strengthen or maintain a resident's social network, and for sharing information and experiences through those networks. Notably, local people with complex clustered problems tended to require, and generally usually received, a high level of community support to access advice, and key community individuals, such as staff and volunteers of the Iorwerth Arms/Bryngwran Cymunedol, were crucial to identifying and supporting those with the greatest needs.

Community organisations like the Iorwerth Arms help people expand and maintain their social networks, which, along with connections to services, plays a crucial role in preventing problems occurring or worsening.

Across our research, we found that locally based organisations, sensitive to culture, identity and language, such as the Iorwerth Arms, are central to community wellbeing, and have a crucial role to play in preventing SWL problems from occurring or worsening, including by identifying people who are struggling.

These findings about the centrality of "communities of place" to social networks and advice-seeking behaviour also indicate that the move to more centralised, remote (online or telephone) services, including advice services, does not meet some people's, or even most people's needs. Our research in Bryngwran shows in particular that comparatively high levels of digital confidence do not necessarily correlate with increased preference for online services, or with effective online help-seeking and service delivery. Digital resources have helped people connect in communities and access advice, but in our research, these were local community Facebook pages (through which formal SWL advice providers shared information about their services), community WhatsApp groups, and other Apps created by community groups on Anglesey often acting as virtual local noticeboards. Online information through websites, particularly those developed at a Wales or UK-wide level, were not seen to be of much value, and the information presented was often considered too generic to be of much assistance to people's individual circumstances affecting them in their community.

Our research in Bryngwran shows that comparatively high levels of digital confidence do not necessarily correlate with increased preference for online services, or with effective online help-seeking and service delivery.

Facebook pages and Apps created by local people and community organisations can be of more value to help seekers than generic online information such as that provided by government websites.

Despite the importance of community-based provision, a theme arising in our discussions with advice providers was of a much longer-term trend of centralising assessments and decision-making processes relating to social welfare, with respect to benefits in particular, coupled also with the perceived centralisation of advice. This centralisation makes the whole system of raising awareness of entitlements, claiming entitlements, seeking advice and challenging decisions much more remote from the individuals and communities affected. Although funding decisions under it are centralised, Welsh Government's Single Advice Fund (SAF) is a generally welcome development, which requires regional providers to demonstrate a good knowledge of their local communities. We also note that new standalone SAF grants have been provided to organisations that are needed and valued by the populations accessing them in local areas, but where collaborative and interdisciplinary models are not appropriate. The SAF, however, does not provide core funding for information and advice services organisations. This should be set in the context of several local authorities across Wales, who are struggling with the impacts of cuts to their own budgets, also cutting their contributions to core funding for advice organisations. It is not then clear how advice organisations are supposed to cover their core costs (such costs include, for example, further training of staff, salaries, building maintenance, and equipment to increase the capacity of existing staff).

Some advice providers across Wales are struggling to cover their core costs, as these are not covered by the Single Advice Fund, and local authorities are reducing their financial contributions.

The right help at the right time is key, but advice services and community organisations are under strain

A key message from Anglesey and broader North Wales advice providers and community organisations is that people need "the right help at the right time", with help and support, as well as connections to advice from community-based organisations, being central to this. Advisors need to know their communities, and ideally be representative of them, and be open-minded and non-judgemental, to provide effective services.

Advisors need to know their communities, and ideally be representative of them, and be open-minded and non-judgemental, to provide effective services.

Our research finds that advice and community organisations on Anglesey, and across North Wales, face significant challenges. Some of these challenges for Wales are reported in more detail in the briefing from our session with the North Wales Regional Advice Network.[1] Advice providers and community organisations across Wales are facing increased demand for their services, coupled with a reduction in funding. Despite initiatives such as the SAF, funding is still often based on contracts rather than grants, is short-term, and project based. The increase in the SAF funding period to three years (with potential for further extensions) is welcome in terms of sustainability and opportunities for planning for advice providers, but a minimum period of five years would be even better, with one of our research participants poignantly suggesting that funding ought really to be "for a generation, not just a few years".
Our research also finds significant issues for the advice sector in North Wales and beyond in recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers, as well as challenges to the wellbeing of advisors. Advisors in various types of organisations might also only be providing advice as ancillary to their main or other roles. A person's capacity to continue doing something that may not formally be part of their role is limited and leads to risk of burnout.

When people provide advice as an extra to their main role, this can go beyond their formal training, and can lead to burnout even for people with training.

Prevention is better than cure, but Welsh policies are not yet having much distinctive impact

Advice providers and community organisations participating in our research noted that better provision of public services, particularly in health, social care and transport, would prevent various advice needs from occurring and/or from reaching a crisis stage. It was agreed across our research participants that there could be more investment on Anglesey in preventing SWL problems from occurring or worsening.

Wales has unique legislation relevant to prevention in the wellbeing context; the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA), which details the ways in which specified public bodies must work, and work together, to improve the wellbeing of Wales. Public bodies must set and publish wellbeing objectives designed to maximise their contribution to meeting seven wellbeing goals. To show that they have applied the sustainable development principle, public bodies have to work in particular ways, two of which are particularly relevant here, namely: thinking long-term, which is "the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have a detrimental long term effect"; and prevention, "how deploying resources to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may contribute to meeting the

1 https://swladviceandcommunities.com/social-welfare-advice-research-with-the-north-wales-regional-advice-network

body's well-being objectives, or another body's objectives" (WFGA section 5(2)). These duties should mean that preventing SWL problems occurring is high on the policy agenda for Welsh public bodies, however, there has been an acknowledged implementation challenge in giving practical effect to the requirements of the WFGA.[2] At least in the context of our research, and comparing our three English case-studies to Anglesey in Wales, it is not clear that distinct Welsh policies and law around future generations, sustainability and ways of working are yet leading to any reports of comparatively better performance when it comes to preventing SWL problems occurring or worsening. From our research, WFGA and particularly, the requirement to develop wellbeing plans, is however helping to improve the identification of wellbeing issues and good practices locally, but public bodies then lack resources to make improvements, with budget cuts leading to difficult choices and reduced public services provision.

Comparing our case-studies in England and Wales, it not clear that Welsh policies and law around future generations, sustainability and ways of working are yet leading to comparatively better performance when it comes to preventing problems occurring or worsening.

A common theme emerging from our research across all case-study areas was of poor decision-making in particular government departments, and specifically the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). This leads to so-called "failure demand" where another part of the social welfare system fails to do something, or fails to do it properly, which is a significant cause of SWL advice needs. Across our research there were many examples of benefits improperly refused or withdrawn, where decisions were later overturned on reconsideration or on appeal to a Tribunal. Generally, social security schemes, including their administration, are not devolved to Wales. However, Welsh Government and local authorities in Wales already provide a number of different social welfare schemes that have tended to be seen as discrete, whereas increasingly there are calls to view them in a more coherent way as part of a developing Welsh benefits system.[3] A Welsh Benefits Charter has been developed, setting out guiding principles for the design and roll-out of payments and grants that are devolved to Welsh Government.[4] Anglesey County Council is among the signatories agreeing to the Charter principles, and to work with Welsh Government and others to realise the outcomes stated in the Charter. Ongoing monitoring of work towards the Charter principles will be valuable in understanding what a more preventative and long-term approach might look like, and whether the principles can also improve the number of decisions made "right first time". More broadly, further devolution of additional social security benefits may at least have the potential to redress some of the systemic failure demand that is a significant cause of the SWL problems experienced by individuals and communities on Anglesey engaged with our research. However, such devolution would need to be accompanied by a fair allocation of additional financial resource.

Ongoing work to monitor the implementation of a Welsh Benefits Charter could help in understanding what a more preventative approach might look like, and what are the advantages and challenges of devolving social security.

2 *https://senedd.wales/media/sjrp5vm0/cr-ld14223-e.pdf*

3 *https://www.bevanfoundation.org/current-projects/welsh_benefits_system/*

4 *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-02/welsh-benefits-charter.pdf*

Advice networks are important, but they are largely voluntary, lack sustainability and should include more localised engagement

The advice services landscape on Anglesey was amongst the most well connected of our case-study areas.

We found the advice services landscape on Anglesey to be amongst the most well connected of our four case-study areas (to recap, these are Anglesey, Hackney, Rochdale and South Hams). Our workshops and other engagement with advice and community sector professionals evidenced good working relationships, generally clear understanding of the services provided by other organisations, and effective referrals and partnership working. The Welsh National Advice Network initiative, and Regional Advice Networks have facilitated the sharing of common concerns and best practices and have improved Welsh Government awareness of the issues facing the advice sector. Nevertheless, the engagement and partnership working on Anglesey has developed from the ground up, through the work of dedicated staff and volunteers, and goodwill. This shows that whilst policy may ultimately acknowledge and support practices that have grown from the ground up, it is local leadership and key community individuals that are crucial to establishing and maintaining well-networked advice services that fully appreciate and are sensitive to the needs of local communities on Anglesey.

Local leadership and key community individuals are crucial to well-networked advice services that fully appreciate and are sensitive to the needs of communities on Anglesey.

The Welsh National Advice Network and Regional Advice Networks, have facilitated sharing common concerns and best practices, and improved Welsh Government awareness of issues facing the advice sector.

Despite the aims of the National Advice Network and the SAF, there remains a need for better co-ordination of funding sources, particularly where these incentivise the community sector to provide help and support with cost-of-living problems, that shades into advice work. Advice providers and community organisations responding to our research considered that Welsh Government ought to further develop existing platforms and networks into a single portal, as Welsh Government has the most extensive overview of the information and advice landscape and has the capacity to draw on existing good practice whilst avoiding duplication.

There needs to be better co-ordination of funding sources, especially where these incentivise the community sector to provide help and support with cost-of-living problems, that shades into advice work.

Larger, more connected, and especially more diverse social networks do correlate with SWL problem resolution

It is not just the size and connectedness of social networks that matters for problem resolution, but also who is in someone's social network, and the social and economic capital these people have.

Across our research we found a positive correlation between social network size and problem resolution; that is, people with larger social networks were somewhat more likely to report that their problems had been either partially or fully resolved. The data also came close to showing a weak correlation between the connectedness of social networks and problem resolution: those with more connected social networks were somewhat more likely to report having their problems at least partially resolved. This is explored more fully in our full project report comparing all the case-study areas.[5] More broadly our data suggests that it is not just the size and connectedness of social networks that matters for problem resolution, but also who is in someone's social network, and the social and economic capital such connections have. For example, we found that there may be a link between Bryngwran interviewees' greater tendency towards having professionals in their social networks, as well as their having more connected social networks, and their self-reported ability to access formal SWL advice without referral or signposting. Community hubs such as the Iorwerth Arms are central places where people go to develop and expand their social networks, improving their wellbeing and reducing their likelihood of experiencing problems, yet such assets themselves are increasingly only preserved through community action. The Iorwerth Arms itself is a community-owned and run pub that was saved from closure and demolition through community action in 2015, now a not-for-profit pub run by unpaid Directors.

Community hubs are central places where people go to develop and expand their social networks, improving their wellbeing and reducing their likelihood of experiencing problems, yet such assets are increasingly only preserved through community action.

There is a need to improve education on rights and entitlements, to reduce stigma, and to raise awareness of advice services

There is a lack of awareness of legal rights and entitlements, with the need to raise awareness through the school curriculum, and through continuing, lifelong learning, seen as a priority for action.

5 https://www.nuffieldfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2022/05/The-role-of-communities-and-connections-in-social-welfare-legal-advice-final-report.pdf

In comparison to other local case-study areas, Bryngwran interviewees were more likely to share their problems directly with formal advice providers, such as Citizens Advice and the Council Welfare Rights Advice Service, without requiring an obvious intermediary step of signposting or referral. Partly, this is due to some good visibility of these advice services, including through outreach activities at the Iorwerth Arms, and word of mouth through social networks. Nevertheless, across our research, including on Anglesey, there was a lack of awareness of legal rights and entitlements, with the need to raise awareness both through the school curriculum, and continuing, lifelong learning, which was stressed as a priority for action. Awareness of organisations/services providing help and advice was variable in Bryngwran, and several people could not name any organisations/services helping people with SWL problems, although they generally linked this to not having experienced any such problems themselves. People also felt that waiting for a problem to occur, before learning about which organisations/services are available, negatively impacted the chances of resolution.

People also reported experiencing "shame" around having problems and felt "pride" in managing their problems themselves rather than sharing them with people in their networks. Advice and community organisations also saw pride and shame as a common reason for people on Anglesey, especially those in rural areas and older people, not seeking help with problems, often waiting until a crisis point is reached. Advice providers and community organisations were aware of Welsh Government's "Claim what's yours" initiative, which is provided through Advicelink Cymru and aims to support people to understand and claim financial support they are entitled to. Campaigns like this are having some impact, but stigma remains, and social support from peers continues to be important in alleviating such stigma.

Campaigns such as "Claim what's yours" are having an impact, but social support from peers continues to be important in alleviating the perceived shame and stigma associated with having problems and seeking help.

There are limits to social networks and strong communities on access to justice

Across our research case-study areas, we found that communities can and do provide support to people, in terms of food, goods, furniture, social support, connections to advice and other services. However, a key theme of our research was that community support reaches a limit in circumstances where three distinct but often overlapping circumstances apply. First, where the problem cannot be fully resolved without specialist advice from formal SWL advisors who are better placed to address underlying legal rights and entitlements, due to their training, expertise, and quality assurance processes; and, rightly or wrongly, due to perceptions (and some reality) that they alone have the "power" and "standing" within state structures and processes to push for the enforcement of rights and entitlements. On Anglesey we found that access to such specialist SWL advice providers was better than in other case-study areas, but that providers continue to face challenges. The second situation when community support reaches its limit is where problems are due to the so-called "failure demand", that is generated through the poor administration of rights or entitlements. The third context is cuts to local public services provision that cause significant challenges to people in communities, which can later result in SWL problems.

Our research shows that many of the social welfare legal problems faced by people in local communities stem from austerity cuts to services and shrinking state provision; Anglesey appeared to be no exception here.

Our research shows that many of the SWL problems faced by people in local communities stemmed from austerity cuts to services and shrinking state provision; Anglesey appeared to be no exception here. Interviewees reported feeling that their local authorities often had neither the time nor inclination to help. They had commonly experienced problems with health and social care cutbacks, patchy and inconsistent provision of social workers/social care services, lack of provision for children and young people, long waits for accessing GPs and other healthcare services, poor public transport, difficulties accessing appropriate social housing, and police services being nonresponsive to anti-social behaviour and other community safety issues. Anglesey was not immune from facing all these challenges, which suggests that austerity cutbacks to services, and the resultant increased incidence and worsening of SWL problems, is as much a problem for Wales as it is for England, and that devolved initiatives have so far been limited in their impacts. Our research finds that neither stronger social networks nor more effective advice seeking behaviour can compensate for lack of investment in public services.

Neither stronger social networks nor more effective advice seeking behaviour can compensate for lack of investment in public services.

There is a need for more research with diverse communities in Wales

Our direct fieldwork with the public in Wales was limited to a small case-study locality, the village of Bryngwran. Understandably, our findings cannot be statistically generalised to Anglesey as a whole, or to Wales more widely. That said, the depth of our qualitative investigation, alongside the several different research methods adopted (desk-based research, workshops and other engagement with advice services providers and community organisations, and wider engagement with networks of organisations across Wales) provides a solid foundation for wider policy recommendations. There is, however, a need for further research examining the role of communities and connections in SWL advice across different localities in Wales, particularly focusing on a diverse collection of geographical areas with varying population densities, and on areas experiencing the highest rates of deprivation, and/or where communities are otherwise marginalised.

Recommendations

The following recommendations relate specifically to Anglesey and to Wales

Our Full report makes several recommendations for local governments and statutory authorities, and for the advice sector, which are also relevant to Anglesey (these wider recommendations are also reproduced at page 89 of this Report).

WELSH GOVERNMENT

1. Neither stronger social networks nor more effective advice seeking behaviour can compensate for lack of investment in public services. Welsh Government should continue to invest in public services, with a particular view to furthering the wellbeing goals and ways of working (particularly prevention and thinking long-term) enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. **[Sections 4.1; 5.1; 6.5; 7.3; 7.7]**

2. Continued funding for the Single Advice Fund is welcome and central to enabling people to realise their social welfare rights and entitlements, this funding should at the very least be maintained. **[Sections 4.1; 4.2; 5.2; 5.5; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4]**

3. Continue monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Welsh Benefits Charter particularly to determine the impact of implementing the Charter on the occurrence of social welfare problems, and its impact on ensuring that decisions are made "right first time" and that "failure demand" (where something is not done or not done properly in the benefits administration system) is reduced. Learn lessons relevant to the potential devolution of other social security benefits. **[Sections 5.1; 5.6; 7.3; 7.7]**

4. Continue to support the "Claim what's yours" campaign, and other similar campaigns, and continue work around reducing the stigma associated with experiencing social welfare problems and with seeking help and advice in relation to these problems. **[Sections 5.3; 6.7.3; 7.6]**

5. Support lifelong learning initiatives relating to education around social welfare rights and entitlements, and sources of information, advice and redress, especially in the context of progressing social and economic rights and commitments to reducing social and economic inequality. **[Sections 5.4; 6.7; 7.3; 7.6]**

6. Provide more clarity around the various sources of both devolved and non-devolved funding for the advice and communities sectors in Wales, particularly where these interact and overlap in relation to the provision of social welfare help, information and advice. **[Sections 4; 5.2; 5.4; 5.5; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4]**

7. Continue monitoring the impact of introducing the category, "associated services", into the Information and Advice Quality Framework including the number and type of organisations seeking (and receiving) accreditation in this category. Consider funding

additional research into the impact of this additional category on the delivery of services by the Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise sector alongside the advice sector. **[Sections 4.1; 4.2; 5.3]**

8. Learn from the strong collaborative partnership working demonstrated between the advice sector, local authority and communities on Anglesey. Acknowledge that this takes significant time to develop and is heavily based on the leadership of key individuals within each sector. Consider how Welsh Government advice and communities policies could support the sustainability of such partnerships for the future, and in particular provide support for the next generation of community leaders. **[Sections 4; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 6.4; 6.7; 7.4]**

9. Consider funding additional research examining the role of communities of place, culture and language in how people seek and access help and advice with social welfare legal problems in diverse communities across Wales. This research should also be used, alongside quantitative research, to inform further policy development and resourcing for advice services. **[Sections 6.6; 7.1; 7.5; 7.8]**

ANGLESEY AND GWYNEDD PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

10. Actively consider the contribution of information and advice services to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Anglesey and Gwynedd, and actively consider the important roles played by both the advice and communities sectors in supporting public services delivery and supporting joint working across public services providers locally. **[Sections 5, 6 and 7]**

ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

11. Whilst Regional Advice Networks are an important source of learning and partnership working, consider facilitating the development of an Anglesey Community Advice and Information Partnership (CAIP) bringing together key public services providers, the advice sector, and community organisations operating on Anglesey. The CAIP would aim to share information about services, assist referrals, and ensure a coordinated response to shared problems, including new and emerging problems. The CAIP would also be a forum for sharing best practices around engaging with diverse communities on Anglesey. **[Sections 5.3; 5.4; 7.2; 7.4; 7.5]**

12. Continue to support the resourcing of services provided by place-based, culturally and linguistically sensitive community organisations across Anglesey to prevent social welfare problems from occurring or worsening. **[Sections 4.2; 5.2; 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2; 7.4]**

13. Continue (financially and non-financially) supporting the creation and maintenance of community hubs. **[Sections 4.2; 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2]**

14. Ensure that policies, including those relating to communities and advice, comply with both the letter and spirit of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, especially provisions around the importance of prevention; assisting people to access

the right help at the right time is a crucial facet of preventing problems occurring and/or worsening. **[Sections 5.1; 7.3]**

15. Consider the findings of this research related to the challenges faced by people seeking information about Council services, or seeking to contact the Council, who either cannot or prefer not to use online communication. **[Sections 6.7; 7.1; 7.7]**

ADVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

16. Continue to maintain and develop partnerships between advice and communities sector organisations operating on Anglesey. Share best practice about how relationships are developed and maintained. **[Sections 4.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 7.4; 7.6]**

17. Continue to facilitate and develop rural outreach and the genuine co-location of advice and community services, where appropriate. **[Sections 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.6]**

RÔL CYMUNEDAU A CHYSYLLTIADAU MEWN CYNGOR CYFREITHIOL AR LES CYMDEITHASOL AR YNYS MÔN:

CRYNODEB GWEITHREDOL AC ARGYMHELLION

AWDURON YR ADRODDIAD:

Dr Sarah Nason (Prifysgol Bangor) a Dr Sara Closs-Davies (University of Manchester)

TÎM YMCHWIL:

Dr Peter Butcher a Sarah Worth (Prifysgol Bangor); Lindsey Poole and Faith Osifo (UK Advice Services Alliance); Dr Lorien Jasny and Susanne Hughes (University of Exeter); Dr Susanne Martikke (GMCVO)

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Diolchiadau

Ariannwyd y prosiect hwn gan gydweithrediad yr Academi Brydeinig a Sefydliad Nuffield ar Deall Cymunedau. Mae Sefydliad Nuffield yn ymddiriedolaeth elusennol annibynnol gyda chenhadaeth i hybu lles cymdeithasol. Mae'n ariannu ymchwil sy'n llywio polisi cymdeithasol, yn bennaf mewn Addysg, Lles a Chyfiawnder. Sefydliad Nuffield yw sylfaenydd a chyd-ariannwr Cyngor Biofoeseg Nuffield, Sefydliad Ada Lovelace ac Arsyllfa Cyfiawnder Teuluol Nuffield. Mae'r Sefydliad wedi ariannu'r prosiect hwn, ond safbwyntiau'r awduron a fynegir ac nid o reidrwydd y Sefydliad. Ceir rhagor o wybodaeth yn www.nuffieldfoundation.org.

Yr Academi Brydeinig yw academi genedlaethol y DU ar gyfer y dyniaethau a'r gwyddorau cymdeithasol. Mae'n ysgogi'r disgyblaethau hyn i ddeall y byd a llunio dyfodol mwy disglair. O ddeallusrwydd artiffisial i newid yn yr hinsawdd, o adeiladu ffyniant i wella lles – dim ond trwy ddyfnhau mewnwelediad i bobl, diwylliannau a chymdeithasau y gellir datrys heriau cymhleth heddiw. Mae mynd i'r afael â heriau cymhleth o ddeallusrwydd artiffisial i newid yn yr hinsawdd yn gofyn am ddyfnhau ein dealltwriaeth o bobl, diwylliannau a chymdeithasau. Mae'r Academi'n buddsoddi mewn ymchwilwyr a phrosiectau ledled y DU a thramor, yn ymgysylltu â'r cyhoedd mewn syniadau a dadleuon ffres, ac yn dod ag ysgolheigion, y llywodraeth, busnes a chymdeithas sifil ynghyd i ddylanwadu ar bolisi er budd pawb. Ceir rhagor o wybodaeth am eu gwaith yn www.thebritishacademy.ac.uk.

Hoffai'r ymchwilwyr ddiolch i bawb sydd wedi rhoi mor hael o'u hamser i gymryd rhan yn ein hymchwil, ni fyddai'r prosiect hwn wedi bod yn bosibl hebddynt. Gyda diolch arbennig i Ned Sharpe (Pennaeth Prosiectau Strategol Cymorth Cyfreithiol, Mynediad at Gyfiawnder, Gweinyddiaeth Gyfiawnder y DU), Bryngwran Cymunedol a'r Iorwerth Arms.

Ariennir gan:

The British Academy

Nuffield Foundation

Tîm ymchwil:

Prifysgol Bangor University

University of Exeter

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GMCVO Research

RÔL CYMUNEDAU A CHYSYLLTIADAU MEWN CYNGOR CYFREITHIOL AR LES CYMDEITHASOL AR YNYS MÔN

Crynodeb gweithredol ac argymhellion:

Cyflwyniad

Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn rhan o brosiect ymchwil a oedd yn edrych ar sut mae pobl o wahanol leoliadau a chymunedau'n cael gafael ar gyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol.

Mae cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol yn cynnwys cyngor am hawliau a hawlogaeth pobl mewn meysydd sy'n cynnwys budd-daliadau lles, dyledion, cyflogaeth, tai, mewnfudo, addysg a gofal cymunedol. Mae'r math hwn o gyngor, sy'n aml yn cael ei alw yn gyngor ar hawliau lles cymdeithasol, yn seiliedig ar y gyfraith ond nid oes yn rhaid i gyfreithwyr cymwysedig ei ddarparu. Mae'r galw am gyngor o'r fath ar gynnydd, ond mae capasiti'r sector cynghori yn lleihau ac yn newid i ddarparu mwy o gyngor o bell (dros y ffôn ac ar-lein). Roedd y prosiect hwn yn dadansoddi rôl mudiadau lleol a mudiadau ar sail hunaniaeth o ran helpu pobl i gael gafael ar gyngor ym mhedair ardal yr astudiaeth: Ynys Môn, Rochdale, Hackney, a South Hams. Mae'r adroddiad hwn yn cyflwyno'r canfyddiadau o Ynys Môn.

Roedd y prosiect wedi ymchwilio i'r canlynol:

- Y berthynas rhwng mynediad at gyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol a chysylltedd cymunedol, anghydraddoldeb/ cydraddoldeb a llesiant;
- sut mae agweddau, priodoleddau a chysylltiadau cymunedau yn effeithio ar ymddygiad pobl o ran chwilio am gyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol; a
- mudiadau anffurfiol a ffurfiol lleol, modelau a sianeli darparu cyngor.

Ynys Môn

Dulliau

Defnyddiodd y prosiect amrywiaeth o ddulliau i gasglu data gan fudiadau ac unigolion ar **Ynys Môn** ac ar draws **Gogledd Cymru**. Roedd hyn yn cynnwys cyfarfodydd gyda rhanddeiliaid allweddol, gweithdai gyda darparwyr cyngor, a gweithio gyda chymuned ym Mryngwran, gan gynnwys 39 o gyfweliadau un-i-un. Cafodd pentref **Bryngwran** ei ddewis gan ei fod yn gymuned wledig gyda chyfran uchel o siaradwr Cymraeg. Mae nifer o batrymau sydd i'w gweld yn Ynys Môn yn effeithio ar y pentref, er enghraifft pobl ifanc yn symud o'r ardal a phoblogaeth sy'n heneiddio. Mae dau brif sector economaidd Ynys Môn yn effeithio ar Fryngwran hefyd, sef twristiaeth ac amaethyddiaeth. Ar ben hynny mae Bryngwran Cymunedol, mudiad sy'n

gwasanaethu'r gymuned leol, yn union y math o gorff a oedd o ddiddordeb i'n hymchwil. Roedd yr ymchwil yn ceisio creu darlun o'r berthynas rhwng mynediad at gyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol a nodweddion cymunedol, o fewn ac ar draws set amrywiol o gymunedau o ran daearyddiaeth, cyfansoddiad economaidd-gymdeithasol, iaith ac ethnigrwydd.

RÔL CYMUNEDAU A CHYSYLLTIADAU MEWN CYNGOR CYFREITHIOL AR LES CYMDEITHASOL AR YNYS MÔN

Y Prif Ganfyddiadau

Mae cymunedau'n allweddol i gyngor effeithiol: nid yw canoli na digideiddio yn adlewyrchu nac yn diwallu anghenion pobl

Mae cymunedau a chysylltiadau yn allweddol i wasanaethau cynghori effeithiol. Mae cymunedau lle, diwylliant ac iaith yn hanfodol i ddeall sut mae pobl sy'n profi problemau yn cysylltu â chymorth a chyngor.

Ar draws ein hymchwil, gwelsom fod cymunedau a chysylltiadau'n allweddol i wasanaethau cynghori effeithiol, a bod cymunedau lle, diwylliant ac iaith yn hanfodol i ddeall sut mae pobl sy'n cael problemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol yn cysylltu â chymorth a chyngor. Mae ein data'n dangos bod y nodweddion cyfun hyn, sef lle mae pobl yn byw, eu diwylliant, eu hiaith a'u hymdeimlad o gymuned, yn ymddangos yn fwy perthnasol i ddeall rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol pobl, ac i ddeall y math o broblemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol mae pobl yn eu hwynebu, yn ogystal â'r hyn mae pobl yn ei wneud pan fyddant yn cael problemau o'r fath, na nodweddion unigol pobl fel oedran, rhywedd, cyflogaeth neu a oes ganddynt anabledd neu gyflwr iechyd. Roedd y canfyddiad hwn yn arbennig o glir ar Ynys Môn.

Rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol o bobl ym Mryngwran ar Ynys Môn oedd yr ail fwyaf a'r mwyaf cysylltiedig yn ein hastudiaeth.

Rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol pobl Bryngwran ar Ynys Môn oedd yr ail fwyaf yn ein hastudiaeth ar gyfartaledd (ar ôl Dartmouth yn South Hams). Ar gyfartaledd, rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol pobl Bryngwran oedd y rhwydwaith cymdeithasol â'r cysylltiadau agosaf â phobl o bedair ardal yr astudiaeth. Roedd rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol pobl Bryngwran yn tueddu i fod yn fwy amrywiol eu maint (nifer y cysylltiadau cymdeithasol) a'u cyfansoddiad (pwy oedd y cysylltiadau cymdeithasol hyn, e.e. ffrindiau, gwaith teulu, cydweithwyr, cymdogion). Roedd rhannu gwybodaeth mewn rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol yn allweddol i geisio cymorth. Roedd natur rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol pobl, a sut roeddent yn eu defnyddio i ofyn am help ac roedd y rhai a gafodd eu cyfweld ym Mryngwran yn fwy tebygol na'r rhai yn ardaloedd eraill yr astudiaeth i ddweud eu bod wedi rhannu eu problemau â rhai a oedd wedi wynebu profiadau tebyg

Roedd gan gyfweleion ym Mryngwran yr ymdeimlad uchaf o les ar gyfartaledd ar draws ein hastudiaeth ac roeddent, yn gyffredinol, yn hyderus bod pobl yn eu cymuned yn barod i helpu ei gilydd.

Y rhai a gafodd eu cyfweld ym Mryngwran oedd y lleiaf tebygol ar draws ardaloedd yr astudiaeth hefyd o ddweud eu bod wedi cael problemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol yn ystod y ddwy flynedd ddiwethaf, a phan roedd problemau roedd nifer y problemau clwstwr lluosog yn is wrth gymharu ag ardaloedd eraill yr astudiaeth. Fodd bynnag, ni ddylid tybio bod hyn yn golygu nad oedd problemau na phroblemau cymhleth yno a'u bod yn effeithio ar y gymuned. Roedd hi'n amlwg bod rhai a gafodd eu cyfweld yn cael problemau yn ymwneud ag arian, yr argyfwng costau byw, problemau wrth gael gafael ar fudd-daliadau, problemau gyda thâl isel, swyddi ansicr, problemau'n dod o hyd i dai addas, problemau iechyd, cael gafael ar ofal cymdeithasol a chymorth anghenion dysgu ychwanegol, a phryderon am gwtogi gwasanaethau cyhoeddus, cysylltiadau trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus gwael ac effaith y cynnydd mewn costau tanwydd. Roedd ein gweithdai gyda darparwyr cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol ar draws Ynys Môn wedi dangos bod y problemau hyn yn gyffredin mewn llawer o gymunedau ar draws yr ynys.

Roedd pobl ym Mryngwran wedi profi amrywiaeth o broblemau, gan gynnwys yn ymwneud â chostau byw, budd-daliadau a thai, a gwasanaethau cyhoeddus fel iechyd, addysg a thrafnidiaeth.

Y mudiad/gwasanaeth a gafodd ei enwi amlaf gan y rhai a gafodd eu cyfweld fel un a oedd yn darparu help a chefnogaeth oedd yr Iorwerth Arms (hyb cymunedol a thafarn sy'n berchen i'r gymuned ac yn cael ei rhedeg gan y gymuned). Roedd pobl yn ystyried bod hwn yn "hanfodol" i'r gymuned. Mae'r data'n dangos bod yr Iorwerth Arms yn gweithredu fel hwylusydd i helpu i ehangu, i gryfhau neu i gynnal rhwydwaith cymdeithasol trigolion, ac i rannu gwybodaeth a phrofiadau drwy'r rhwydweithiau hynny. Yn benodol, roedd pobl leol gyda chlwstwr o broblemau cymhleth yn tueddu i fod eisiau lefel uchel o gefnogaeth gymunedol i gael gafael ar gyngor ac yn gyffredinol roeddent yn cael hwnnw. Roedd unigolion allweddol yn y gymuned, fel staff a gwirfoddolwyr yr Iorwerth Arms/Bryngwran Cymunedol, yn hollbwysig o ran adnabod a chefnogi'r rhai a oedd â'r anghenion mwyaf.

Mae sefydliadau cymunedol fel yr Iorwerth Arms yn helpu pobl i ehangu a chynnal eu rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol, sydd, ynghyd â chysylltiadau â gwasanaethau, yn chwarae rhan hanfodol wrth atal problemau rhag igwydd neu waethygu.

Ar draws ein hymchwil, gwelsom fod mudiadau lleol, sy'n sensitif i ddiwylliant, hunaniaeth ac iaith, fel yr Iorwerth Arms ym Mryngwran, yn ganolog i lesiant cymunedol, a bod ganddynt ran hanfodol i'w chwarae o ran atal problemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol rhag digwydd neu waethygu, gan gynnwys drwy ganfod pobl sy'n cael trafferthion.

Mae'r canfyddiadau hyn ynghylch pa mor ganolog yw "cymunedau lle" i rwydweithiau cymdeithasol ac ymddygiad gofyn am gyngor hefyd yn dangos nad yw symud i wasanaethau mwy canolog, o bell (ar-lein neu dros y ffôn), gan gynnwys gwasanaethau cynghori, yn diwallu anghenion y rhan fwyaf o bobl. Mae ein hymchwil ym Mryngwran yn dangos yn benodol nad yw lefelau cymharol uchel o hyder digidol o reidrwydd yn cyd-fynd â mwy o ddewis o ran gwasanaethau ar-lein. Nid ydynt chwaith yn dangos bod modd chwilio am help na darparu gwasanaethau ar-lein yn effeithiol. Mae adnoddau digidol wedi helpu pobl i gysylltu mewn cymunedau a chael gafael ar gyngor. Ond yn ein hymchwil, roedd y rhain yn dudalennau Facebook cymunedol lleol (lle'r oedd darparwyr cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol ffurfiol yn rhannu gwybodaeth am eu gwasanaethau), grwpiau WhatsApp cymunedol, ac Apiau eraill sydd wedi cael eu creu gan grwpiau cymunedol ar Ynys Môn a oedd yn aml yn gweithredu fel hysbysfyrddau lleol rhithiol. Nid oedd gwybodaeth ar-lein trwy wefannau, yn enwedig y rhai a ddatblygwyd ar lefel Cymru neu'r DU gyfan, i'w gweld yn werthfawr iawn, ac roedd y wybodaeth a gyflwynwyd yn aml yn cael ei hystyried yn rhy generig i fod o gymorth mawr i amgylchiadau unigol pobl sy'n effeithio arnynt yn eu cymuned.

Mae ein hymchwil ym Mryngwran yn dangos nad yw lefelau cymharol uchel o hyder digidol o reidrwydd yn cyd-fynd â ffafriaeth gynyddol am wasanaethau ar-lein. Nid ydynt chwaith yn dangos bod modd chwilio am help na darparu gwasanaethau ar-lein yn effeithiol.

Gall tudalennau Facebook ac Apiau sy'n cael eu creu gan bobl leol a sefydliadau cymunedol fod o fwy o werth i bobl sy'n ceisio cymorth na gwybodaeth ar-lein generig fel yr hyn a ddarperir gan wefannau'r llywodraeth, ac yr oedd yn aml yn gweithredu fel hysbysfyrddau lleol rhithiol.

Er gwaethaf pwysigrwydd darpariaeth yn y gymuned, roedd thema gref yn ein trafodaethau gyda darparwyr cyngor am duedd llawer mwy tymor hir o ganoli asesiadau a phrosesau gwneud penderfyniadau sy'n ymwneud â lles cymdeithasol, mewn perthynas â budd-daliadau yn benodol, ynghyd â'r canfyddiad o ganoli cyngor. Mae'r canoli hwn yn golygu bod y system gyfan o godi ymwybyddiaeth o hawlogaeth, hawlio hawlogaeth, gofyn am gyngor a herio penderfyniadau yn bellach o lawer oddi wrth yr unigolion a'r cymunedau yr effeithir arnynt. Er bod penderfyniadau cyllido'n ganolog, mae Cronfa Gynghori Sengl Llywodraeth Cymru yn ddatblygiad sy'n cael ei groesawu'n gyffredinol, ond eu bod angen darparwyr rhanbarthol gwybodus o'r gymunedau lleol. Rydym hefyd yn nodi bod grantiau annibynnol newydd o dan y Gronfa Gynghori Sengl wedi'u darparu i sefydliadau, sydd eu hangen a'u gwerthfawrogi gan y poblogaethau sy'n cael mynediad iddynt mewn ardaloedd lleol, ond lle nad yw modelau cydweithredol a rhyngddisgyblaethol yn briodol. . Fodd bynnag, nid yw'r Gronfa Gynghori Sengl yn rhoi cyllid craidd i fudiadau gwasanaethau gwybodaeth a chyngor, ac eto mae nifer o awdurdodau lleol ledled Cymru, sy'n delio ag effeithiau toriadau i'w cyllidebau eu hunain, yn cwtogi ar eu cyfraniadau at gyllid craidd i fudiadau cynghori. Nid yw'n glir sut mae mudiadau i fod i dalu eu costau craidd (sy'n cynnwys hyfforddiant pellach i staff, cyflogau, cynnal a chadw adeiladau, ac offer i gynyddu capasiti'r staff presennol).

Mae rhai darparwyr cyngor ledled Cymru yn ffeindio hi'n anodd talu eu costau craidd, gan nad yw'r rhain yn dod o dan y Gronfa Gynghori Sengl, ac mae awdurdodau lleol yn lleihau eu cyfraniadau ariannol.

Mae'r cymorth iawn ar yr adeg iawn yn allweddol, ond mae gwasanaethau cynghori a mudiadau cymunedol dan bwysau

Un neges allweddol gan ddarparwyr cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol Ynys Môn a Gogledd Cymru, a gafodd ei hadleisio yn ardaloedd eraill ein hastudiaeth, yw bod ar bobl angen "y cymorth iawn ar yr adeg iawn". Mae cymorth a chefnogaeth, yn ogystal â chysylltiadau at gyngor, gan fudiadau cymunedol yn ganolog i hyn. Mae angen i'r cynghorwyr adnabod eu cymunedau, ac yn ddelfrydol dylent eu cynrychioli, a bod â meddwl agored ac yn anfeirniadol, er mwyn darparu gwasanaethau effeithiol.

Mae angen i gynghorwyr adnabod eu cymunedau, ac yn ddelfrydol, fod yn gynrychioliadol ohonynt, bod â meddwl agored ac anfeirniadol, i ddarparu gwasanaethau effeithiol.

Mae ein hymchwil yn canfod bod mudiadau cymunedol a chynghori ar Ynys Môn, ac ar draws Gogledd Cymru, yn wynebu heriau sylweddol. Mae llawer o'r heriau hyn yn codi yn ardaloedd eraill yr astudiaeth. Mae rhai o'r heriau i Gymru yn cael mwy o sylw yn ein adroddiad byr i'r Rhwydwaith Cynghori Rhanbarth Gogledd Cymru (NWRAN).[1] Mae darparwyr cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol ledled Cymru yn wynebu mwy o alw am eu gwasanaethau, ynghyd â llai o gyllid. Er gwaethaf cynlluniau megis y Gronfa Gynghori Sengl, mae cyllid yn dal yn aml yn seiliedig ar gontractau yn hytrach na grantiau, yn gyllid tymor byr, ac yn seiliedig ar brosiectau. Croesewir ymestyn cyfnod cyllido'r Gronfa Gynghori Sengl i dair blynedd (gyda'r potensial am estyniadau pellach) o ran cynaliadwyedd a chyfleoedd i ddarparwyr cyngor gynllunio. Fodd bynnag byddai cyfnod sylfaenol o bum mlynedd hyd yn oed yn well, gydag un a gymerodd ran yn ein hymchwil yn awgrymu y dylai cyllid fod "am genhedlaeth, nid am ychydig flynyddoedd".

Mae ein hymchwil hefyd yn canfod problemau mawr i'r sector cynghori yng Ngogledd Cymru a'r tu hwnt o ran recriwtio a chadw staff a gwirfoddolwyr, yn ogystal â heriau i lesiant cynghorwyr. Mae cynghorwyr mewn gwahanol fathau o fudiadau yn gallu bod yn darparu cyngor fel rhywbeth ategol i'w prif swyddogaethau. Cyfyngedig yw capasiti rhywun i barhau i wneud rhywbeth nad yw o bosibl yn rhan ffurfiol o'i swydd, ac mae'n gallu arwain at risg o orweithio.

Pan fydd pobl yn rhoi cyngor sy'n ychwanegol i'w prif rôl, gall hyn fynd y tu hwnt i'w hyfforddiant ffurfiol, a gall arwain at flinder, hyd yn oed i rheini â hyfforddiant.

1 https://swladviceandcommunities.com/ymchwil-cyngor-lles-cymdeithasol-gyda-rhwydwaith-cyngor-rhanbarthol-gogledd-cymru

Mae atal yn well na gwella, ond nid yw polisïau Cymru yn cael llawer o effaith benodol eto

Dywedodd darparwyr cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol a gymerodd ran yn ein hymchwil y byddai darparu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus gwell, yn enwedig ym meysydd iechyd, gofal cymdeithasol a thrafnidiaeth, yn rhwystro amrywiol anghenion cynghori rhag codi a/neu rhag cyrraedd argyfwng. Cytunwyd ar draws ein hymchwil y gallai fod mwy o fuddsoddiad ar Ynys Môn i atal problemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol rhag digwydd neu waethygu.

Mae gan Gymru ddeddfwriaeth unigryw sy'n berthnasol i atal yng nghyd-destun llesiant; Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015, sy'n nodi'r ffyrdd y mae'n rhaid i gyrff cyhoeddus penodol weithio, a chydweithio, i wella llesiant Cymru. Rhaid i gyrff cyhoeddus osod a chyhoeddi amcanion llesiant sydd wedi'u dylunio i gynyddu eu cyfraniad at gyflawni'r saith nod llesiant. Er mwyn dangos eu bod wedi dilyn yr egwyddor datblygu cynaliadwy, mae'n rhaid i gyrff cyhoeddus weithio mewn ffyrdd penodol, mae dwy ohonynt yn arbennig o berthnasol yma, sef: meddwl yn y tymor hir, sef "pwysigrwydd cydbwyso anghenion tymor byr â'r angen i ddiogelu'r gallu i ddiwallu anghenion tymor hir, yn enwedig lle gallai pethau sy'n cael eu gwneud i ddiwallu anghenion tymor byr gael effaith niweidiol yn y tymor hir"; ac atal, "sut gall defnyddio adnoddau i atal problemau rhag codi neu waethygu gyfrannu at gyflawni amcanion llesiant y corff, neu amcanion corff arall". Dylai'r dyletswyddau hyn olygu bod atal problemau lles cymdeithasol yn uchel ar agenda polisi cyrff cyhoeddus Cymru. Fodd bynnag, cydnabyddir y bu her o ran gweithredu gofynion Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol yn ymarferol.[2] O leiaf yng nghyd-destun ein hymchwil, ac wrth gymharu tair ardal ein hastudiaeth yn Lloegr ag Ynys Môn yng Nghymru, nid yw'n glir bod polisïau a chyfraith Cymru am genedlaethau'r dyfodol, cynaliadwyedd a ffyrdd o weithio yn arwain eto at unrhyw adroddiadau o berfformiad cymharol well o ran atal problemau lles cymdeithasol rhag digwydd neu waethygu. O'n hymchwil fodd bynnag gwelir bod Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol ac yn benodol y gofyniad i ddatblygu cynlluniau llesiant yn helpu i adnabod materion ac arferion da llesiant yn lleol yn well, ond nad oes gan gyrff cyhoeddus adnoddau i wneud gwelliannau, gyda thoriadau i gyllidebau'n arwain at ddewisiadau anodd a darparu llai o wasanaethau cyhoeddus.

O gymharu ein hastudiaethau achos yng Nghymru a Lloegr, nid yw'n glir bod polisïau a chyfraith Cymru ynghylch cenedlaethau'r dyfodol, cynaliadwyedd a ffyrdd o weithio, eto'n arwain at berfformiad cymharol well o ran atal problemau rhag digwydd neu waethygu.

Thema gyffredin iawn a ddaeth i'r amlwg o'n hymchwil ar draws holl ardaloedd yr astudiaeth oedd gwneud penderfyniadau gwael mewn adrannau penodol o'r llywodraeth, ac yn benodol yn Adran Gwaith a Phensiynau Llywodraeth y DU. Mae hyn yn arwain at "alw oherwydd methiant" sef lle mae rhan o'r system lles cymdeithasol yn methu gwneud rhywbeth, neu'n methu ei wneud yn iawn, a bod hynny'n achosi llawer o anghenion cyngor lles cymdeithasol. Ar draws ein hymchwil roedd llawer o enghreifftiau o fudd-daliadau a wrthodwyd neu a dynnwyd yn ôl yn amhriodol, lle cafodd penderfyniadau eu gwrthdroi yn ddiweddarach ar ôl ailystyried neu ar apêl i Dribiwnlys. Yn gyffredinol, nid yw cynlluniau nawdd cymdeithasol, gan gynnwys eu

2 *https://senedd.cymru/media/yjubmisr/cr-ld14223-w.pdf*

gweinyddiaeth, wedi'u datganoli i Gymru. Fodd bynnag, mae Llywodraeth Cymru ac awdurdodau lleol yng Nghymru eisoes yn darparu nifer o wahanol gynlluniau lles cymdeithasol sydd wedi tueddu i gael eu hystyried yn rhai ar wahân, tra bod mwy a mwy o alw i'w gweld mewn ffordd fwy cydlynol fel rhan o system fudd-daliadau sy'n datblygu yng Nghymru.[3] Mae Siarter Budd-daliadau Cymru wedi cael ei datblygu, sy'n nodi'r prif egwyddorion i ddylunio ac i gyflwyno taliadau a grantiau sydd wedi cael eu datganoli i Lywodraeth Cymru.[4] Mae Cyngor Sir Ynys Môn wedi llofnodi ei fod yn cytuno ag egwyddorion y Siarter, ac y bydd yn gweithio gyda Llywodraeth Cymru ac eraill i wireddu'r canlyniadau a nodir yn y Siarter. Bydd hi'n werthfawr parhau i fonitro'r gwaith i gyflawni egwyddorion y Siarter er mwyn deall, yn benodol, sut beth fyddai dull mwy ataliol a thymor hir, ac a oes modd i'r egwyddorion wella faint o benderfyniadau sy'n cael eu gwneud "yn iawn y tro cyntaf". Yn fwy cyffredinol, gallai datganoli rhagor o fudd-daliadau nawdd cymdeithasol ychwanegol o leiaf yn gallu gwneud iawn am rywfaint o'r galw oherwydd methiant systemig sy'n achosi llawer o broblemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol sy'n wynebu'r unigolion a'r cymunedau yn Ynys Môn a gymerodd ran yn ein hymchwil. Fodd bynnag, byddai datganoli o'r fath yn galw am ddyrannu teg adnoddau ariannol ychwanegol.

Gallai gwaith parhaus o fonitro gweithrediad y Siarter Budd-daliadau Cymru fod o help i ddeall sut y gallai ymagwedd fwy ataliol edrych, a manteision a heriau datganoli nawdd cymdeithasol.

Mae rhwydweithiau cynghori yn bwysig, ond gan fwyaf maent yn wirfoddol, ddim yn gynaliadwy a dylent gynnwys ymgysylltu mwy lleol

Roedd dirwedd gwasanaethau cynghori ar Ynys Môn yr un gorau o ran cyswllt, ymhlith yr ardaloedd astudiaeth.

Gwelsom fod y dirwedd gwasanaethau cynghori ar Ynys Môn ymysg y rhai sydd wedi'u cysylltu orau o blith pedair ardal ein hastudiaeth (sef Ynys Môn, Hackney, Rochdale a South Hams). Roedd ein gweithdai a'n hymgysylltiad arall â gweithwyr proffesiynol yn y sector cynghori a'r sector cymunedol wedi dangos bod cysylltiadau gweithio da yn bodoli. Yn gyffredinol roedd dealltwriaeth glir o'r gwasanaethau a oedd yn cael eu darparu gan fudiadau eraill, ac roedd atgyfeiriadau a gwaith partneriaeth effeithiol. Mae Rhwydwaith Cynghori Cenedlaethol Cymru (NAN) a'r Rhwydweithiau Cynghori Rhanbarthol (RANs) wedi hwyluso rhannu pryderon cyffredin ac arferion gorau. Maent hefyd wedi gwella ymwybyddiaeth Llywodraeth Cymru o'r materion sy'n wynebu'r sector cynghori. Serch hynny, mae'r gwaith ymgysylltu a phartneriaeth ar Ynys Môn wedi datblygu o'r gwaelod i fyny, drwy waith staff a gwirfoddolwyr ymroddedig. Mae hyn yn dangos, er y gall polisi gael effaith o ran dilysu arferion presennol ymhellach, arweinwyr lleol ac unigolion cymunedol allweddol sy'n hanfodol i wasanaethau cynghori sydd wedi'u rhwydweithio'n dda ac sy'n llwyr werthfawrogi ac yn sensitif i anghenion cymunedau lleol ar Ynys Môn.

3 https://www.bevanfoundation.org/current-projects/welsh_benefits_system/

4 https://www.llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2024-02/siarter-budd-daliadau-cymru.pdf

Mae arweinyddiaeth leol ac unigolion cymunedol allweddol yn hanfodol i wasanaethau cynghori sydd wedi'u rhwydweithio'n dda, ac yn ymddangos gwerthfawrogiad ac yn sensitif i anghenion cymunedau Ynys Môn.

Mae Rhwydwaith Cynghori Cenedlaethol Cymru a'r Rhwydweithiau Cynghori Rhanbarthol wedi hwyluso rhannu pryderon cyffredin ac arferion gorau, ac wedi gwella ymwybyddiaeth Llywodraeth Cymru o'r materion sy'n wynebu'r sector cynghori.

Er gwaethaf nodau Rhwydwaith Cynghori Cenedlaethol Cymru a'r Gronfa Gynghori Sengl mae dal angen cydlynu ffynonellau cyllid yn well, yn enwedig pan fydd y rhain yn cymell y sector cymunedol i helpu ac i gefnogi gyda phroblemau costau byw, sy'n troi'n waith cynghori. Roedd darparwyr cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol a ymatebodd i'n hymchwil o'r farn y dylai Llywodraeth Cymru ddatblygu llwyfannau a rhwydweithiau presennol ymhellach i greu un porth, gan mai Llywodraeth Cymru sydd â'r trosolwg mwyaf helaeth o'r dirwedd gwybodaeth a chyngor a'i bod yn gallu defnyddio arferion da sydd eisoes yn bodoli gan osgoi dyblygu.

Mae angen cydgysylltu ffynonellau cyllid yn well, yn enwedig lle mae'r rhain yn cymell y sector cymunedol i ddarparu cymorth a chefnogaeth gyda phroblemau costau byw, sy'n troi at waith cynghori.

Mae cydberthynas rhwng rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol sy'n fwy, sy'n fwy cysylltiedig, ac yn enwedig sy'n fwy amrywiol a datrys problemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol

Nid maint a chysylltedd rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol yn unig sy'n bwysig ar gyfer datrys problemau, ond hefyd pwy sydd yn rhwydwaith cymdeithasol rhywun, a'r cyfalaf cymdeithasol ac economaidd sydd gan y bobl hyn.

Ar draws ein hymchwil, gwelsom gydberthynas gadarnhaol rhwng maint rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol a datrys problemau, hynny yw, roedd pobl â rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol mwy rywfaint yn fwy tebygol o ddweud bod eu problemau naill ai wedi cael eu datrys yn rhannol neu'n llawn. Daeth y data hefyd yn agos at ddangos cydberthynas wan rhwng cysylltedd rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol a datrys problemau. Roedd y rhai â rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol mwy cysylltiedig rywfaint yn fwy tebygol o ddweud bod eu problemau wedi cael eu datrys yn rhannol o leiaf. Fodd bynnag, dim ond un wan oedd y gydberthynas hon. Yn fwy cyffredinol, mae ein data'n awgrymu nad dim ond maint a chysylltedd rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol sy'n bwysig i ddatrys problemau, ond pwy sydd yn rhwydwaith cymdeithasol rhywun hefyd, a'r

cyfalaf cymdeithasol ac economaidd sydd gan bobl o'r fath. Er enghraifft, gwelsom y gallai fod cysylltiad rhwng tueddiad uwch y rhai a gafodd gyfweliad ym Mryngwran i gael gweithwyr proffesiynol yn eu rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol, yn ogystal â chael rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol mwy cysylltiedig, a'u gallu i gael gafael ar gyngor cyfreithiol ffurfiol ar les cymdeithasol heb atgyfeirio neu gyfeirio. Mae hybiau cymunedol fel yr Iorwerth Arms yn llefydd canolog lle mae pobl yn mynd i ddatblygu ac i ehangu eu rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol, gan wella eu llesiant a lleihau eu tebygolrwydd o gael problemau. Serch hynny, dim ond drwy weithredu cymunedol mae asedau o'r fath yn cael eu diogelu fwyfwy. Mae'r Iorwerth Arms ei hun yn dafarn sy'n berchen i'r gymuned ac yn cael ei rhedeg gan y gymuned. Cafodd ei hachub rhag cael ei chau a'i dymchwel drwy weithredu cymunedol yn 2015, ac mae bellach yn dafarn nid-er-elw sy'n cael ei rhedeg gan Gyfarwyddwyr di-dâl.

Mae canolbwyntiau cymunedol yn fannau canolog lle mae pobl yn mynd i ddatblygu ac ehangu eu rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol, gan wella eu lles a lleihau eu tebygolrwydd o brofi problemau, ac eto dim ond trwy weithredu cymunedol y caiff asedau o'r fath eu cadw'n fyw.

Mae angen gwella addysg ar hawliau a hawlogaeth, lleihau stigma, a chodi ymwybyddiaeth o wasanaethau cynghori

Mae diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o hawliau a buddion cyfreithiol, gyda'r angen i godi ymwybyddiaeth trwy'r cwricwlwm ysgol, a thrwy ddysgu gydol oes parhaus, yn cael ei hystyried yn flaenoriaeth.

Wrth gymharu ag ardaloedd eraill yr astudiaeth, roedd y rhai a gafodd gyfweliad ym Mryngwran yn fwy tebygol o rannu eu problemau'n uniongyrchol â darparwyr cyngor ffurfiol, fel Cyngor ar Bopeth a Gwasanaeth Cyngor ar Hawliau Lles y Cyngor, heb fod angen cam cyfryngol amlwg o gyfeirio neu atgyfeirio. Yn rhannol, mae hyn oherwydd bod y gwasanaethau cynghori hyn yn amlwg iawn, gan gynnwys drwy weithgareddau allgymorth yn yr Iorwerth Arms, a bod pobl yn siarad amdanynt drwy rwydweithiau cymdeithasol. Serch hynny, ar draws ein hymchwil, gan gynnwys ar Ynys Môn, roedd diffyg ymwybyddiaeth o hawlogaeth a hawliau cyfreithiol, gyda'r angen i godi ymwybyddiaeth drwy'r cwricwlwm ysgol, a dysgu gydol oes parhaus, a oedd yn cael ei bwysleisio fel blaenoriaeth ar gyfer gweithredu. Roedd yr ymwybyddiaeth o fudiadau/gwasanaethau sy'n darparu cymorth a chyngor yn amrywio ym Mryngwran. Nid oedd rhai pobl yn gallu enwi unrhyw fudiadau/gwasanaethau sy'n helpu pobl gyda phroblemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol, er eu bod yn cysylltu hyn yn gyffredinol â'r ffaith nad oeddent wedi cael unrhyw broblemau o'r fath eu hunain. Roedd pobl hefyd yn teimlo bod aros am broblem cyn dysgu pa fudiadau/gwasanaethau sydd ar gael yn cael effaith negyddol ar y siawns o ddatrys y broblem.

Dywedodd pobl hefyd eu bod wedi teimlo "cywilydd" am eu problemau a'u bod yn teimlo'n "falch" o allu rheoli eu problemau eu hunain yn hytrach na'u rhannu â phobl yn eu rhwydweithiau. Roedd mudiadau cynghori a chymunedol hefyd yn gweld balchder a chywilydd fel rheswm cyffredin pam nad oedd pobl ar Ynys Môn, yn enwedig y rhai mewn ardaloedd gwledig a phobl hŷn, yn chwilio am gymorth gyda phroblemau, gan aros yn aml nes

cyrraedd pwynt argyfwng. Roedd darparwyr cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol yn gwybod am gynllun "Hawliwch yr Hyn sy'n Ddyledus i Chi" Llywodraeth Cymru, sy'n cael ei ddarparu drwy Advicelink Cymru. Ei nod yw helpu pobl i ddeall ac i hawlio cymorth ariannol mae ganddynt hawl iddo. Mae ymgyrchoedd fel hyn yn cael rhywfaint o effaith, ond mae stigma'n parhau, ac mae cefnogaeth gymdeithasol gan gymheiriaid yn parhau i fod yn bwysig o ran lliniaru stigma o'r fath.

Mae ymgyrchoedd fel "Hawliwch yr Hyn sy'n Ddyledus i Chi" yn cael effaith, ond mae cefnogaeth gymdeithasol gan gyfoedion yn parhau i fod yn bwysig i leddfu'r cywilydd a'r stigma canfyddedig sy'n gysylltiedig â chael problemau a cheisio cymorth.

Mae cyfyngiadau ar rwydweithiau cymdeithasol a chymunedau cryf o ran mynediad at gyfiawnder

Ar draws ardaloedd ymchwil ein hastudiaeth, fe welsom fod cymunedau yn gallu ac yn darparu llawer o gefnogaeth i bobl, o ran bwyd, nwyddau, dodrefn, cefnogaeth gymdeithasol, cysylltiadau at gyngor a gwasanaethau eraill ac yn y blaen. Fodd bynnag, un o themâu allweddol ein hymchwil oedd bod cefnogaeth gymunedol yn cyrraedd terfyn mewn amgylchiadau lle ceir tri amgylchiad gwahanol ond sy'n aml yn gorgyffwrdd. Y cyntaf yw pan nad oes modd datrys y broblem yn llawn heb gyngor arbenigol gan gynghorwyr ffurfiol cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol sydd mewn sefyllfa well i fynd i'r afael â hawlogaeth a hawliau cyfreithiol sylfaenol, oherwydd eu hyfforddiant, eu harbenigedd a'u prosesau sicrhau ansawdd; ac, yn gywir neu'n anghywir, oherwydd canfyddiadau (ac mae'n wir i raddau) mai dim ond nhw sydd â'r "pŵer" a'r "safle" o fewn strwythurau a phrosesau'r wladwriaeth i bwyso am orfodi hawliau a hawlogaeth. Ar Ynys Môn, yn gyffredinol gwelsom fod mynediad at ddarparwyr cyngor cyfreithiol arbenigol ar les cymdeithasol yn well nag yn ardaloedd eraill yr astudiaeth, ond bod darparwyr yn dal i wynebu heriau. Yr ail sefyllfa pan fydd cymorth cymunedol yn cyrraedd ei derfyn yw lle mae problemau'n deillio o'r hyn a elwir yn 'galw oherwydd methiant', sy'n cael ei greu drwy weinyddu hawliau neu hawlogaeth yn wael. Y trydydd cyd-destun yw toriadau i ddarpariaeth gwasanaethau cyhoeddus lleol sy'n achosi heriau sylweddol i bobl mewn cymunedau, a all arwain wedyn at broblemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol.

Dengys ein hymchwil fod llawer o'r problemau cyfreithiol lles cymdeithasol a wynebir gan bobl mewn cymunedau lleol yn deillio o doriadau difrifol i wasanaethau, a darpariaeth y wladwriaeth sy'n crebachu.

Yn gyffredinol, mae ein hymchwil yn dangos bod llawer o'r problemau sy'n wynebu pobl mewn cymunedau lleol yn deillio o doriadau cyni mewn gwasanaethau a lleihad yn narpariaeth y wladwriaeth; nid oedd yn ymddangos bod Ynys Môn yn eithriad yma. Dywedodd y rhai a gafodd gyfweliad nad oedd gan eu hawdurdodau lleol yr amser na'r awydd i helpu yn aml. Roedd yn gyffredin iddynt fod wedi cael problemau gyda thoriadau i iechyd a gofal cymdeithasol, darpariaeth ddarniog ac anghyson o weithwyr cymdeithasol/gwasanaethau gofal cymdeithasol, diffyn darpariaeth i blant a phobl ifanc, aros yn hir i weld meddygon teulu a gwasanaethau gofal iechyd eraill, trafnidiaeth gyhoeddus wael, anawsterau i gael gafael ar dai cymdeithasol priodol,

a gwasanaethau heddlu yn peidio ag ymateb i ymddygiad gwrthgymdeithasol a materion diogelwch cymunedol eraill. Roedd Ynys Môn hefyd yn wynebu'r holl heriau hyn. Mae hyn yn awgrymu bod toriadau cyni i wasanaethau, a'r ffaith bod problemau cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol yn cynyddu ac yn gwaethygu o ganlyniad i hynny, yn gymaint o broblem i Gymru ag i Loegr, ac mai cyfyngedig fu effaith mentrau datganoledig hyd yma. Mae ein hymchwil yn canfod nad yw rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol cryfach nac ymddygiad mwy effeithiol o ran gofyn am gyngor yn gallu gwneud iawn am y diffyg buddsoddiad mewn gwasanaethau cyhoeddus.

Ni all rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol cryfach nac ymddygiad ceisio cyngor mwy effeithiol wneud iawn am ddiffyg buddsoddiad mewn gwasanaethau cyhoeddus.

Mae angen rhagor o ymchwil gyda chymunedau amrywiol yng Nghymru

Roedd ein gwaith maes uniongyrchol gyda'r cyhoedd yng Nghymru wedi'i gyfyngu i ardal fach, pentref gwledig Bryngwran. Yn ddealladwy, ni ellir cyffredinoli ein canfyddiadau'n ystadegol i Ynys Môn i gyd, nac i Gymru'n ehangach. Wedi dweud hynny, mae dyfnder ein hymchwiliad ansoddol, ynghyd â'r nifer o wahanol ddulliau ymchwil a ddefnyddiwyd (ymchwil desg, gweithdai ac ymgysylltu â darparwyr gwasanaethau cyngor a mudiadau cymunedol, ac ymgysylltu'n ehangach â rhwydweithiau o fudiadau ledled Cymru) yn rhoi sylfaen gadarn ar gyfer argymhellion polisi ehangach. Fodd bynnag, mae angen amlwg am ragor o ymchwil i edrych ar rôl cymunedau a chysylltiadau mewn cyngor cyfreithiol ar les cymdeithasol ar draws gwahanol ardaloedd yng Nghymru, gan ganolbwyntio'n benodol ar gasgliad amrywiol o ardaloedd daearyddol sydd â dwysedd poblogaeth amrywiol, ac ar ardaloedd sy'n profi'r cyfraddau uchaf o amddifadedd, a/neu lle mae cymunedau wedi'u hymyleiddio fel arall.

Argymhellion

Mae'r argymhellion canlynol yn ymwneud yn benodol ag Ynys Môn a Chymru

Mae ein hadroddiad llawn yn cynnwys nifer o argymhellion i lywodraethau lleol ac awdurdodau statudol, ac i'r sector cynghori, sydd hefyd yn berthnasol i Ynys Môn.

LLYWODRAETH CYMRU

1. Nid yw rhwydweithiau cymdeithasol cryfach nac ymddygiad mwy effeithiol o ran gofyn am gyngor yn gallu gwneud iawn am y diffyg buddsoddiad mewn gwasanaethau cyhoeddus. Dylai Llywodraeth Cymru barhau i fuddsoddi mewn gwasanaethau cyhoeddus, gyda golwg benodol ar hyrwyddo'r nodau llesiant a'r ffyrdd o weithio (yn enwedig atal a meddwl yn y

tymor hir) sydd yn Neddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015. **[Adrannau 4.1; 5.1; 6.5; 7.3; 7.7]**

2. Mae parhau i gyllido'r Gronfa Gynghori Sengl i'w groesawu ac mae'n ganolog i alluogi pobl i wireddu eu hawliau a'u hawlogaeth lles cymdeithasol. Dylid cynnal y cyllid hwn o leiaf. **[Adrannau 4.1; 4.2; 5.2; 5.5; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4]**

3. Parhau i fonitro ac i werthuso gweithrediad Siarter Budd-daliadau Cymru yn enwedig i bennu effaith gweithredu'r Siarter ar faint o broblemau lles cymdeithasol sy'n codi, a'i heffaith ar sicrhau bod penderfyniadau'n cael eu gwneud 'yn iawn y tro cyntaf' a bod llai o 'alw oherwydd methiant' (lle nad yw rhywbeth yn cael ei wneud neu ddim yn cael ei wneud yn iawn yn y system gweinyddu budd-daliadau). Dysgu gwersi sy'n berthnasol i bosibilrwydd datganoli budd-daliadau nawdd cymdeithasol eraill. **[Adrannau 5.1; 5.6; 7.3; 7.7]**

4. Parhau i gefnogi'r ymgyrch "Hawliwch yr Hyn sy'n Ddyledus i Chi", ac ymgyrchoedd tebyg eraill, a pharhau i weithio ar leihau'r stigma sy'n gysylltiedig â chael problemau lles cymdeithasol a gofyn am gymorth a chyngor gyda'r problemau hyn. **[Adrannau 5.3; 6.7.3; 7.6]**

5. Cefnogi mentrau dysgu gydol oes sy'n ymwneud ag addysg am hawliau a hawlogaeth lles cymdeithasol, a ffynonellau gwybodaeth, cyngor ac iawn, yn enwedig yng nghyd-destun datblygu hawliau cymdeithasol ac economaidd ac ymrwymiadau i leihau anghydraddoldeb cymdeithasol ac economaidd. **[Adrannau 5.4; 6.7; 7.3; 7.6]**

6. Rhoi mwy o eglurder am y gwahanol ffynonellau o gyllid datganoledig a heb ei ddatganoli sydd ar gael i'r sectorau cyngor a chymunedau yng Nghymru, yn enwedig lle mae'r rhain yn rhyngweithio ac yn gorgyffwrdd mewn perthynas â darparu cymorth, gwybodaeth a chyngor lles cymdeithasol. **[Adrannau 4; 5.2; 5.4; 5.5; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4]**

7. Parhau i fonitro effaith cyflwyno'r categori, "gwasanaethau cysylltiedig", i'r Fframwaith Ansawdd Gwybodaeth a Chyngor, gan gynnwys nifer a math y mudiadau sy'n ceisio (ac yn derbyn) achrediad yn y categori hwn. Ystyried cyllido ymchwil ychwanegol i effaith y categori ychwanegol hwn ar ddarparu gwasanaethau gan y sector Cymunedol, Gwirfoddol, Ffydd a Mentrau Cymdeithasol ochr yn ochr â'r sector cynghori. **[Adrannau 4.1; 4.2; 5.3]**

8. Dysgu o'r gwaith partneriaeth cydweithredol cryf sydd i'w weld rhwng y sector cynghori, yr awdurdod lleol a chymunedau ar Ynys Môn. Cydnabod bod hyn yn cymryd cryn amser i'w ddatblygu a'i fod yn dibynnu'n drwm ar arweinyddiaeth unigolion allweddol ym mhob sector. Ystyried sut gallai polisïau cymunedau a chyngor Llywodraeth Cymru gefnogi cynaliadwyedd partneriaethau o'r fath i'r dyfodol, ac yn enwedig cefnogi'r genhedlaeth nesaf o arweinwyr cymunedol. **[Adrannau 4; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 6.4; 6.7; 7.4]**

9. Ystyried cyllido ymchwil ychwanegol sy'n archwilio rôl cymunedau lle, diwylliant ac iaith o ran sut mae pobl yn gofyn am ac yn cael cymorth a chyngor gyda phroblemau lles cymdeithasol cyfreithiol mewn cymunedau amrywiol ar hyd a lled Cymru. Dylid hefyd defnyddio'r ymchwil, ac ymchwil feintiol, i lywio datblygu polisïau ac adnoddau ar gyfer gwasanaethau cynghori. **[Adrannau 6.6; 7.1; 7.5; 7.8]**

BWRDD GWASANAETHAU CYHOEDDUS YNYS MÔN A GWYNEDD

10. Ystyried cyfraniad gwasanaethau gwybodaeth a chyngor i wella llesiant economaidd, cymdeithasol, amgylcheddol a diwylliannol Ynys Môn a Gwynedd. Ystyried y rolau pwysig y sectorau cyngor a chymunedau i gefnogi darparu gwasanaethau cyhoeddus a chefnogi cydweithio ar draws darparwyr gwasanaethau cyhoeddus yn lleol. **[Adrannau 5, 6 and 7]**

CYNGOR SIR YNYS MÔN

11. Er bod Rhwydweithiau Cynghori Rhanbarthol yn ffynhonnell bwysig o ddysgu a gwaith partneriaeth, dylid ystyried hwyluso'r gwaith o ddatblygu Partneriaeth Cyngor a Gwybodaeth Gymunedol Ynys Môn, gan ddod â darparwyr gwasanaethau cyhoeddus allweddol, y sector cynghori a mudiadau cymunedol sy'n gweithredu ar Ynys Môn at ei gilydd. Nod y Bartneriaeth Cyngor a Gwybodaeth Gymunedol fyddai rhannu gwybodaeth am wasanaethau, helpu atgyfeiriadau, a sicrhau ymateb cydlynol i broblemau a rennir, gan gynnwys problemau newydd a rhai sy'n dod i'r amlwg. Byddai'r Bartneriaeth Cyngor a Gwybodaeth Gymunedol hefyd yn fforwm i rannu'r arferion gorau am ymgysylltu â chymunedau amrywiol ar Ynys Môn. **[Adrannau 5.3; 5.4; 7.2; 7.4; 7.5]**

12. Parhau i gefnogi darparu adnoddau i wasanaethau sy'n cael eu darparu gan fudiadau ar draws Ynys Môn sy'n seiliedig ar le, sy'n sensitif yn ddiwylliannol ac yn ieithyddol er mwyn atal problemau lles cymdeithasol rhag digwydd neu waethygu. **[Adrannau 4.2; 5.2; 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2; 7.4]**

13. Parhau (yn ariannol ac anariannol) i gefnogi cread a chynnal canolbwyntiau cymunedol. **[Adrannau 4.2; 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2]**

14. Sicrhau bod polisïau, gan gynnwys y rhai sy'n ymwneud â chymunedau a chyngor, yn cydymffurfio â manylion ac ysbryd Deddf Llesiant Cenedlaethau'r Dyfodol (Cymru) 2015, yn enwedig darpariaethau am bwysigrwydd atal; mae helpu pobl i gael gafael ar y cymorth iawn ar yr adeg iawn yn hanfodol i atal problemau rhag digwydd a/neu waethygu. **[Adrannau 5.1; 7.3]**

15. Ystyried canfyddiadau'r ymchwil hwn ar yr heriau sy'n wynebu pobl sy'n gofyn am wybodaeth am wasanaethau'r Cyngor, neu sy'n ceisio cysylltu â'r Cyngor, sydd naill ai'n methu cyfathrebu ar-lein neu'n mae'n well ganddynt beidio â gwneud hynny. **[Adrannau 6.7; 7.1; 7.7]**

DARPARWYR CYNGOR A MUDIADAU CYMUNEDOL

16. Parhau i gynnal a datblygu partneriaethau rhwng mudiadau'r sector cynghori a chymunedau sy'n gweithio ar Ynys Môn. Rhannu'r arferion gorau o ran sut mae perthnasoedd yn cael eu datblygu a'u cynnal. **[Adrannau 4.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 7.4; 7.6]**

17. Parhau i hwyluso a datblygu allgymorth gwledig a chydleoli gwasanaethau cymunedol a chyngor go iawn, lle bo hynny'n briodol. **[Adrannau 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.6]**

January 2025

The Role of Communities and Connections in Social Welfare Legal Advice on Anglesey

1. Introduction

This report is one of several stemming from a research project looking at how people from different localities and communities access social welfare legal (SWL) advice. Specifically, these localities are based on four case-study areas: Anglesey, Rochdale, Hackney and South Hams. A bigger report has been published[6] summarising the research project and its overall findings. This report focuses on the Anglesey case-study area.

SWL advice includes advice about people's rights and entitlements in areas including welfare benefits, debt, employment, housing, immigration, education and community care. This kind of advice, often known as social welfare rights advice, is based on the law, but does not need to be provided by qualified lawyers. The demand for such advice is growing, but the capacity of the advice sector is shrinking and changing to more remote advice delivery (over the telephone and online). By examining SWL advice-seeking through the lens of local case-study areas, this project analysed the role of locality and identity-based organisations in helping people access advice.

The project investigated:

- Relationships between access to SWL advice and community connectedness, (in) equality and wellbeing;
- how community attitudes, attributes and affiliations affect SWL advice-seeking behaviour
- local informal and formal organisations, models and channels of advice delivery.

After a short overview of the methodology, this report sets out some background information about Anglesey and North Wales, and the advice services landscape, before presenting findings from stakeholder engagement and fieldwork on Anglesey, concluding with analysis and recommendations.

2. Methodology

The project used a variety of methods to collect data from organisations and individuals on Anglesey. The first stage of data collection focussed on generating a picture of the advice services landscape on Anglesey and more broadly across North Wales. This comprised meetings with key stakeholders and several workshops with advice providers. The list of workshop participant organisations is noted at Annex D to our Full Report. As part of this

6 *hwttps://swladviceandcommunities.com/*

research, we also held a joint event with the North Wales Regional Advice Network to gain broader perspectives of advice providers across North Wales, with many of the specialist organisations serving Anglesey.[7]

Based on insights from the stakeholder engagement phase, the research team then considered a micro geographical location on Anglesey to gain deeper insights and understanding of a local community and its citizens' SWL problems, awareness and experiences of SWL advice provision. The village of Bryngwran was selected as an area that would be a good geographical focus for the aims of the research, particularly as the project overall sought to examine experiences of a diverse range of communities of different geographies and ethnicities. Bryngwran provided specific insights into the experiences of a rural community, alongside the urban densely populated communities of other case-study areas, such as in Hackney and Rochdale.

Individual participants were provided with shopping vouchers to thank and compensate them for their time. We interviewed 39 individuals who lived in Bryngwran or had close links to it (for example, they worked in or regularly visited close relatives who live in Bryngwran).

Participants were asked about the kind of SWL problems they currently face or have faced in the last two years, and what kind of action, if any, they had taken in relation to these problems. We were also interested in understanding people's awareness of the advice services available to them, and their experiences, where relevant, of accessing and using these services. We also examined people's confidence in using the internet, and their overall sense of wellbeing. Our project has also focused on understanding people's social networks, e.g. who people speak to regularly. We wanted to understand how people's social connections relate to whether they have problems, and their experiences of seeking help with these problems.

The detailed methodology as well as the full list of stakeholder engagement themes and interview questions can be found in Annex A to our full report.[8] More information about how we constructed and analysed people's social networks is included in section 6.3.1 of this report.

3. Anglesey background

Anglesey is classified as a rural local authority by both Welsh Government and the Office of National Statistics (ONS). It is comparatively sparsely populated, with approx. 69,000 people living within its 276 square mile area, making it the sixth least densely populated of Wales' 22 local authority areas. [9]

According to research by the Centre for Progressive Policy, local authorities made up primarily of small towns or villages (such as Anglesey) are the most exposed in Wales to fuel poverty and low paid work (whereas medium sized towns face higher food insecurity).[10]

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7 https://swladviceandcommunities.com/social-welfare-advice-research-with-the-north-wales-regional-advice-network

8 https://swladviceandcommunities.com/

9 All data is taken from the ONS Census 2021 unless otherwise stated.

10 Centre for Progressive Policy, The cost-of-living crisis across the devolved nations (July 2023); https://www.progressive-policy.net/downloads/files/CPP_CoL-Devolved-nations_report_July-2023_SP_2023-07-18-144113_omnr.pdf

The largest town on Anglesey is Holyhead, with a population of approx. 11,500, and known for its ferry port. According to the Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD), Holyhead town centre is the most deprived area of Anglesey (within the top 10% of most deprived areas in Wales).[11] Anglesey Foodbank told us that Anglesey has problems with food poverty, particularly in urban areas and especially in Morawelon (a ward in the Holyhead area). The Foodbank noted that problems have worsened due to the cost-of-living crisis, particularly rising fuel costs, and continued tightening of the welfare system including benefit caps, limits and sanctions.

The second largest town on Anglesey is Llangefni, home to the principal County Council offices, and with a population of approx. 5,000, followed in third by the coastal town of Amlwch, with a population of approx. 3,800. Although several parts of Anglesey are comparatively wealthy, existing data and our research, shows that people across the Island face challenges in relation to fuel poverty, low pay, and social housing availability, and hidden deprivation can exist amongst conspicuous affluence. Our advice and community sector participants told us that Anglesey is effectively made up of "pockets of people and communities".

In the more rural areas of Anglesey public transportation is a particular problem, with reductions in local bus services, and the need to travel to larger population centres, impacting people's capacity to access advice services. The need to travel impacts employment options, having knock-on effects on financial circumstances and therefore on broader advice needs. According to the 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment: "The frequency of bus services made it difficult for residents to access amenities and services, and likely to have a worse impact on some groups, for example, disabled people, young people and older people".[12] Return public and private travel time to a GP surgery and to a pharmacy is higher in Anglesey than in Wales on average. Participants in our research also noted a general lack of local GPs and NHS dentists on the Island. According to the 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment: "Lack of access to health services has a greater impact on Anglesey's rural communities and some equality characteristics, including disabled people and older people, who are less likely to have access to a vehicle and are also more likely to need the health services".[13]

Overall, the population of Anglesey, is declining, whereas the average age of those resident is increasing. The population decreased by 1.2% between the 2011 and 2021 Census, whereas the population of Wales increased by 1.4%. The population of Anglesey, like the population of Wales as a whole, is ageing. 26.5% of the population of Anglesey are aged 65 and over, compared to the Wales average of 21.1%. Between the 2011 and 2021 Census there was a 16.3% increase in people aged over 65 living on Anglesey. Whilst the older population has increased, on Anglesey there has been a 7.9% decrease in people aged 15 to 64 years from to 2011 to the 2021 Census (compared to a Wales wide decrease of 2.5%). Reasons commonly given for the decline in the younger population are outward migration in search of more highly paid employment and more affordable housing.

According to the 2021 Census, of Anglesey residents aged 16 years and over, 49.9% said they were employed (excluding full-time students), down from 51.3% in 2011. The percentage of

11 https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Community-Safety-and-Social-Inclusion/Welsh-Index-of-Multiple-Deprivation

12 https://www.llesiantgwyneddamon.org/Uploads/Pages/Documents/3-4-3-140-1-Anglesey-Well-being-Assessment-2022.pdf

13 Ibid.

retired Anglesey residents, on the other hand, has increased from 28.6% to 30.5%. As stated in a Centre for Progressive Policy Report in 2023, the average weekly earnings across Anglesey are lower than the average for Wales as a whole, and Anglesey comes in jointly with Powys and Pembrokeshire as having the highest percentage of low paid jobs across the Welsh local authorities, at 17% of all jobs.[14] The proportion of people on Anglesey aged 16-64 receiving out of work benefits is also slightly higher than the Wales average.[15] The 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment summarises that: "A lack of high value jobs is having an impact on area well-being. As well as its effect on the economy, it also has an impact on retaining young people and therefore the Welsh language".[16] The lack of available jobs is also challenging for people claiming job seeker benefits that require them to spend a significant amount of their day searching for work. Childcare provision is also a problem for Anglesey, especially in rural areas. The 2022 Well-being Assessment found a "lack of sustainable provision affects communities in some areas of the county and there is also concern about the availability of Welsh medium provision".[17]

In terms of the economy, farming plays a crucial role in Anglesey, with 7% of its population employed in the agricultural, forestry and fishing sectors (the fifth highest percentage among the Welsh local authorities).[18] There are particular challenges facing farming communities in Wales, including as a result of the UK's departure from the EU.[19] The 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment summarises that: "A high percentage of the people of Anglesey work in the skilled trades occupations (which include farmers and agricultural workers). Brexit and the reduction in grants and financial support have had an impact on this sector".[20] The Assessment also references the North Wales Population Needs Assessment which identifies particular cohorts as being at higher risk than others with respect to mental health problems, noting that "farmers are a high risk occupational group, which is significant to Anglesey's rural communities".[21] Farming communities then have a specific need for expert advice, as well as more generalist SWL advice relating to debt and family issues that cluster around periods of economic uncertainty.

Alongside the farming industry, tourism is one of the key industries on Anglesey, constituting the largest economic sector, especially around its coastline. As the Anglesey local authority Destination Management Plan 2023-2028 notes: "The visitor economy is fundamental to the sustainable economic position of Anglese. However, it has become increasingly evident over the past 3 years that unchecked tourism can adversely impact the lives of people and the unique qualities which make the island so synonymous and drive the vast majority of tourist activities".[22] According to the Destination Management Plan, Anglesey is the UK county that is "most reliant" on tourism economically, "generating upwards of £360m per annum in the local

14 *Centre for Progressive Policy (n 10).*

15 *https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157383/report.aspx#tabwab*

16 *Anglesey Well-being Assessment (n 12).*

17 *Anglesey Well-being Assessment (n 12).*

18 *https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157383/printable.aspx*

19 *https://www.fwi.co.uk/news/eu-referendum/analysis-7-years-after-brexit-farmers-count-the-cost*

20 *Anglesey Well-being Assessment (n 12).*

21 *Anglesey Well-being Assessment (n 12).*

22 *Anglesey local authority Destination Management Plan 2023-2028: https://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/documents/s20420/Destination%20Management%20Plan%202023-2028.pdf?LLL=0#:~:text=Tourism%20can%20play%20a%20significant,can%20also%20have%20negative%20impacts.*

economy, and directly supporting 3,698 jobs".[23] However, the Plan notes that growing tourist numbers generate unwelcome effects for the natural environment and unwelcome pressures on the local community, including community infrastructure. Jobs in tourism may also come with comparatively low wages and less secure ("zero hours" and seasonal contract-based) employment conditions. Nomis data for example shows that 60% of employed people work in full-time jobs on Anglesey (compared to the Wales average of 65%) and that consequently on Anglesey 40% of people work in part-time jobs (compared to the Wales average of 35%).[24]

Part of Anglesey's tourist attraction is its history, heritage and language. Approx. 55.8% of the population of Anglesey speak Welsh, but rates vary, for example over 80% of the population of Llangefni speak Welsh, whereas the figure is approx. 45% for Holyhead. The coastal tourist village of Rhosneigr has the lowest percentage of Welsh speakers (36%). Unlike most Wales in recent years, Anglesey has seen a decline in Welsh speakers, this is due to a range of other social changes, such as an influx of inward migration and outflux of young people seeking better employment and housing prospects. Rural areas tend to have higher rates of Welsh language competency and use. For example, four of the top six authorities in Wales in terms of the proportion of people employed in agriculture, forestry and fishing (which includes Anglesey) are also four of the top six authorities in terms of the proportion of Welsh speakers. The 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment summarises that: "Anglesey is considered a stronghold of the Welsh language, but the percentage of speakers has declined over the last decade. Anglesey's communities are concerned about the impact of migration, tourism, the availability of suitable and affordable housing for young people and families has on the Welsh language".[25]

According to the 2021 Census, there were 4,375 holiday home users on Anglesey, with 63.3 people per 1,000 of its usual residents using a second address as a holiday home there. This is an increase of nearly 53% from the 2011 Census (41.5 people per 1,000 usual residents). Housing is a particular challenge for the population of Anglesey. The 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment, North Wales Population Needs Assessment, and other resources, continually refer to the challenges for younger people and families of finding suitable, affordable housing on the island. 15.6% of households on Anglesey are renting homes in the social rented sector, however this figure should be considered alongside the additional number of people who are waiting to be housed. According to Anglesey County Council's Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2023-2053, there were over 900 people on the social housing waiting list at the time of that assessment. The list included 85 households in temporary accommodation (with the latter figure being described as "unprecedented").[26] According to the 2022 Anglesey Well-being Assessment: "Housing prices and affordability are major concerns amongst local communities and is likely to have a negative impact on the social, cultural, linguistic and economic well-being of areas".[27]

23 *Ibid.*

24 *https://www.nomisweb.co.uk/reports/lmp/la/1946157383/printable.aspx*

25 *Anglesey Well-being Assessment (n 12).*

26 *https://democracy.anglesey.gov.uk/documents/s20016/HRA%20Business%20Plan%20FINAL.pdf?LLL=0*

27 *Ibid.*

4. The advice landscape in Wales and on Anglesey

4.1 Wales

According to the then Welsh Government Minister for Social Justice, when referring to Welsh Government's Information and Advice Quality Framework in 2022, the provision of information, advice and guidance services in Wales is both a key enabler of Welsh Government's Programme for Government, and crucial to its wellbeing and sustainability goals.[28] As the Minister stated: "Access to these services is seen as central in giving everyone a fair and equal chance in life. As such, the Welsh Government is committed to strengthening information, advice and guidance services, with the aim of helping people to understand and exercise their rights and make informed decisions about their lives".[29] In a December 2016 Information and Advice Action Plan the then Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Communities and Children stated: "Strong and well-integrated advice services have an important role to play in promoting the wellbeing and prosperity which are essential to building resilient communities".[30]

Although many SWL advice services are funded by Welsh Government, justice policy is not a matter devolved to the Welsh Parliament / Senedd Cymru (the Senedd) and Welsh Government. Ostensibly, the power to make policies and laws with respect to justice, including legal aid (state) funded SWL advice services, remains with the UK Parliament and Government at Westminster. However, the Senedd and Welsh Government are institutions responsible for delivering social justice in Wales in various areas of activity including, for example, health, housing, and education.

Research has shown that Westminster reforms to legal aid have had a disproportionately negative effect in Wales, where spending on legal aid in both civil and criminal justice has suffered a higher real terms reduction than in England.[31] The Law Society's "heat maps", which provide an overview of the number of legal aid providers and their specialisms, reveal that Wales suffers a significant shortage of legal aid funded advice. The "heat maps" show the number of local legal aid providers in each local authority area, but what they don't show is how active each provider is. When this is taken into consideration, the limited access to legal aid funded advice is likely even more stark.[32] At the time of writing this report, according to the Law Society's maps, across the whole of Wales there were seven immigration and asylum legal aid providers, five community care legal aid providers, two education legal aid providers and just one welfare benefits legal aid provider. It is also worth highlighting that the situation in Wales continues to deteriorate. During this research, Wales lost three housing legal aid providers, which is equivalent to a 11% drop across the whole of Wales, and has lost one welfare benefits legal aid provider, halving its provision. None of the community members we spoke to had consulted a lawyer about their

28 *https://www.gov.wales/information-and-advice-quality-framework-html*

29 *Ibid.*

30 *https://www.gov.wales/social-welfare-information-and-advice-action-plan*

31 *See e.g., Public Law Project (2018): https://publiclawproject.org.uk/resources/the-effects-of-laspo-on-civil-legal-aid-in-wales/*

32 *See e.g., mapping research by Jo Wilding, University of Sussex: https://www.legalaidmapping.org.uk/map/*

problems, and lawyers were barely mentioned by advice providers or community organisations, they were, in effect, conspicuous by their absence within our findings.

Evidence of the First Minister to a Commission on Justice in Wales was that cuts to legal aid, the cause of much of the drop in advice provision in Wales, have also placed additional demand on public services in Wales. The Welsh Government responded by providing additional resources, including a new Single Advice Fund (SAF). Since 2020, Welsh Government has funded some social welfare advice services nationally through the SAF and its associated "Advicelink Cymru".[33] At the time of writing, Citizens Advice Cymru manages "Advicelink Cymru", and funding is sub-granted to individual Local Citizens Advice organisations as well as to a range of national and local delivery partners. This includes a national remote service (bilingual telephone advice and webchat); generalist and specialist welfare benefits, debt, and housing advice services across the Citizens Advice network; and a specialist employment and discrimination phone service. The SAF does not, however, provide core funding for advice services. Core funding includes, for example, further training of staff, salaries, building maintenance, and equipment to increase the capacity of existing staff).

Overall, funding for advice services in Wales was increased in 2014 as a response to UK Government austerity measures including cuts to legal aid. Funding was increased from £4 million per year to £6 million per year. When introduced in 2020, the SAF provided grants of over £9 million, being further increased to over £10 million in 2021, and £11 million in 2022. The benefits of co-ordination through the SAF are said to include quality assurance of advisers and their training, agencies working together, and the ability to collate data and evidence about users and their needs, for example, statistical data is kept on the proportion of people accessing SAF services who have protected characteristics. However, the budget for the SAF was frozen from 2023 to 2024 amid some concerns that funding is now insufficient to meet rising demand. As we were completing this research, in July 2024, the Welsh Government Cabinet Secretary for Culture, Social Justice, Trefnydd and Chief Whip announced further funding for the SAF, stating that £36 million of grant funding will be provided for information and advice services to be delivered through the SAF over the next three financial years.[34] There is also a potential to extend contracts granted under the scheme beyond three years. This more medium-term funding period has the potential to enable successful bidders to plan their services more effectively, invest in partnership working and to benefit from greater sustainability in their services. The SAF guidance notes for 2025-2028 state that the SAF will not offer core funding to information and advice providers. It will, however, fund the delivery of "free to the client social welfare information and advice services", which demonstrate and evidence how they will "attain the most effective and sustainable outcomes for those seeking advice".[35] Following a competitive bidding process in late 2024, 13 new grants have been awarded to deliver the SAF for 2025 to 2028. Citizens Advice organisations have been successful, and will again be providing services across North Wales. The SAF aims to offer a positive contribution to help meet the

33 https://www.citizensadvice.org.uk/about-us/information/advicelink-cymru/

34 https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-07/single-advice-fund-grant-guidance-2025.pdf

35 Ibid.

ongoing increase in demand for access to advice services and help to ensure more people throughout Wales have access to the information and advice that they need. However, it does not address cuts to core funding for advice providers, that were a major concern raised by participants in our research.

A National Advice Network for Wales (NAN) was created in 2015 and consists of key stakeholders including funders, advice providers, representative organisations, and other partners. It is tasked with providing expert advice, guidance, and support to Welsh Ministers on how to strategically develop the provision of social welfare information and advice services throughout Wales. Six Regional Advice Networks have also been established, with independent chairs and steering groups and membership of local and regional stakeholders. The Regional Advice Networks have been tasked to map advice need and provision and identify gaps; build referral networks between all advice services; combine experiences to identify the root causes of common problems; share best practices and support each other to deliver quality assured advice. The North Wales Regional Advice Network covers Anglesey, and at the time of writing the Network was chaired by the CEO of Wrexham Citizens Advice, having formerly been chaired by the CEO of Conwy Citizens Advice.

The Welsh Information and Advice Quality Framework (IAQF) divides information and advice services into five broad headings. These are: information; guidance; advice; advice with casework; and specialist casework. These are discussed further in the report of our engagement with the North Wales Regional Advice Network.[36] More recently, a category of "associated services" has been added, aiming to expand access to quality assurance schemes to a wider range of support services, such as those provided by community-based organisations participating in our research. According to Welsh Government: "IAQF Wales builds upon the range of existing quality assurance schemes used by some information and/or advice providers in Wales. It does not establish a new set of standards but requires existing standards to address and meet the quality criteria within the individual quality areas. Similarly, IAQF Wales does not establish a separate assurance process for individual providers but works with existing assurance processes undertaken by standard owners where these are compliant with the requirements of IAQF Wales".[37]

4.2 Anglesey

This section introduces and describes the various advice providers identified during our fieldwork. In defining SWL advice providers for the purposes of this research, we have focused on services which provide free and independent advice on social welfare issues to members of the public. They are characterised by "no fee or charge at the point of delivery" and being "unfettered of government or funder control". The majority of SWL advice services are classified within the voluntary, not for profit or charitable sectors, although some are provided by statutory bodies (such as local authorities or social housing providers) or through law firms acting under legal aid

36 https://swladviceandcommunities.com/social-welfare-advice-research-with-the-north-wales-regional-advice-network

37 https://www.gov.wales/information-and-advice-quality-framework-html#109944

contracts. For the purposes of our wider research, we have classified SWL advice providers generally into "formal" and "informal" categories. Formal providers are likely to be part of recognised advice networks and/or hold an advice-giving quality mark, they will be registered with regulators where relevant, hold appropriate indemnity insurance for protection of giving wrong advice, and have an offer to the public that clearly includes independent SWL advice. Informal providers, conversely, may not be part of recognised advice networks (but could be part of broader Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise (CVSE) sector networks), their primary offer to the public/community is likely to be services other than advice, they are unlikely to hold indemnity insurance or be regulated specifically in relation to advice, and their offer to the public/community includes independent help and assistance with SWL problems, whether or not they are defined as such, e.g., help with social housing or benefits, or help with "financial wellbeing". Not all advice services can be clearly defined as either "formal" or "informal". Advice services provided in-house by the public sector, such as those provided by Anglesey Council, may hold a quality assurance mark and be members of an advice network, but they may not be fully independent. For example, local authority advice around income maximisation can be motivated as much by organisational interests (i.e., collecting Council Tax) as by the interests of the individual seeking the advice. On this categorisation, it is likely that only the services provided by Citizens Advice Ynys Môn and some services provided by Shelter Cymru would undoubtedly be classified as "formal" SWL advice services for the purposes of our research.

CITIZENS ADVICE YNYS MÔN

Citizens Advice Ynys Môn provide free, confidential and impartial advice and campaign on big issues affecting people's lives. Their goal is to help everyone find a way forward, whatever problem they face. They are an independent charity and part of the Citizens Advice network across England and Wales. People come to them, either when facing a crisis or just considering their options, on all sorts of issues, to include money, benefits, housing or employment problems. The organisation values diversity, promotes equality, and challenges discrimination wherever they see it. The main activities of Citizens Advice Ynys Môn are to help people resolve their legal, money and other problems by providing free information and advice and by influencing policymakers. According to its Annual Return, Citizens Advice Ynys Môn's main objectives for 2022/23 have been to maintain and expand its current volunteer base, to enable an increase in outreach, digital and in person services. The Annual Return states that the service helped approx. 16,150 people in the financial year 2022/23 (a 40% increase on previous year).[38] The Annual Return also states: "We remain the only local provider on the island that is subject to a regular comprehensive audit across the quality of advice we deliver to the public. The main advice issues this year Universal Credit, Personal Independence Payments, and Mental Health support. We continue to provide increased advice on welfare benefits, debt and employment".[39]

38 *https://find-and-update.company-information.service.gov.uk/company/03688949/filing-history*

39 *Ibid.*

ANGLESEY COUNCIL SERVICES

Anglesey Council also provides several advice services. For instance, the Council's Welfare Rights Team are significant providers of advice across the island, they are primarily based at the J.E. O'Toole Centre, Holyhead which provides free, independent and confidential advice, support, and representation on issues relating to benefits, tax credits and employment law for people living in the area. This service fulfils many of the criteria of a "formal" advice service (as defined by our project) however, it lacks the full independence and oversight of an organisation like Citizens Advice. The J.E. O'Toole Centre is part of the housing department of Anglesey Council. Anglesey Council housing department has lots of different functions including rent management and estate issues and is also home to the housing support team. The J.E. O'Toole Centre tends to be seen as a "one stop shop" for the Council as it has the Council "sign on the door" and the perception (and reality as we found in our research) that if someone from the J.E. O'Toole Centre can't help they will be able to find the person that can. Anglesey Council advice services are open to anybody and are not reserved to Council tenants.

Anglesey Council's Financial Inclusion Team, formally known as the Financial and Digital Inclusion Team, are an increasingly important part of the advice landscape. They do work around applications for the Discretionary Assistance Fund and discretionary housing payments and can also do pre-tenancy checks. The Financial Inclusion Team gives free, confidential advice and support in areas such as: accessing information about utility bills and financial assistance that may be available for water/gas and electric utility services, including accessing credit for pre-payment meters for those who are unable to visit a pay-point; accessing foodbanks if someone has no income/savings to buy food; budgeting advice; and reporting any changes on Universal Credit Journals or managing a Universal Credit claim online. In terms of advice and support, the Financial Inclusion Team can also offer advice on accessing bank accounts, discussing housing options such as downsizing to more affordable accommodation, and can also help with debt advice and developing financial confidence and capabilities, whatever a person's situation.

Anglesey Council's provision also includes Teulu Môn, which is a free and inclusive service for families on Anglesey. It is the first point of contact for all children, families and professionals for information, advice and assistance relating to children or the families of children, aged 0 to 25 years. It is a part of Anglesey's Children's Services.

In terms of housing and homelessness advice there is a Single Point of Access (SPoA) for housing enquiries on Anglesey Council's website, which includes an email address and an online form with various options for support such as housing; housing repairs and maintenance; and the general housing options team.

SHELTER CYMRU

Shelter Cymru provides specialist housing and homelessness advice. Shelter Cymru advisers are experts in housing law and can also offer debt and benefits advice. At the time of writing, they offer pre-bookable in-person appointments at the J.E. O'Toole centre, alongside telephone and online services.

ELECTED REPRESENTATIVES AND THEIR CASEWORKERS

The offices of the local Westminster Member of Parliament (MP) and Member of the Senedd (MS) are also important providers of advice and assistance. They are part of the local advice ecosystem, and their services tend to be known through their websites and newsletters as well as word of mouth. MPs and MSs have caseworkers may have strong connections with central UK Government and Welsh Government respectively, though this can depend on personal links and connections. For instance, the local MP's caseworker (at the time of our research) had been able to develop and maintain links with the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions. Caseworkers tend to refer people to Citizens Advice, particularly for clients needing help with form filling and some benefits appeals. Caseworkers may be able to help with appeals, though this is largely dependent on their own experience and expertise. Caseworkers also refer people to a range of other local advice and support services. The MP or MS office can also refer to more senior staff within organisations and there is a general sense that correspondence from MP or MS offices gives extra leverage to an issue. The politicians themselves are available for in-person meetings (usually these are pre-booked) as well as other means of communication such as Facebook live chats.

SPECIALIST SERVICES

In addition to Council services, Digartref provides support and assistance to those affected by homelessness on Anglesey, providing both short- and long-term solutions for those experiencing or at risk of becoming homeless. The Wallich, a Welsh homelessness and rough sleeping charity, also runs a "Housing First" service on Anglesey. Housing First focuses on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing, accompanied by wrap-around support to maintain the tenancy.

In addition to more specific Anglesey services, there are other organisations providing advice that work on a regional North Wales basis, or across several North Wales local authority areas. For example, Age Cymru works across Anglesey and Gwynedd, and aims to promote the welfare of older people living in these areas, including providing advice on matters such as benefits and Blue Badge applications. "Amser i Siarad" (Time to Talk) (previously known as Mind Gwynedd and Môn) is a mental health charity operating across both Anglesey and Gwynedd. Conwy Connect for Learning Disabilities provides some advice in its role of promoting the rights of people with learning disabilities living in North Wales, including on Anglesey. Gofal a Thrwsio (Care and Repair) Gwynedd a Môn provides information, advice and support to help older people in Gwynedd and Anglesey to live independently at home.

In addition to regional organisations, Anglesey also benefits from national organisations and services that operate across Wales. For example, SNAP Cymru provides free and independent information, advice and support for parents, children and young people who have, or may have, special educational needs or disabilities. Flintshire Citizens Advice provides an employment law, Discrimination Advice Service across Wales supported by the Single Advice Fund.

The Soldiers', Sailors' and Airmen's Families Association (SSAFA) is a UK wide charity that is particularly active on Anglesey. SSAFA provides help and support for (ex) military personnel and their dependants. They offer "mentoring" for personnel who have left the military to help them live in a "civilian environment". A Mentor is allocated to the client, and they help with employment and signposting towards social welfare support and services. SSAFA engages with many other services on Anglesey such as the local authority housing and welfare teams, and with Citizens Advice.

The Money and Pensions Service (MaPS) is an arm's-length body, sponsored by the Department for Work and Pensions that operates across the UK, including North Wales, to provide regulated advice with respect to money, pensions and debt. In Wales MaPS also works more specifically with businesses and organisations to improve financial wellbeing for their customers, employees and communities. Advice is delivered through UK wide telephone and online services.

ADVOCACY ORGANISATIONS

Anglesey also has organisations that provide advocacy. The North Wales Advice and Advocacy Association (Nwaaa) have been providing advocacy services in North Wales since 1997. Its statement of purpose is: "To promote and provide advice and advocacy for people facing disadvantage through dis-ability, illness, age or social exclusion, who live, in particular but not exclusively, in North Wales". Nwaaa says it passionately believes in enabling people to overcome problems and make informed choices that will improve their lives. They aim to work with people before a situation becomes a crisis, and in a way that supports independence and participation. Tros Gynnal Plant, a children's rights charity supporting and representing vulnerable children and young people, also provides an advocacy service across North Wales.

EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS FOR THE PROVISION OF INFORMATION, HELP AND ADVICE.

During our research we have seen a trend of information and advice provision partnerships developing around thematic issues across Wales, with some having a regional presence. For example, the 'Healthy Homes Healthy People' project aims to improve health and well-being by creating a home which is safe, sound, warm and secure for all, by providing energy efficiency advice and improvements, reductions in utility bills, improved safety in the home, as well as health and well-being outcomes. Partners involved in the scheme include Warm Homes Fund, North East Wales Care and Repair, Wales & West Utilities, Dŵr Cymru/Welsh Water, Police, Fire, Wardens and other agencies. Primarily what is offered is a telephone and email service offering advice in relation to home warmth, energy bills, inability to pay rent or mortgage due to loss of income, and advice on benefits eligibility. Here a range of organisations from the public, private and third sector contribute to the overall advice offer.

COMMUNITY-BASED ORGANISATIONS

There are a broad range of what we can refer to as community organisations operating on Anglesey that offer various help, support, and information, and in some cases also advice, in the social welfare context. Most of the organisations mentioned in this section connect or refer people to the advice services described above.

Medrwn Môn is an independent agency based in Llangefni providing support and advice to voluntary organisations and community groups enabling them to work more effectively. Its missions include: to provide practical advice and support to community groups and voluntary organisations; support such organisations to develop and maintain strong partnerships and networking opportunities; promote volunteering opportunities; identify training needs; encourage people to have their say; provide administrative support and practice services; and to identify gaps in provision. Medrwn Môn runs a "Place Shaping" project looking at how communities on Anglesey can be made "stronger and more resilient in future through understanding what those communities have in terms of assets - buildings, green spaces, skills & knowledge, community groups, and public services". One of Medrwn Môn's aims is to understand what communities look like now to identify priorities and plan so that communities are equipped to deal with future challenges.

Menter Môn is a not-for-profit social enterprise that delivers projects and services across North West Wales. It has a Board of Directors who give their time on a voluntary basis to provide the company with strategic support. Menter Môn seeks to add value to the region's resources for the benefit of local inhabitants. Among these resources are the natural and built environment, heritage, language, people and agricultural produce. Menter Môn takes a long-term community-based perspective and provides sustainable growth solutions to create and maximise opportunities across five main areas: conservation and the environment; agriculture and food; prosperous communities; renewable energy; technology and business. As part of Medrwn Môn, Môn Community Link also runs a Social Prescribing Service for people over the age of 18 and families living on Anglesey. This can be accessed through a GP or by self-referral.

Menter Iaith Môn is part of the Mentrau Iaith family which are community, voluntary and dynamic organisations promoting the Welsh language. Mentrau Iaith Cymru support their work nationally to increase the use of the language in communities. Menter Iaith Môn was established in 1995 and provides a cross-section of provisions and activities that support efforts to maintain the Welsh language locally and provide opportunities for residents to use their Welsh.

Anglesey Foodbank is an amalgamation of foodbank type agencies founded by local churches on Anglesey and the Trussell Trust. The latter provides Anglesey Foodbank with some funding, as well as insurance, training for staff and so on, but Anglesey Foodbank is free to operate in ways adapted to the needs of local communities with the aim of stopping hunger.

COMMUNITY HUBS

There are several types of community hubs operating on Anglesey. Advice service providers and community group participants in our research noted that these hubs have different roles, operate at various levels within communities and are set up by different organisations; so much so, this can sometimes make them difficult to keep track of. One community hub project was created in partnership with Anglesey Council, Age Cymru Gwynedd a Môn and Medrwn Môn, as part of the "Cymuned" initiative, known as the "Virtual Village Hall for Anglesey", which was initially developed as an online community hub for Anglesey. The website was launched at the end of 2021 and is said to have united community hubs based across Anglesey, "allowing them to publicise their ongoings in one place online, and offers a blended approach to accessing local events, which seeks to cater to the varied needs of those who live on the Island". There are seven community hubs across Anglesey. One is a faith-based community hub, the Anglesey Mission, bringing together Roman Catholic faith communities on Anglesey. The other six are based in different geographical communities across Anglesey. For example, the Gwelfor Community Centre was established in 1978 by residents and is the focal point for Morawelon and London Road, Holyhead (population approx. 4,600) but also welcome to all. The Centre was asset transferred to the Morlo Regeneration Partnership from the Anglesey Council in 2014. LlanNi is a community group and hub for the village of Llannerch-y-medd, population approx. 1,360. A key hub for our project is the Iorwerth Arms, a community owned and run pub that was saved from closure and demolition through community action in 2015 and now a not-for-profit pub run by unpaid Directors as a community hub for the Bryngwran area, population approx. 900 (including the village of Bryngwran as well as Engedi and Capel Gwyn). Research work by Building Communities Trust (BCT) in 2020 noted: "The hubs are supported by a network of local asset co-ordinators who help connect people in the community with their hub, enabling them to access group support and networks within their local area".[40] BCT also note that this is "similar to a social prescribing approach, encouraging natural support systems within the community where people support people and improved health and wellbeing outcomes begin to emerge for individuals and the wider community".[41]

The Anglesey Community hubs pre-dated the Covid-19 pandemic, however, other forms of hubs also developed specifically because of the pandemic, including Covid-19 Support Hubs created by the local health board, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board. These Covid-19 Support Hubs were developed to be a one-stop-shop for information, advice, and practical support available to all residents. There had been as many as 16 located across North Wales where over 100 different community organisations came together to provide a wide range of services. The Anglesey hub was based at the Holyhead offices of Citizens Advice Ynys Môn. At the time of our research, several hubs had continued to operate, and some had expanded the scope of their provision to broader post-Covid community wellbeing needs. However, there appears to be no clear commissioning framework for community hubs, or a clear picture as to how these hubs are supposed to engage with those developed under

40 https://static1.squarespace.com/static/62554a379dc7e96b0ee4c256/t/62793a3a8424d061540bfd65/1652111930507/2020-11-23-56-1-medrwn-mon-anglesey-hubs.pdf

41 Ibid

other initiatives, such as the initiative that led to creation of six community hubs on Anglesey, including at the Iorwerth Arms in Bryngwran. Funding for what started as Covid-19 Support Hubs comes from several sources, including Welsh Government, local authorities, health boards and charities, but there is no clear overarching framework, for example no framework that would include quality standards, and these funding streams are not sustainable or well connected to commissioning of other services, specifically including SWL advice services. At the time of our research, the community-based organisations we engaged with were not yet seeking accreditation under the Welsh Information and Advice Quality Framework as providers of "accredited services". This category aims to expand access to quality assured services where there may be some element of information, advice or guidance provided, but the main work of the organisation is likely to be other activities such as befriending schemes, foodbanks, and community hubs.

5. Perspectives and experiences of advice providers and community organisations

As part of our research, we held various focus group workshops to understand the issues facing advice providers and community organisations on Anglesey. The following key themes emerged from our engagement with SWL advice providers and CVSE sector organisations.

5.1 Prevention and making decisions "right first time"

Key among the themes raised by advice providers was prevention. Both advice sector and community organisations considered that more support could be provided around "life skills" such as budgeting and cooking, as well as careers advice and opportunities for training. Though it was noted that it can be hard to encourage people to attend and engage with this kind of support when offered. Some advice organisation participants noted that to access specific support or entitlements, such as food and fuel vouchers, or to apply for discretionary support, people would need to contact particular helplines to get necessary referral. A key theme was that people need "the right help at the right time", and although these helplines have been developed with the potential to help diagnose the broader causes of hardship and to provide "holistic" advice, notably for some clients they do not want to engage with the wider help offered. For instance, some people only seek a particular entitlement such as a food or fuel voucher, and do not want to engage with wider services. So much so, some people go the extent of registering under different names to receive multiple vouchers, but not wanting to engage with the underlying issues causing their need. The challenge is then how to connect with people at the right time when they are more open to engaging with the broader causes of and contributory factors to their problems.

People need "the right help at the right time", and the nature of this help varies. A particular type of help that people need at the right time is filling in forms. Advice providers taking part in our research commonly noted that there is insufficient funding to provide support for people to fill in forms, particularly applications for benefits, that there is an assumption that many people can do this without or with little advice and support, whereas this is simply not the case. Professional support is

required to fill in forms effectively and the borderline between "support" and "advice" is particularly challenging in this context. Incorrect and incomplete forms have a significant impact on people's outcomes and on service provider resources.

Advice providers and community organisations noted that better provision of public services, particularly in health and social care, would prevent various advice needs from occurring and/or from reaching a crisis stage. Initial decisions being made "right first time" is also important, especially around rights and entitlements, such as benefits and additional learning needs provision. A common theme emerging from our research was of poor decision-making in particular government departments, and specifically the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and of problems with contracted out eligibility assessments for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) performed by Capita. Capita's role is to understand how a long-term health condition or disability affects someone's daily life to help the DWP assess a PIP claim. The DWP then looks at Capita's assessment report, the "How your disability affects you" form, and any other evidence provided to decide on each PIP claim. Our findings show real concern expressed by advice professionals about the quality of Capita assessments and DWP decision-making, with various examples of clients they had subsequently supported being successful in having decisions overturned on reconsideration, or more commonly at a Tribunal – thus, suggesting that this (often drawn out) process and the costs involved could have been avoidable.

5.2 Funding, staff and volunteers

For advice provider organisations, a lack of sustainable resources is a real problem, both money and people being comparatively in short supply. The short-term nature of sources of funding is problematic, with government and charitable grant funding regularly being limited to short periods (projects) of up to two years, and where funding often requires the development of "new" and "innovative" services as part of award criteria; but where even after having proven efficient and effective, such services are not then awarded with follow-on funding, with new projects instead having to be funded (with all the application risks, competitiveness, start-up costs and staff this involves). Participants in our North Wales Regional Advice Network event from across North Wales, expressed a mismatch between funder requirements and client needs and that funding seem to be framed around the former rather than the latter.

Most participants organisations, both large and small, received funding through grants from a range of different sources. The criteria for accessing such grants seemed quite variable, with some reporting complex procedures and criteria whilst others experienced much more flexible arrangements. For instance, some funding sources placed significant restrictions on eligibility or had extensive reporting criteria with respect to outcomes. The short termism, piecemeal nature of funding and the range

of criteria was seen as cutting against the aim of larger organisations to provide a holistic service. For smaller organisations, responding to different funding calls, and adapting to strict criteria was challenging, especially when there were also restraints on who could be helped once funding had been secured. Larger organisations had the advantage of economies of scale in this regard. Some funder criteria also

seemed unnecessarily restrictive in terms of the information/input needed from people who would be helped by the service. It was noted that sometimes the benefits are so self-explanatory, extensive evidence from potential clients in advance should not be an essential criterion for accessing funding.

Participants considered that funders have not always encouraged genuine partnership working, and that tender processes can be competitive, cutting against partnership working and negatively impacting longer-term sustainability.
The short-term nature of funding destabilises capacity. Notably, new funding streams result in the establishment of new projects which can lead to the identification of previously unmet needs and begin to help people with those needs. However, funding is then withdrawn due to lack of resources or the end of one-off or rolling schemes, although the demand and needs have not gone away. The funded project may have succeeded in raising awareness of needs, but then these can no longer be met due to the short-term nature of the project funding, and the appearance is almost as if the project itself has created new demand for services provided by organisations already struggling with capacity. Such new projects may well provide services that relieve the pressure on other public bodies (such as the NHS or the courts service), but when the projects end due to short-term funding this has knock-on effects for various organisations when demand continues to exist.

The availability of funding, or extensions to existing funding, is often decided and advertised at short notice, meaning that although there is money available it must be spent immediately, and this does not always lead to the most efficient and effective resourcing of activities within organisations. Key staff might have already left or been repurposed to other activities, or the organisation cannot pivot quickly enough to provide the best offering under new funding. Short-termism and lack of forewarning about continuation funding impacts on who can be helped, but also on how they can be helped, and ultimately limits the options available to clients, and can damage relationships with partners.

The short-term nature of funding also means that sometimes by the time a project has been established and advertised, and awareness of it raised across various networks, that project is already nearing its completion, and it becomes too late for organisations to refer in. It can be difficult for referring agencies to know when projects have finished. Thus, funding streams can sometimes impact on not only who can be referred to a particular service and how, but also on referral onwards from that service or initiative and how those referrals should be framed.

Advice and community sector participants in our research workshops and in the North Wales Regional Advice Network event also noted that resources tend to be allocated to the areas where it is easiest to evidence both need (and to an extent demand) for services, but this doesn't mean needs don't exist in other areas, and in particular, pockets of poverty and deprivation in and around more affluent areas can be neglected and thus become invisible.

We found that there is little funding for core services, such as for further training of staff, salaries, building maintenance and equipment to increase the capacity of existing staff. For example, the Welsh Government funded SAF, explained above in section 4.1, does not cover such costs. Participants also gave examples of funding

applications that had failed because applications where not specific enough, or "novel" enough, whereas the real need of the organisation was to fund its core services. Ultimately, this leads to staff resources being directed towards short term and "novel" projects, reducing overall core capacity that includes engaging with outreach, which is especially challenging in rural areas. Rural outreach then becomes something that only happens consistently and regularly when it forms part of a specific (usually short-term) funded project.

Smaller organisations tended not to be subject to strict eligibility and reporting conditions through their funding criteria, but in part this was because their emphasis/ founding purpose was often on helping more distinctive groups, based on locality and/or identity. Smaller organisations did not tend to have targets or limitations on the amount of time that could be spent with a help-seeker/client, or the number of people to be helped. Large organisations, on the other hand, tended to have funding scheme targets based on the number of people helped and the time spent (including time spent per-client in some cases).

Staffing and volunteer numbers are also a resource consideration. Participants noted that volunteer numbers had reduced, particularly in the post-pandemic environment, and that staff recruitment is also challenging. Volunteer numbers in larger organisations seemed to have taken a particularly big hit during the pandemic and have not subsequently recovered, as a result more frontline advice services need to be provided by paid staff. However, organisations are also struggling to recruit, and in some instances to retain staff. For some organisations this might be linked to salaries (it was noted that staff can earn more working in the retail industry). However, organisations that provide some of the highest wages on Anglesey (particularly the local Council and Health Board) are also struggling to recruit. Potential reasons for lack of staffing include the fact that provision of advice has become more professionalised and more highly regulated (or at least there are perceptions that it has been) and that this therefore requires more experience, training and oversight for quality assurance purposes. Advice sector organisations, and particularly their newer staff and volunteers, agreed that it can feel like there is "too much training and too much of it is online". Some organisations said that finding people with the required expertise was "like finding gold dust". Many advice and community sector organisations did not have the money to invest in training and monitoring new staff and volunteers. Another reason for lack of staffing relates to the short-termism and lack of sustainability in funding (noted above) which can lead to short-term contracts that provide little job security, limited training, and no meaningful options for future career progression.

Participants also discussed the nature of work and volunteering generally and how people's expectations are changing. Whilst advice sector organisations sought to be flexible and offer homeworking (including to reduce travel costs for their staff, help with caring obligations etc) there are challenges that staff and volunteer expectations and desired patterns of working do not always fit with the best delivery methods for service users and/or the broader needs of the employing organisation itself. It was said that advice provision roles are not such that people can work fully from home indefinitely. Organisations have sought to be agile and flexible in terms of the needs of their staff and volunteers and to encourage them to work in the office. For example, ensuring offices are available and can be used as warm environments,

sometimes with free food being available in response to the cost-of-living crisis impacting staff and volunteers. Difficulties recruiting Welsh speakers were also noted, with subsequent impacts on capacity to deliver bilingual services.

For larger organisations whose advice services are directed towards people with particular characteristics (age, homeless people, disability etc), providing advice may be only one of an advisor's roles funded by a particular stream/pot of funding. Advisors in various types of organisations might also only be providing advice as ancillary to their main or other roles. Sometimes an advisor's advice provision knowledge comes from a previous role (project) and is only being applied in a current role due to the discretion of the advisor and a feeling of wanting to be able to help and not wanting to turn people away. A person's capacity to continue doing something that may not formally be part of their role is limited and leads to risk of burnout.

Among smaller, and particularly community-based organisations, volunteer loss was more variable. Some organisations had seen a reduction in volunteers. Whereas others, seemingly those established for more specific purposes and client groups, and particularly those mainly providing information and support rather than advice, did not experience the same challenges in terms of volunteers, and some also did not experience the same challenges in terms of funding, in part because they offer relatively smaller advice services and often signpost and refer people to other external organisations.

5.3 Interactions between community-based advice with formal advice providers

Various points were raised about the importance of community organisations to facilitate information, support and advice provision, but also of the challenges for such organisations to interact with formal advice providers. Participants noted that the work of small, often locality or identity-based organisations, which they sometimes referred to as "micro-organisations", can be more fluid, change quite quickly and adapt to meet the changing needs of communities. These changes can also include who works for and volunteers with these organisations. Fluidity and change make it difficult for larger more formal and long-established advice organisations to work with smaller micro-organisations. Specifically, it is difficult for larger organisations to include community-based organisations and their services in wider networks and directories and keep up to date.

Developing technology and online offerings can be more difficult for smaller community-based organisations, both due to comparative funding and expertise. However, they often tend to have excellent engagement on platforms like Facebook, where pages and events can be created with relative ease, and communication channels, such as WhatsApp Groups, to communicate with different groups of community members. There is comparatively little use of other social media like Instagram and Twitter/X, which might be in part linked to age demographics especially of rural Anglesey communities.

Smaller community-based organisations can lack sufficient administrative staff (or volunteers), and this can be particularly challenging in setting up meetings, sending reminders, updating online information and so on. The lack of meaningful core funding for administration seems to be a common factor amongst large, medium-sized and smaller organisations. Larger and medium size organisations operating across a region or county have a particular interest in networking and engagement with smaller community-based organisations. However, this kind of engagement may be a lower priority for resource allocation for the smaller organisations, who interact with larger organisations in a more ad hoc way based on the knowledge, understanding, connections, time and energy of staff and/or volunteers.

Smaller organisations depend significantly on the people running them, and organisations noted that this poses risks, with such organisations having been set up with particular objectives (which might also be linked to their funding) to operate for the benefit of a particular geographical area or characteristic/set of characteristics. This can create the risk of appearing as "cliques" and even be seen as exclusionary to some of the very same local people whose needs they have been established to meet, but where people feel they can't access the support. Community engagement with smaller organisations can depend very much on personalities. Our participants noted that people living in smaller rural locations and those who work/volunteer in a small organisation can believe that they are "doing the right thing" and have the community's best interests at heart from their own perspective, but that this doesn't always turn out to be exactly the case in practice. Our participants noted how important it is to be open-minded and non-judgemental when being part of and working with community organisations.

From the perspective of advice providers participating in our research, a challenge for people and communities accessing advice is the extent to which people don't know or understand that there are organisations out there which could assist them, or that the issue(s) they are facing is/are something that could begin to be addressed by SWL advice. Providers are aware of people out there that they aren't reaching. Challenges were seen to be around people not knowing what their rights are, not knowing how to ask for help, needing support to ask for help, which can be coupled with pride and not wanting to ask for help. Advice organisations considered that people can see asking for help as "rocking the boat", having failed in some way, or that people don't want to be a problem. The process of seeking help, and particularly of accessing benefits, can be seen as very off putting to people as it can require asking lots of intrusive personal questions especially around disability. Participants emphasised the need for people to refer themselves to help and that they usually can't be referred by others. Advisors generally felt able to adapt to the different characteristics and requirements of service users across communities (of geography and of identity) and noted that there are differences among client groups in terms of how they access information, which they also saw as impacted by digital capability and access to technology.

Advice providers considered that there is digital exclusion on Anglesey, including people who are not online at all. There was a view that current support tends to concentrate on training people to use digital devices, whereas there are problems around some people simply not having internet access. Citizens Advice provide support, such as giving clients a phone, laptop, sim card etc, but the cost of Wi-Fi

continues to be an issue. Free Wi-fi is available, but only in certain pockets of areas on Anglesey, e.g., Llangefni. Participants told us that more isolated people tend to be less digitally aware. They also said that it is important to consider disability, including learning disability, in the context of provision of and access to technology. Phoning people and signposting them to support is not enough. What is needed is a wider conversation to understand the unique personal needs of individuals and to set them up so they can interact online effectively.

Participants noted that older people feel some stigma around needing and seeking advice, e.g., taking up their entitlements, using a warm bank etc. It was felt that a high-profile, widespread publicity campaign is still needed, and that whilst "Claim what's yours" is valuable, still more could be done. It was noted that rurality is a distinctive issue for North Wales, but the success of video links to more remote locations has been variable, with limited take-up. Participants reflected that more "boots on the ground" are needed within local communities. Face to face provision is crucial, especially for disabled people, people who have care needs, and older people. Locally based services are important and should be protected, especially for clients who need support to access and engage with advice.

The challenges of accessing advice described above, demonstrate that community engagement is key to raising awareness of entitlements to advice, access to advice providers, and in identifying and understanding the unique needs of individuals. This also reinforces our earlier argument for advice providers to have the capacity to interact with people in the right way at the right time.

Approaches that seem to work to engage communities with advice provision are leaflets and newsletters through the letterbox and posters in community spaces. Word of mouth is crucial, people chat to friends over coffee, at the bus stop, in the GP waiting room etc. GPs play an important role, people will speak to a GP and be signposted to an advice provider on their recommendation; GPs are seen as having authority to make that recommendation/signposting and this reduces stigma. This authority also comes with referrals from specialist hospital wards such as oncology, and in some cases also with teaching professionals. Private businesses are also part of this ecosystem - people chat to supermarket staff, staff at the pub counter, and their buying patterns can be observed if they are regulars.

5.4 Awareness of and navigating the advice landscape

Participating advice organisations felt it was important to set out the parameters of their services and that such information was accurate and up to date. Larger organisations, often subject to referrals from smaller community-based and identity-based organisations, felt it important that partners have realistic expectations of the service that can be provided, including the extent of advice that can be provided, and that this should specifically be communicated to people being referred to manage expectations and avoid delays and disappointments. Different organisations don't know fully what the other does, and particularly don't know the limits of support that can be provided. Sometimes it is other professionals that have the highest assumptions of what others can do (assumptions that may be incorrect). For example, the role of advocacy organisations seemed to be poorly understood.

Advocacy can sometimes be the first port of call for people who don't really understand what advocates can do and how they can (and can't) help, or they can be the last port of call for people who have tried other avenues and have not been able to access sufficient help. This first port of call and last port of call is a trait that tends to be shared with elected representatives and their caseworkers: people have an idea or eventually find out that these individuals and organisations can help, but it isn't initially clear how and in what circumstances. Participants noted that there seems to be an increase in situations where people are referred to advocacy when what they really need is a support worker, and their association in the course of their work with social services tends to mean that advocacy organisations can be asked (even by professionals) for social services type help that is not within their remit. This seems to chime generally with reports of lack of availability of social workers and of their struggling to manage high caseloads and high staff turnover.

It was reflected that larger organisations tend to know about networks and referral processes, and that it can be more difficult for smaller organisations to know about networks and to keep up to date about the services offered within the network. Participants noted the existence of seamless channels for a client's advice journey, with effective referrals and sharing of information about services – such as Refernet, Dewis Cymru, and Elemental (for social prescribing referrals) and having a so-called "Single Point of Access" (SpoA) (particularly for housing and homelessness advice). However, many participants felt that there might already be too many different types of directories, networks, information sharing hubs and referral mechanisms, each with a different emphasis or focus, but often with overlapping criteria, and some of which are seen as sub-standard in performing their intended functions. The search function on Dewis, for example, was seen as not capturing key providers despite them having been registered with the system, and it was generally accepted that Dewis is not used by members of the public or some smaller organisations.

The idea of a single referral portal was raised by different participant organisations as much needed, but it was equally acknowledged that there is no need to "reinvent the wheel" and building on and improving existing platforms would be better than creating an additional platform or network. The benefits of having a single referral portal would include potentially making it easier to report outcomes back to referring organisations (and to others for evaluation/funding purposes) and that this could include storytelling and case-studies to help raise awareness and increase understanding. Some participants suggested that Welsh Government ought to further develop existing platforms and networks into a single portal, as Welsh Government has the most extensive overview of the information and advice landscape and has the capacity to draw on existing good practice whilst avoiding duplication.

Organisations are creating their own resources, their own Apps and referral tools, but there isn't shared working and joined up thinking for, or full awareness of, this. Data protection and privacy regulations are seen as problems for referrals as people may have to tell their story multiple times.
Information sharing needs to be improved. Sometimes organisations don't even know that they are being promoted elsewhere as a point of access/help/support for a particular issue until the enquiries start coming in. Participants considered that an Anglesey-wide advice providers and community organisations forum or network

would be particularly valuable and that the North Wales Regional Advice Network on its own is too wide. It was noted that such networks had existed in the past but that they tended to depend on the voluntary activities of individual professionals with significant experience and connections to manage and keep them up-to-date, and were not sustainable when such people retired or moved away etc. It was clear that a successful network or forum requires core funding for administration and needs to operate in a way that makes it easy for a wide range of organisations, facing various challenges with respect to funding, time and expertise, to participate.

5.5 Centralisation of decision-making and advice services

There was a strong theme in our discussions with advice providers of a much longer-term trend of centralising assessments and decision-making processes, with respect to benefits in particular, coupled also with the perceived centralisation of advice, making the whole system of raising awareness of entitlements, claiming entitlements, seeking advice and challenging decisions much more remote from the individuals affected. It was clear that initiatives such as digital government and digital by default were part of this. In addition, advice providers told us that they themselves struggled to reach UK Government departments including over the phone and that they tended to be passed around various people and departments, none of whom were able to appropriately deal with concerns raised on behalf of local people and needs on Anglesey.

5.6 The limits of advice

Many participants reported not being able to fully help clients, and how this impacted on their own well-being. For example, when full advice had been provided, clients were now claiming all their legal rights and entitlements, all options for maximising income had been explored, yet clients still did not have enough money coming in to cover their essential outgoings. This can cause what is known as "moral injury", a response to acting or witnessing behaviours that go against an individual's values and moral beliefs. Staff and volunteers feel they have fewer solutions available than has been the case in the past, specifically due to the cost-of-living crisis and especially spiralling energy costs. This inability to help has significant impacts on advisors' well-being and morale. It was said by our participants that advisors do not have "magic wands" and that there are real limits to the results/outcomes of advice.

6. The Bryngwran case-study

6.1 Bryngwran in numbers

Bryngwran, a village and community located just off the A5 London to Holyhead trunk road, lies 8.1 miles west of Llangefni, 7.0 miles south west of Llannerch-y-medd and 7.4 miles south east of Holyhead, including the villages of Bryngwran, Capel Gwyn and Engedi. Based on the 2021 Census the area had a population of approx. 900 people, 26.3% of whom were aged 65 and over. Most people in Bryngwran live in a house or bungalow, there being very few flats or apartments. Some 4.5% of homes do not have central heating, as compared to a Welsh average of 1.2%. The population generally describe themselves as being in good or very good health, with those reporting very good health constituting 49.9% compared to a Welsh average of 46.2%.

In Bryngwran, 22.7% of people report a disability under the Equality Act 2010, slightly higher than the Welsh average. Of the population aged 16 and over, 55.1% of the population are economically active and employed, slightly above the Welsh average, and most are in full-time employment.

Levels of education are comparable to Welsh averages, but with a notably high proportion of people having completed apprenticeships. This can be set in the context of the type of employment in the area, including farming, agriculture and related trades, and that 21.6% of employed people work in skilled trades as compared to a Welsh average of 12.2%. There are also fewer people in professional roles, but more in associate professional and technical occupations. Notably, given the rural nature of the area, of those people aged over 16 years and in employment, only 17.5% travel less than 10km to work (compared to a Welsh average of 36.3%), with 34.8% travelling between 10km to less than 30km (compared to a Welsh average of 18.2%) and 7.4% travelling more than 30km (compared to a Welsh average of 5.9%). 64% of people drive a car to work, compared to a Welsh average of 56.5% of people.

The proportion of Bryngwran households deprived in one dimension is higher than the Welsh average, 39.4% compared to 33.4% respectively, but the proportion of people deprived in two or three dimensions is lower than Welsh averages. Dimensions of deprivation relate to employment, education, health and disability, and household overcrowding

The population of Bryngwran is 98.6% White and a majority of 59% describe themselves as Christian compared to a Welsh average of 43.6%. Of the population of Bryngwran, 69% of people can speak, read or write Welsh, and 66.7% describe themselves as being able to speak Welsh (around three times the respective Welsh averages).

6.2 Case-study interview participants

We engaged widely with local people to try and ensure a spread of experiences were reflected in the research. However, our interviewees do not constitute a statistically representative sample of the total population locally. Rather, the aims of this stage of our research were focused on capturing and understanding context, nuances, meaning and deep insights instead of generalisability of data.

64% of Bryngwran interviewees were female, and 36% were male. Interviewees were a range of ages, from 20s to 80s. The average age of interviewees was 52 years. 72% of the interviewees were born in Wales, and 23% were born in England. 54% of the interviewees described their ethnicity as Welsh, with 26% describing themselves as English, and 18% describing themselves as British. 51% said they speak mainly Welsh at home, 36% speak mainly English, and 13% speak a mixture of Welsh and English.

In terms of their housing situation, 38% of the interviewees own their own home outright, with no mortgage, and 31% own their own home but with a mortgage. 8% were renting in the private sector, and a further 8% were renting in the public sector. 13% were living rent free with family. 26% of the interviewees said they live alone, and most lived with one to two other people.

28% of the interviewees were receiving some form of state benefit due to low or no income. 28% of interviewees had a long-term health condition, impairment or disability restricting their everyday activities that has lasted or is likely to last for 12 months or more. 41% of the interviewees were working full-time, with a further 26% working part-time, 21% of interviewees were retired and a further 10% were not working due to a health condition or disability.

Of those interviewees answering the question (n=37), 14% of the Bryngwran interviewees had no formal educational qualifications, with 22% holding GCSE or equivalent qualifications, 41% holding A level or other post-16 qualifications, and 24% educated to undergraduate or postgraduate degree level.

6.3 Bryngwran community connectedness and wellbeing

6.3.1 Mapping people's social networks

As part of our research, we analysed interviewees' social networks. To aid the reader to meaningfully interpret and understand the social networks of interviewees in Bryngwran, we first explain how we developed the social network images and how to interpret these.

Mapping people's social networks is a particular way to represent and understand their own community of close connections. We asked interviewees three questions to build up their social networks of comparatively close connections. These were:

- "Who do you speak to (including text, WhatsApp, etc) regularly? Includes people you live with".
- "Aside from those people who you have just mentioned, are there any other people you speak to when wanting to find out what's going on in your community?"; and
- "Aside from those people already mentioned, is there anyone else who helps people with problems in your community?"

Interpreting social network images

After completing the interviews, we produced network images for analysis by loading our full dataset (created from Network Canvas interviews) into a custom Kumu (https://kumu.io) social network template. This template places circles or squares (representing people in the networks, known as nodes) closer together if there are many connections within the network. For our images we have used squares. Squares (nodes) within less connected networks are more spaced out. This makes it easier to spot closer and more distant social networks. We created 'typical' networks for each case-study area based on the average number of people within the networks and who they are (friend, family member etc), the average connectedness of those networks (the average number of other people in the network each person knows), and the average number of organisations/services mentioned during our line of questioning around awareness of organisations/services providing help and advice with SWL problems. For ethical reasons, the information and connections have been randomised such that none of the images depicts a real person's network.

In the social network images, each central larger square is a person interviewed and most of the smaller squares outside represent their 'social alters' (people they speak to regularly; people they speak to when they want to find out what is going on in the community; and people they think help with problems in the community). The social alters need not be people living locally, but we did collect further information about whether particular social alters lived locally or not (we did not define 'locally' for this purpose, so answers are based on the interviewee's perception). We specifically informed interviewees that 'speak to' here includes phone, instant messaging and email etc., and is not limited to speaking physically in-person.

The social alters are colour-coded to show who they are (friend, family member, work colleague etc.), according to the legend shown below. In this research, 'service provider' means someone who provides a service to the interviewee, this could be anything from a carer to a local shop worker. 'Service provided' on the other hand refers to a person the interviewee provides a service to where they speak to this other person regularly, e.g., where the interviewee is a carer.

If the interviewee thinks that one person knows another a line is drawn between them. This helps to show how connected the network is by showing how many people in the network both know the interviewee and each other.

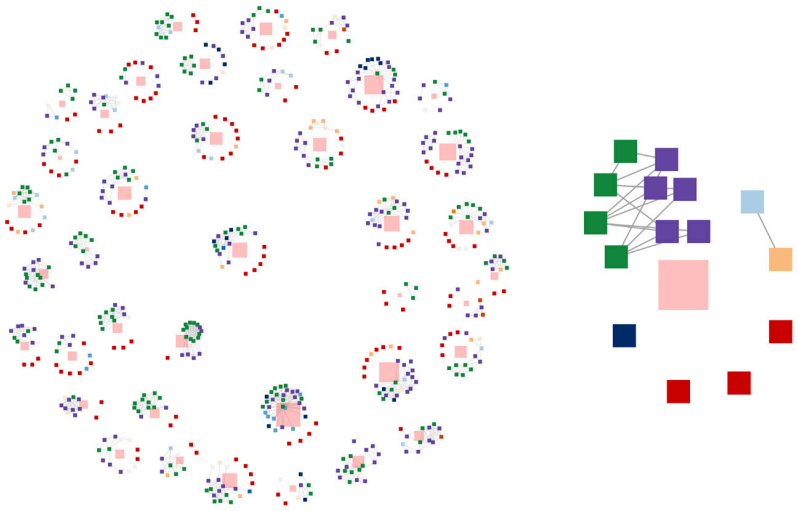
The small squares in red are the organisations/services people were aware of as offering help to people with problems in the community. We did not place any geographical restrictions on the organisations/services that could be listed here; the emphasis of the question was on awareness of the organisation/services seen as offering help to the community, rather than where these were located, though most organisations/services added at this stage were comparatively local. Interviewees were also asked to add any other organisations/services they had used to their networks, which captured several non-local organisations/services contacted about specific problems. The organisations/services are not connected by lines in the images because we have not sought to depict interviewee perceptions of whether other people in their social network were also aware of these organisations/services, or whether organisations/services are connected to each other in some way, as this would be speculative. However, our work with SWL advice providers and community organisations analyses connections between organisations/services. However, our work with SWL advice providers and community organisations analyses connections between organisations/services.

6.3.2 Social network characteristics in Bryngwran

Figure 1 shows a representation of all 39 Bryngwran social networks in the data set. Figure 1 shows there is a fair amount of variation in the size of individual networks (the number of squares) and in their connectedness (the number of lines between each square). The Bryngwran networks are quite diverse in the overall size of the networks (from smallest to largest) and as to who is in the networks (mixtures of friends, family, work colleagues etc). Figure 2 then shows a "typical" individual social network from Bryngwran. This is created by looking at the average size, number of connections, and types of people in the networks. The networks of Bryngwran interviewees were generally quite large and well-connected, for example as compared to our other case-study areas. Figure 2 shows that a "typical" Bryngwran network has a broadly equal representation of friends and family, and typically includes a work colleague and neighbour. It is also notable that work colleagues, neighbours and service providers are not generally connected to family and friends, that is, work colleagues may not also know the interviewee's family and/or their friends.

Figure 1: Bryngwran Social Networks

Figure 2: A "Typical" Bryngwran Network

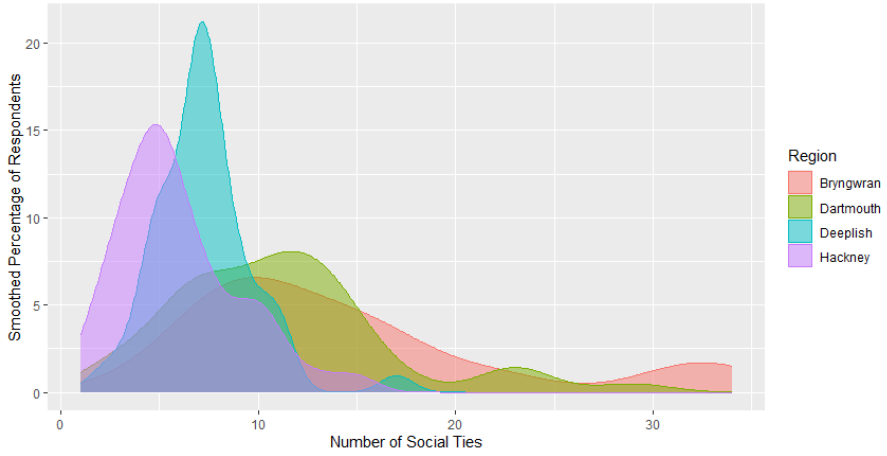


6.3.3 Comparing Bryngwran social networks to those in other case-study areas

It is interesting to compare the social networks of Bryngwran interviewees with those of interviewees in the other case-study areas of Deeplish in Rochdale, Dartmouth in South Hams and several locations in Hackney. Figure 3 is a density plot comparing the size of social networks across the local case-study areas (this shows a smoothed version of the distribution's overall shape). Social ties on the y-axis shows the number of people in an

interviewee's social network. We can see from Figure 3 that more of the red coloured area, representing Bryngwran, is to the right of the graph which means that Bryngwran's social networks tended to be larger, as compared, for example, to Hackney (in purple colour) and to Deeplish in Rochdale (in blue colour) where more of the shaded areas is to the left of the graph. The higher peak for Deeplish (in blue colour) and to a lesser extent for Hackney (in purple colour) shows that there is less variation in the size of social networks across all the people we interviewed in these areas. For example, in Deeplish approx. one quarter of the interviewees had social networks that included seven people. In Bryngwran, and also in Dartmouth, the size of interviewees' social networks was more variable, from smaller networks to some very large networks. This can also be seen in Figure 1 above (which shows all the social network images from Bryngwran). Again, it should be noted that these images have been constructed from the data, so they accurately represent the data without showing any real person's social network.

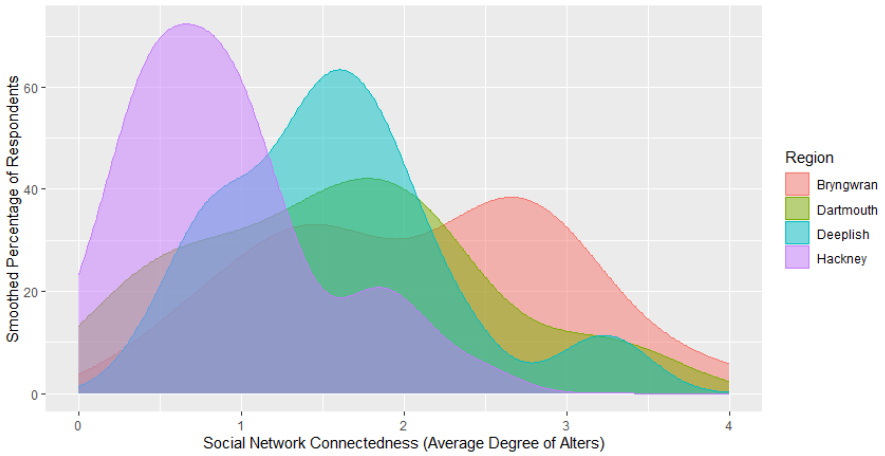
Figure 3: Comparative size of social networks



We also examined the connectedness of social networks by looking at the total number of connections the interviewee reported between the individuals in their social network, normalised by the size of their social network (referred to as the "average degree of alters"). This is effectively a measure of social connectedness based on how many people in a social network both know the interviewee and know each other. Figure 4 compares social network connectedness between the four case-study areas, and shows, for example, that Hackney social networks were generally the least connected, as a large part of the purple-coloured area is to the left of the graph. Deeplish social networks are slightly more connected and often very similar in levels of connectedness, as can be seen by the high peak. On the other hand, Figure 4 shows that Bryngwran had the most connected social networks, as can be seen by the red coloured area being further to the right of the graph. However, its lower curved, rather than distinct peak shape shows that there was much more variation in the connectedness of social networks in Bryngwran, with some considerably more connected than others. Similar to Figure 3, Figure 4 is a density plot, this time showing a

smoothed version of the distribution of the average degree of social alters, displaying the overall "shape" of the distribution.

Figure 4: Comparative connectedness of social networks



When considering both the size and connectedness of social networks, the data suggests that ethnicity may be a relevant factor. Ninety percent of the interviewees in Deeplish described their ethnicity as Pakistani, and we found that people of Pakistani ethnicity in the dataset generally had smaller sized social networks, as did people of African ethnicity (over 80% of the older interviewees in Hackney described their ethnicity as African). There was more variability in the size of social networks amongst those with White ethnicities, with interviewees who described themselves as English having comparatively small social networks while people who described themselves as either British of Welsh had larger ones.[42]

In terms of social network connectedness, the least socially connected networks were those of interviewees describing themselves as African, Caribbean or English. The networks of interviewees identifying as British were more well-connected, followed by those of interviewees identifying as Pakistani. Notably, interviewees who described their ethnicity as Welsh had networks that were generally both larger in size, and also significantly more connected (with higher numbers of people who know the interviewee also knowing each other) as compared to the social networks of other ethnicities in the study. Of those who identified as Welsh in our study, 82% also either mostly spoke Welsh at home, or spoke a combination of English and Welsh. This data indicates that ethnicity and language are both likely to be important in understanding people's social networks, social connectedness and their social capital, underscoring the importance of community-based, culturally and linguistically sensitive services.

42 Interviewees were given the opportunity to select multiple ethnicities, for example, some people described themselves as English and British. The data discussed in this section of the report is based on interviewees identifying with just one ethnicity; very few interviewees selected multiple ethnicities.

In terms of the make-up of social networks, that is, who the people in the networks are, we find that social networks of interviewees in Bryngwran often include a mixture of both family and friends. Figure 5, below, shows the percentage of people in an interviewee's social networks who are family. As can be seen in Figure 5, in contrast to Bryngwran, for example, Deeplish social networks had the highest proportion of connections who were family members, and the lowest proportion of connections who were friends. We see this because much of the blue coloured area, representing Deeplish, is to the right of the graph in Figure 5 showing family, whereas in Figure 6, which shows the percentage of friends in social networks, much of the blue coloured area for Deeplish is to the left of the graph. In contrast, much of the red coloured area, representing Bryngwran, is towards the centre of both graphs in Figures 5 and 6, though with a wider and smoother distribution in Figure 6, showing that there is more variability across Bryngwran social networks in terms of how many of the people in those networks are friends.

Figure 5: Percentage of social network who are family

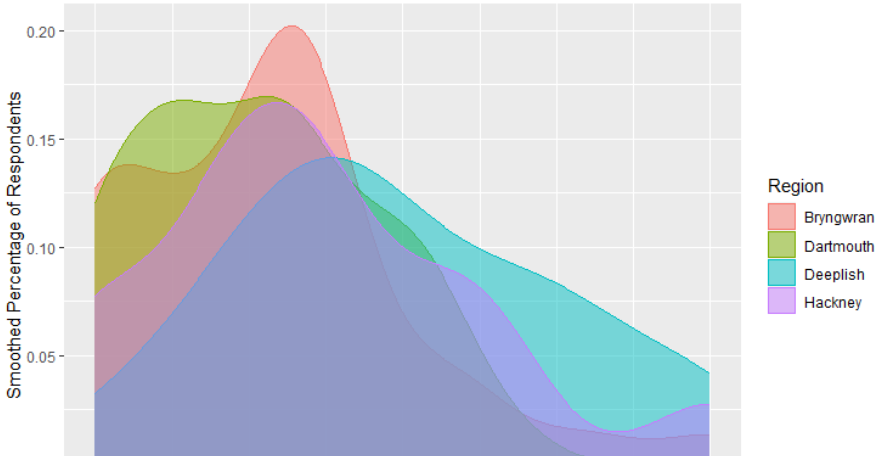
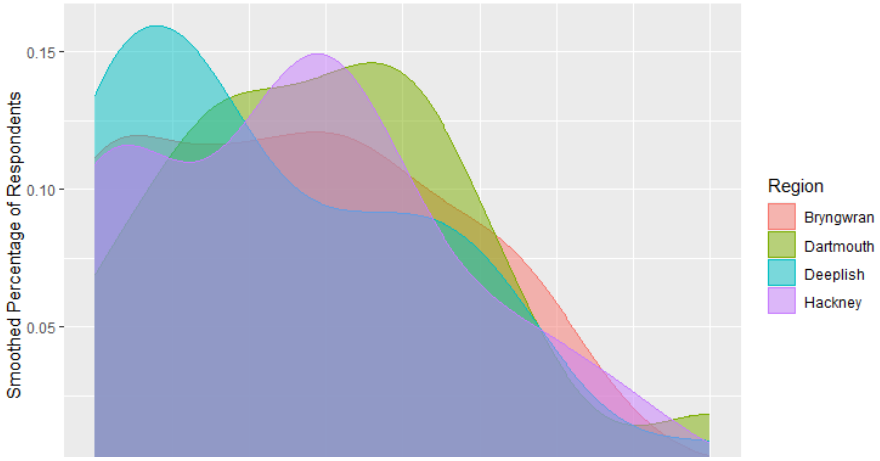


Figure 6: Percentage of social network who are friends



6.3.4 Comparing Bryngwran's sense of wellbeing to other case-study areas

We asked interviewees several questions about their wellbeing, including current life satisfaction and the extent to which they feel things they do in their lives are worthwhile. Bryngwran interviewees on average reported scores of 8.6 out of 10 for life satisfaction and 7.9 out of 10 for a worthwhile life. As can be seen in Figure 7, Bryngwran scores were the highest in these areas across the whole study. In Hackney, we took a slightly different approach as we worked with two different cohorts of interviewees, one group of older people and one group of younger people, and where relevant the data is reported separately for each cohort.

Figure 7: Average wellbeing scores across the case-study areas

Case-study area	Life satisfaction (0 to 10)	Life worthwhile (0 to 10)
Bryngwran	8.6	7.9
Deeplish	6.4	6.4
Hackney Older people (average age 72)	7.0	6.9
Hackney Younger people (average age 22)	6.2	6.9
Dartmouth	5.9	7.3

When comparing reported wellbeing scores from all case-study areas against social networks, we found that generally those with both larger networks (more social ties) and more connected networks (more people knowing each other within an interviewee's social network), report having higher levels of life satisfaction and are more likely to report that their lives feel worthwhile, which aligns with existing social networks research.

Figures 8 and 9, below, focus in more detail on levels of life satisfaction and sense of a worthwhile life as compared to social network connectedness. For both Figures 8 and 9 the x-axis represents the connectedness of social networks, based on how many people in an interviewee's network both know the interviewee and know each other. Figure 8 shows that people with more connected networks generally reported higher levels of life satisfaction. Figure 9 compares social network connectedness to scores out of 10 with respect to a worthwhile life. In both Figures, only in Deeplish are more connected social networks associated with negative trends in life satisfaction and sense of a worthwhile life. The possible explanations for this are discussed in more detail in our Rochdale case-study report.[43]

43 *https://swladviceandcommunities.com*

Figure 8: Network connectedness and life satisfaction

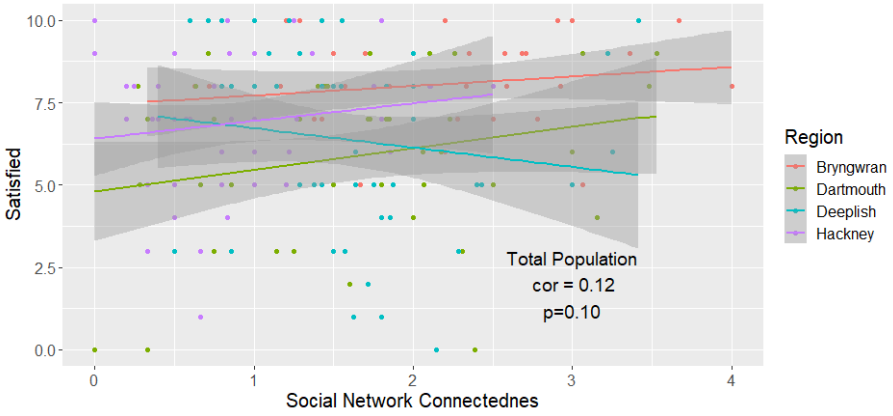
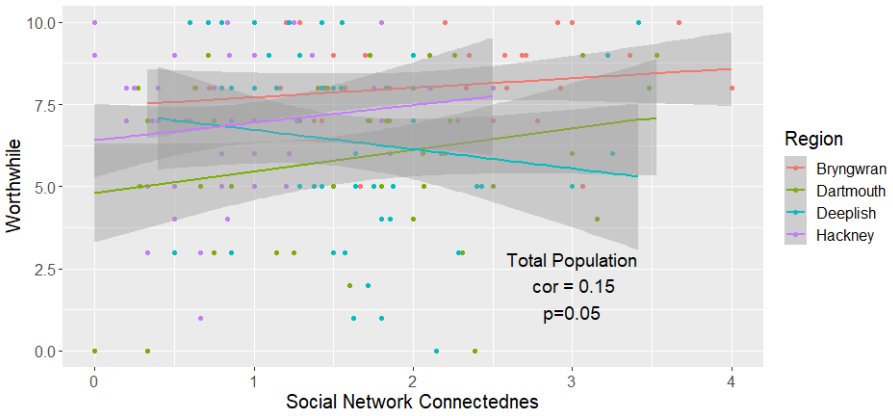


Figure 9: Network connectedness and worthwhile life



We also asked interviewees about their perceptions of the neighbourhood/ community in terms of people helping each other. Specifically, we asked interviewees: "To what extent do you agree with this statement: People in this community are willing to help each other?" Interviewees responded using a scale of 0 to 10, where 0 means completely disagree, and 10 means completely agree. Average scores per case-study areas are shown in Figure 10. Bryngwran had the highest average reported score about the willingness of people in the community to help each other, followed closely by the older cohort of Hackney interviewees; younger people in Hackney gave the average lowest score.

Figure 10: Help in the community	
Bryngwran	7.5
Deeplish	5.1
Hackney Older people (average age 72)	7.3
Hackney Younger people (average age 22)	4.9
Dartmouth	6.8

We see overall from this data, that the more closely knit communities with comparatively older populations generally report higher levels of wellbeing and are also generally more likely to report that people in the community are willing to help each other.

6.4 Community services in Bryngwran

Bryngwran is home to the Iorwerth Arms, a community pub and a regular live music venue. The Iorwerth Arms is owned and run by the local community who saved it from closure and demolition in 2015 and have built it up into a successful, not for profit pub and community hub for the Bryngwran area. Since becoming a community owned pub – which was at the time the last and only retail business in the village of Bryngwran – the Iorwerth Arms has won several prestigious awards (Wales Start Up Award Finalist 2016 and Welsh and United Kingdom Best Rural Pub winner, Countryside Alliance Awards 2019). The Iorwerth Arms is also very active on Facebook and has approx. 3,800 followers, with regular posts about local services and events.

The Iorwerth Arms is operated by "Bryngwran Cymunedol", a private company limited by guarantee without share capital. At the time of writing the company had nine Directors and a Secretary. Directors are generally active within the community which include a local councillor, local farmer, and local teacher. Bryngwran Cymunedol also runs the community hub and good turns scheme in association with Medrwn Môn. The Bryngwran Community Hub has a Facebook group with approx. 500 members, which announces regular posts about activities, events and services in the local area. In February 2021, Bryngwran Cymunedol was awarded funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to develop the outbuildings at the Iorwerth Arms into business units, which host a coffee shop and small village shop, a beauty salon, and the Anglesey Hamper Company creating jobs, providing services locally, and contributing to the sustainability of the area and well-being of the community. This funding covered capital work, equipment, and professional fees.

The Iorwerth Arms and Bryngwran Cymunedol connect with advice providers who hold occasional road show and information events at the pub, including Council

services relating to housing and welfare, and the provision of other organisations such as Age Cymru. For example, during our research period Tai Môn, which manages local Council social housing stock, held a housing roadshow which also shared information about Citizens Advice, the Council's Financial and Digital Inclusion Team and Tenant Participation Team, Housing Management Officers and others who support people and provide some social welfare advice.

The Iorwerth Arms is clearly a cornerstone of the local community. The many activities held there include an inclusive community choir that draws participants from across the Island, warm hubs, afternoon teas and coffee mornings, Welsh classes, exercise classes, regular live music gigs directed at various age groups and tastes, Welsh history events, talks and festivals, the biggest of which being "Phil Fest" in the summer - celebrating the contribution of one of the Iorwerth Arms' most active volunteers and raising money for charity. There is also a community freezer for those in need, and an electric vehicle providing community transport, such as to hospital appointments and for picking up prescriptions.

There is a small village school, Ysgol Gymuned Bryngwran, providing education to children between the ages of three and 11 years. At the time of its last inspection report in 2018, the school had 60 pupils including 10 part-time nursery age pupils. Welsh is the school's everyday language and the main medium of learning and teaching. There are no pupils from ethnic minority backgrounds. At the time of the last inspection in 2018, around 2% of pupils have been eligible for free school meals, this was much lower than the Welsh average of approx. 20% at the time.[44] All primary aged children in Wales are now provided with free school meals.[45] Also, at the time of the 2018 inspection report, the school had identified 32% of its pupils as having additional learning needs, which appears to have been higher than the Welsh average, though how this figure is calculated has changed over the years.[46] The school is also home to a Cylch Meithrin, an organisation which promotes education and development of children from the age of two years up to school age.

Bryngwran has a GP Surgery, and between this and another surgery in Gwalchmai both surgeries provide NHS medical care to over 2,400 patients in Bryngwran, Gwalchmai, and neighbouring areas. The Bryngwran surgery is open part of the week, on Mondays and Fridays between 9am to 12:30pm.

The Holy Trinity Church in Bryngwran holds regular services on the third Sunday of each month, alongside other occasional services and events, such as coffee mornings in the church hall.

44 https://ifs.org.uk/publications/major-challenges-education-wales

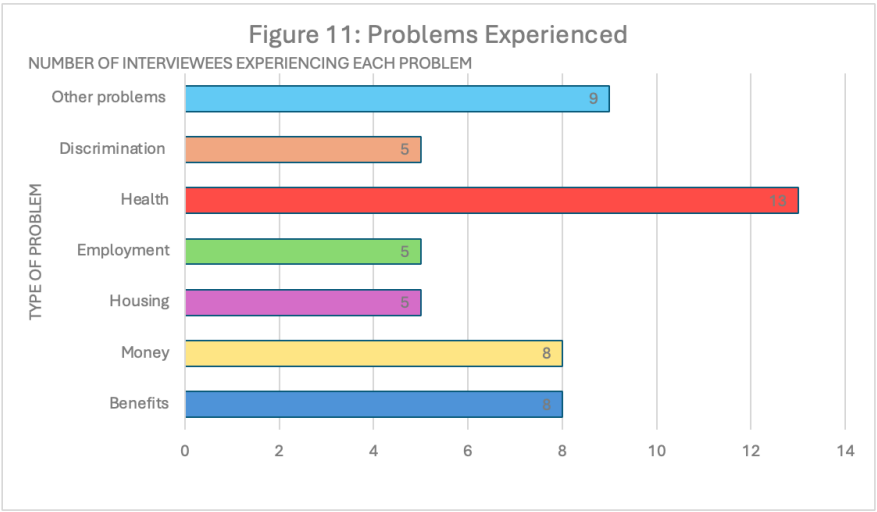
45 https://www.gov.wales/universal-primary-free-school-meals-upfsm#:~:text=All%20primary%20school%20children%20in,child%20goes%20hungry%20in%20school

46 https://statswales.gov.wales/Catalogue/Education-and-Skills/Schools-and-Teachers/Schools-Census/Pupil-Level-Annual-School-Census/Special-Educational-Needs/pupilssen-by-school-year

6.5 SWL and other problems experienced in Bryngwran

Of the Bryngwran interviewees, 62% had experienced at least one problem. This could be SWL problems, or other problems interviewees considered had affected them in their community such as issues with public services provision or community safety. Breaking this down, 31% had experienced just one problem, 15% had experienced two problems, 8% had experienced three problems, and 8% had experienced four or more problems. The most common type of problems experienced related to health, followed by various other problems, and benefits and money problems. "Other" problems here tended to relate to lack of public services, such as public transport, and lack of public services for younger people such as youth clubs and facilities. Figure 11 shows the types of problems people had experienced in Bryngwran; this includes where people experienced more than one problem.

Figure 11: Problems Experienced



A problem for several interviewees was the waiting period for a first payment of Universal Credit (UC). For several interviewees this was especially challenging, particularly when coupled with what they described as feelings of "shame" and "embarrassment" about applying, despite knowing that the benefit "is there to help people". Some of these interviewees fell into the new categories of advice need following the impacts of the Covid-19 pandemic and cost-of-living crisis (e.g., working aged people in stable full-time employment, owning their own home with a mortgage, having been affected by the pandemic and rising cost of living, particularly struggle to pay their fuel bills). Other problems experienced related to the UC sanctioning system, where people can have their benefits stopped for not responding to communication or missing appointments. Such occurrences can often be for reasons beyond an individual's control, as one interviewee said: "I missed one call from Universal Credit one day", with the result, despite the interviewee trying to remedy the situation immediately, that they endured several months without UC payments. Another interviewee, whose benefits were cancelled due to an official error, could not pay their household bills and said it felt "the walls started closing in through no fault of my own".

Several interviewees faced challenges with respect to benefits assessment processes, especially around PIP, and particularly due to repeated assessments despite their health conditions being long-term and permanent. As an interviewee said: "They automatically said no so you had to go through the process" and "…I was rejected anyway".

The cost-of-living crisis was also impacting interviewees. As one said, due to rising fuel bills: "…the hot water is only coming on once a day, we're doing all the washing up in one go…We have it on in the morning, and then it stays warm enough to do the teatime dishes, but we don't put I the hot water on otherwise…". Several interviewees had been impacted by rising utility bills, especially in the context that Bryngwran has a comparatively high proportion of homes without central heating. The rising cost of transport was also noted, with this being particularly significant in a rural area where people rely on their cars, and the limited public transport available, for work, shopping and some social connections and activities.

Several interviewees had faced health problems, either of their own or of people they were caring for, or both. Problems with carers allowance and respite for carers were also mentioned, as were the impacts of bereavement. Interviewees discussed the challenges of getting a face-to-face appointment with a GP, and particularly with a Welsh speaking GP, or when access to a GP was attained there was lack of time to have meaningful discussions. Some had also found accessing social workers especially difficult. There were isolated incidents of people not being able to speak in Welsh with GPs when they wanted to, with some evidence of a lack of wider health and social care provision in Welsh.

Children's mental health, disabilities, and special educational needs had caused problems. Provision for children with special educational needs and/or disabilities was seen as lacking, with families left in challenging, and sometimes costly situations, whilst waiting for a diagnosis and/or support.

Several interviewees had experienced problems relating to employment, including challenges finding full-time permanent work. Others had experienced redundancy from skilled trades or faced discrimination at work.

6.6 The role of social networks in seeking help with SWL problems in Bryngwran

Interviewees referred to family members as providing "moral support, somebody to talk to" and "a sounding board, sometimes you just need to get the problem you've got out". Another said of family members: "…they try to get me out of the house…I go to lunch dates, various things, continue with my life". Family members had also helped by providing transport, which was particularly valued given the rurality of the location and limited public transport.

Several older interviewees mentioned that if resolving a problem required them to go online, they would rely on family members for help. Family had provided other

forms of support, such as recommending where people could go for help, e.g., to the council, the GP, or to other services such as a local community hub.

Many interviewees talked about the help and support they had received from friends. Interviewees referred to "mental support", keeping "mental health on track", and friends as "someone to offload onto" or "people to talk to and sound things off with". Several interviewees had been introduced to the Iorwerth Arms (the community-run pub and community hub in Bryngwran) by friends.

Key community members featured in some social networks, variously as friends and people who help in the community (and for some they were also relations), though interviewees were less likely to have shared their problems with them as compared to friends and/or family.

Interviewees reported that they were likely to share problems with those having faced similar experiences, especially friends, and that such people had helped. Of such friends, interviewees said that they would try to "sort the problem out together" or that friends could "share experiences they've had doing the same". This extended to others in their networks, such as acquaintances and support groups, often meeting in-person. These were seen as opportunities to hear from others about "how they'd gone about things" up to and including tribunal and court experiences. Some people mentioned sharing their problems on internet forums, and particularly Facebook groups, either set up by local community groups, or by groups supporting people with specific characteristics or problems. Interviewees had also used Facebook messenger to share problems with others living locally. When social media was used to seek help and support, the connections made were with other people living locally.

Several interviewees noted that sharing would depend on context; some said, for example, they would be more likely to share a work problem with a work colleague and did not want to bring their work problems home, and vice versa they did not want to share their personal problems at work. Others said, however, that they would discuss work problems with family to gain a different perspective, or indeed that they would share personal problems with work colleagues, especially if this was affecting them at work, and especially where work colleagues were also described as friends. Some interviewees also reported sharing problems with and receiving help from other people living locally who were professionals such as nurses, mental health practitioners, or those involved in with legal processes, or working in fields such as housing or planning, or working for various Council departments. Those involved with small business activities turned to and were helped by their clients in some situations. Several interviewees had turned to local people of faith. Much of this demonstrates the diversity of people's networks, which often included professionals, and people and groups having experienced different types of problems.

6.7 Bryngwran interviewees awareness of and engagement with advice providers and community organisations

6.7.1 Awareness of advice providers and community organisations

In addition to constructing interviewees' social networks and connections to individuals, we also asked interviewees what organisations or services

they were aware of that help people with problems in their community. As part of our research, we divided these organisations/services into those we considered to be formal and informal advice providers, as discussed in section 4.22.

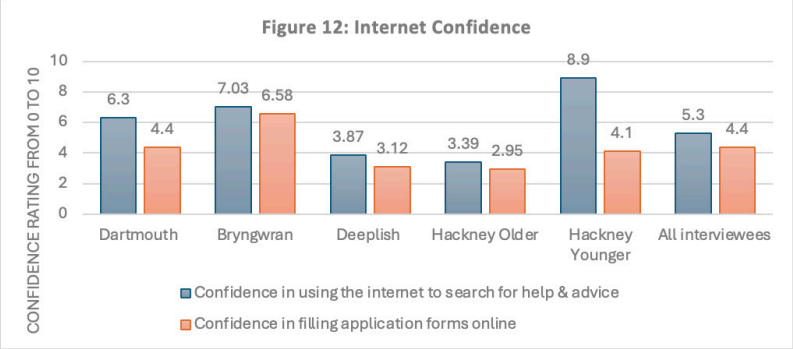
Amongst the Bryngwran interviewees,18% were not able to name any organisations/services that help people with SWL and related problems. Most interviewees who knew of at least one organisation or service were able to mention two (26%) followed by four (23%), the largest number of organisations/services mentioned by interviewees was eight. In total, across the interviewees 43 different organisations/services were mentioned. The most commonly referred to organisation/service was the Iorwerth Arms itself (we included in this where people mentioned Bryngwran Cymunedol and Bryngwran Community Hub which are also synonymous with the Iorwerth Arms from a community perspective). When we consider different aspects of Anglesey Council advice services together (J.E. O'Toole Centre, the Council, Council Housing Department), these followed the Iorwerth Arms as the most commonly noted services. Third most commonly mentioned was Citizens Advice, followed in fourth by the GP Surgery and in fifth by the local community council/community councillors. Of the organisations/services mentioned by interviewees, only three would be classed as formal SWL sector organisations/services (based on our categorisation), seven are public sector bodies, such as the Council (excepting the independent welfare rights advice service, which we count as a formal SWL advice provider in this context albeit that it does not fully meet all our criteria due to lack of full independence), healthcare professionals and the police. We would class around two-thirds of the organisations mentioned as informal organisations providing information and support or providing some SWL advice as ancillary to their main activities. Most of these informal organisations were local to the Isle of Anglesey, or for some local to Anglesey and Gwynedd (the neighbouring local authority), with the remainder being national Wales-wide or UK-wide services.

6.7.2 Contacting advice providers and services and the "channels" of contact

The previous section reports our findings about interviewees' awareness of advice providers and services. This section presents our findings on whether interviewees had actually contacted any advice providers and services, and if so which ones. Of the 24 interviewees who reported having had problems, 17 people had contacted at least one organisation or service about their problem, meaning that another seven interviewees experiencing at least one problem had not contacted any organisations/services about their problem (that is just under one third of the interviewees experiencing a problem). A wide variety of organisations/services were noted, and many of these had only been contacted by one person, with these being organisations/services specialising in particular matters such as supporting carers, relating to children's additional learning needs, or people experiencing a particular health problem or supporting or caring for someone else with that problem.

Organisations/services mentioned repeatedly were the J.E. O'Toole Centre specifically, and Anglesey Council more generally, as well as Citizens Advice, and the GP surgery or other health practitioner. Of the total number of contacts (where people might have contacted the same organisation in more than one way), 19 were in-person, 19 were over the telephone, two by email, two through an online form, and seven through other means which particularly included someone (usually a professional) contacting the organisation on the interviewee's behalf. Around one third of interviewees mentioned that someone else (usually a professional) had contacted the organisation/service on their behalf. Most organisations/services were contacted either in-person or over the phone, and sometimes through both means. Organisations/services were only contacted online (email or online form) where this was the only means of contact available, or whether other methods had failed.

Due to the increased digitisation of information- and guidance-giving within the public and third sectors, an important way for people to be able to seek information and advice is online. We asked our interviewees: "How confident do you feel using the internet to search for help and advice, where 0 means not at all confident and 10 means very confident?". We then asked people more specifically: "How confident do you feel filling in online application forms, such as applications for benefits or other entitlements, where 0 means not at all confident and 10 means very confident?". The average scores out of 10 across all four case-study areas are shown in Figure 12.



To an extent there is an expected correlation between internet confidence and age: younger Hackney interviewees, with an average age of 22 years, were the most confident in using the internet to search for help and advice, and older Hackney interviewees, with an average age of 72 years, were the least confident. Bryngwran interviewees stand out as having both comparatively highly levels of confidence in using the internet to search for help and advice, and the highest confidence scores across the case-study areas for confidence in filling in applications forms online. This may, at least in part, be due to the characteristics of interviewees in Bryngwran generally having higher educational qualifications, and being more likely to be employed, and less likely to have a health condition or disability, as compared to other case-study areas. The comparatively larger and more well-connected social networks may also be part of the context here, with

people sharing knowledge, skills and expertise, including that relating to using the internet, in their social networks. That said, some interviewees in Bryngwran, as with other case-study areas, reported challenges with using the internet, particularly in relation to filling in online forms, and there was a clear preference for seeking help and advice in-person.

6.7.3 Help received following contact with advice providers and community organisations

This section focuses on interviewee experiences and outcomes during and after contacting advice providers and community organisations about their problems. Interviewees had received "good" help from several organisations in relation to different types of problems. For example, Menter Môn (an organisation supporting entrepreneurship and providing advice, support and inspiration around employment) was said to have given "good" advice on CVs and training courses following redundancy; their help was described as "really good" in relation to redundancy that affected several people locally. However, we also found that younger people were less likely to engage with employability organisations such as Menter Môn or the Job Centre and would prefer to look for jobs online. There was some stigma attached to the Job Centre for young people across the research, though this was mainly linked to a feeling that the service would not be able to help them find work that match their qualifications.

Experiences of local healthcare services were mixed. Accessing GP appointments was challenging for some, as one interviewee said: "Phone them in the morning. And will you ring back after 1pm is what you get…Its difficult to get an appointment. Not just at our surgery…" Accessing a Welsh speaking GP locally was sometimes difficult, and the lack of sufficient Welsh provision dissuaded some who could travel elsewhere from using the local GP service.

Neither the GP surgery nor the small local school were expressly mentioned as having connected people to help or advice relating to SWL problems. Several interviewees talked about the school gates and GP's waiting room as places where problems are shared but noted that people are usually keen to do so discreetly.

It was noted in our workshop with advice providers and community organisations on Anglesey (as discussed in section 5) that private sector services are also part of this community-based landscape; specifically, in Bryngwran, the Iorwerth Arms, where staff will likely notice changes to buying habits, particularly in the context of alcohol consumption. Staff of private services like pubs, shops and cafes can notice changes in the habits of local people which may be evidence that they are struggling with social welfare issues. Workshop participants also noted the importance of staff of private businesses, especially small local businesses, understanding how to connect people to help and advice. However, in Bryngwran the lack of any supermarket in the village is an obvious challenge, and, in addition, is a key reason why the Iorwerth Arms' community transport is so needed and valued.

Citizens Advice was the main source of SWL advice for Bryngwran interviewees, as one said: "I went there then explained the situation and then they did everything from there. Great. They went to the Universal Credit [appeal]…And I won the case", the Citizen's Advice adviser "was amazing, to tell the truth". Another interviewee said: "If I hadn't gone through them, I don't know what I'd have done to be honest". Interviewees were equally positive about help received from the Council Welfare Rights Service, with comments including: "They gave me guidance on what to tell the DWP, it wasn't plain sailing, but it was straightforward, once everything started pulling together". Another interviewee said: "…they're helpful, they're not treating you like you're on the fiddle, they're treating you as a person…and like I say, if you're respectful to them, they're respectful to you". The formal SWL advice sector on Anglesey is generally well connected, with good local knowledge and close working relationships, and this was reflected in interviewees' experiences. For example, where interviewees reported receiving help "in Holyhead" or "at the J.E. O'Toole", it wasn't always clear if the person/people they had been helped by was/were expressly employed by Citizens Advice or by the Council. There were no suggestions that interviewees perceived any lack of independence between these two different services that might impact confidence in the advice given, it was more that they received usually holistic and comparatively seamless help with problems regardless of which service they initially contacted.

7. Analysis, comparisons and conclusions

The following sections explain the key conclusions of our research on Anglesey, further comparing these to the findings of our research in other case-studies and situating the research in the broader Welsh policy context.

7.1 Communities are key to effective advice: centralisation and digitalisation does not reflect or meet people's needs

Across our research we found that communities and connections are key to effective advice services, and that communities of place, culture and language are crucial to understanding how people experiencing SWL problems connect with help and advice. Our data indicates that these combined characteristics of where people live, their culture, language, and sense of community, appear to be more relevant to understanding people's social networks, and to understanding the kind of SWL problems people experience, as well as what people do when they experience such problems, than do people's individual characteristics such as age, gender, employment or whether they have a disability or health condition. This finding was especially clear on Anglesey.

Social networks in Bryngwran on Anglesey were the second largest in our study (after Dartmouth in South Hams) and were the most closely connected of the four case-study areas. The social networks of people in Bryngwran tended to be more diverse in their range of sizes (number of social connections) and make up (who these social connections were, e.g., friends, family work, colleagues, neighbours) and were also the most well-connected social networks in our study. Notably, those identifying as Welsh, and particularly those using the Welsh language in the home, tended to have

the largest and particularly the most connected social networks. Interviewees in Bryngwran had on average the highest average sense of wellbeing across our study and were more likely to report that people in their community were willing to help each other as compared to other case-study areas. Bryngwran interviewees were also the least likely across our case-study areas to report having experienced SWL problems in the last two years, and when problems were experienced the occurrence of multiple clustered problems was lower when compared to other case-study areas. This should not, however, be taken to downplay the prevalence of problems or their complexity and impact on the community. Interviewees were clearly experiencing problems relating to money and the cost-of-living crisis, problems accessing benefits, problems with low pay, insecure jobs, problems finding suitable housing, problems relating to health, accessing social care and additional learning needs support, and concerns about reductions in public services, poor public transport links, and the impacts of rising fuel costs. Many interviewees were concerned about the future for children and younger people given limited public services locally.

In our research with local people in Bryngwran, the Iorwerth Arms (the community-owned and run pub and community hub), was the organisation/service most often mentioned by our interviewees as providing help and support, and it was seen as a "lifeline" for the community. Help received there related primarily to social connections, in particular the sense of community and range of activities, and practical help with food, other goods, and arranging transport. Several interviewees simply referred to "the Iorwerth" or "the pub" as the place they would turn to for support. The data demonstrates that the Iorwerth Arms acts as a facilitator to help expand, strengthen or maintain a resident's social network, and for sharing information and experiences through those networks.

Across our research, we found that locally based organisations, sensitive to culture, identity and language, such as the Iorwerth Arms, are central to community wellbeing, and have a crucial role to play in preventing SWL problems from occurring or worsening, including by identifying people who are struggling. Community organisations also have a crucial role to play in connecting people to advice services, albeit that the optimum form of connections varies from one community to another.

These findings about the centrality of what we can call "communities of place" to social networks and advice-seeking behaviour also indicates that the move to more centralised, remote (online or telephone) services, including advice services, does not meet many people's or even most people's needs. Our research in Bryngwran shows that comparatively high levels of digital confidence do not necessarily correlate with increased preference for online services, or with effective online help-seeking and service delivery. Interviewees in Bryngwran had the highest levels of combined confidence with respect to both looking for help and advice online and filling in online application forms, across all our case-study areas, suggesting potentially higher levels of confidence and efficacy in accessing services digitally. However, those interviewees that had sought help and advice had done so primarily in-person face-to-face and/or over the telephone. On the rare occasions where interviewees had used email or an online form, this was either because no other options were available, or where lack of response from public services providers had led them to use several means to try and make contact. Although levels of confidence in using the internet were higher than in other case-study areas,

interviewees still raised concerns about digital capabilities and connectivity, noting that connectivity issues also affected services providers. Digital resources have helped people connect in communities and access advice, but in our research, these were local community Facebook pages (through which formal SWL advice providers shared information about their services), community WhatsApp groups, and other Apps created by community groups often acting as virtual local noticeboards. Online information through websites, particularly those developed at a Wales or UK-wide level, were not seen to be of as much value, and the information presented was often considered too generic to be of much assistance to people's individual circumstances affecting them in their community.

Many of the interviewees in Bryngwran who had experienced SWL problems were able to pursue self-directed resolution to quite a high degree of success, generally more so than in other case-study areas. This seemed to be due firstly to clear information about the Island's two key advice providers, Citizens Advice and the Council Welfare Rights Service, being available both in the form of physical posters and flyers locally, and through online information on the services' own websites and on local community Facebook groups. Secondly, sharing information in social networks was key, with the nature of people's social networks, and how they used them to seek help, being somewhat distinctive as compared to the other case-study areas. Interviewees in Bryngwran were more likely than those in the other local case-study areas to report having shared their problems with those who had faced similar experiences. This included people beyond friends and family and extended to work colleagues and support groups, often meeting in-person. Interviewees referred to sharing problems with, and receiving help from, people in their social networks with professional occupations or expertise: nurses, mental health practitioners, those involved with legal processes, working in fields such as housing or planning, working for various Council departments, or with business experience. The social networks of many interviewees in Bryngwran appear to include at least some people with higher levels of education and/or working in skilled and/or professional occupations, who are more likely to know how to resolve problems. This may be reflected in the data showing that interviewees in Bryngwran were amongst the most likely across the local case-study areas to have had their problems resolved.

Importantly, however, self-directed resolution was not the case for all, and those with complex clustered problems tended to require, and generally usually received, a higher level of community support to access advice. Key community individuals, such as staff and volunteers of the Iorwerth Arms/Bryngwran Cymunedol, were crucial to identifying and supporting those with the greatest needs. Across our case-studies we found that those with complex problems and needs benefitted most from sustained relationships of trust and empathy with local community members who supported, encouraged, and in some cases facilitated, their access to and use of more formal advice services.

Despite the importance of community-based provision, there was a strong theme in our discussions with advice providers of a much longer-term trend of centralising assessments and decision-making processes relating to social welfare, with respect to benefits in particular, coupled also with the perceived centralisation of advice, making the whole system of raising awareness of entitlements, claiming entitlements, seeking advice and challenging decisions much more remote from the individuals

and communities affected. It was clear that initiatives such as digital government and digital by default were part of this. In addition, advice providers told us that they themselves struggled to reach UK Government departments especially, including over the phone, and that they tended to be passed around various people and departments, none of whom were able to appropriately deal with concerns raised on behalf of local people on Anglesey.

The context of multilevel governance and devolution is relevant here. "Social security schemes" (in effect, core welfare benefits) are a reserved matter, where the responsibility to establish and to administer such schemes is the responsibility of the UK Government and Westminster Parliament. The implications of such are discussed further in section 7.3 below. Although the responsibility specifically for "legal aid" funded advice is also reserved, in practice most SWL advice is funded either directly by Welsh Government, by local authorities, or through grants from trusts and foundations. There have also been some injections of funding through UK Ministry of Justice initiatives, the Big Lottery's Advice Services Transition Fund, and some emergency Covid funding.

Whilst the collaborative nature of the SAF, discussed above in section 4.1, is valuable, our research, both on Anglesey and across the other case-study areas, raises some concerns about centralised decision-making with respect to funding. Our research finds that for advice services to be delivered most effectively to communities, decisions on how to spend funds to meet advice needs in a locality should generally be made at the local authority level. There is a risk that the SAF, with its focus on Pan-Wales and Regional services, is itself part of a centralising trend. The SAF requires regional bidders "to explain how their proposed service delivery model will effectively coordinate the delivery of services within all the individual Local Authority areas in a region and ensure services will be delivered in accordance with the needs of local communities across a region".[47] However, our research suggests that additional community focus is needed, and that local authorities are best placed to develop local advice and support plans collaboratively across several areas of services including health, social care and education. In response to such concerns, the Minister has noted that the SAF regional and national collaborative and interdisciplinary models are not appropriate for all providers. The Minister has subsequently introduced new standalone SAF grants for organisations that are needed and valued by the populations accessing them in local areas, some of which grants have been awarded to organisations supporting communities in North Wales.[48] This aligns with our research, communicated to the Minister through the North Wales Regional Advice Network, that place, culture and language are central to effective access to advice for some communities.

There are limitations to SAF funding, for example, the SAF does not provide core funding for information and advice services organisations, yet several local authorities across Wales, struggling with the impacts of cuts to their own budgets,

47 https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-07/single-advice-fund-grant-guidance-2025.pdf

48 Written Statement, Single Advice Fund, 12 December 2024: https://www.gov.wales/written-statement-single-advice-fund#:~:text=In%20the%20Written%20Statement%20I,through%20an%20open%20grant%20exercise.

are cutting their contributions to core funding for advice organisations, it is not clear how organisations are then supposed to cover their core costs (which includes further training of staff, salaries, building maintenance, and equipment to increase the capacity of existing staff). It is a requirement of the SAF grants that providers support the Regional Advice Networks in their respective regions, but no additional funding is provided for this.

According to SAF Guidance Notes, the allocation of the grant funding available across Wales from the SAF is based on identified need in line with the findings of the Welsh Government's independently commissioned report, "A needs analysis and predictive model of social welfare information and advice services in Wales".[49] Although such quantitative research is extremely valuable, our research indicates that it cannot fully capture the diverse characteristics of local communities of people and needs, nor does it seek to examine how people in particular communities of place, culture and language actually do seek help and advice with SWL problems. The characteristics that are key to SWL advice seeking behaviours; place, social networks, culture, language and sense of community, cannot all be captured fully in quantitative research; indeed, some cannot be captured at all in this kind of research. Advice and community sector participants in our research workshops and in our North Wales Regional Advice Network event noted also that resources tend to be allocated to the areas where it is easiest to evidence both need (and to an extent demand) for services, but this doesn't mean needs don't exist in other areas, and in particular, pockets of poverty and deprivation in and around more affluent areas can be neglected and thus become invisible.

7.2 The right help at the right time is key, but advice services and community organisations are under strain

A key message from Anglesey and broader North Wales advice providers and community organisations, echoed in our other case-studies, is that people need "the right help at the right time", with help and support, as well as connections to advice, from community-based organisations being central to this. The converse is that seeking to provide unwelcome advice, or advice at the wrong time for the person experiencing problems, can waste time and money, and have negative impacts on advisors. The centralisation of services, discussed above, risks exacerbating this problem of not being sensitive to the characteristics of local communities. Advisors need to know their communities, and ideally be representative of them, and be open-minded and non-judgemental, to provide effective services.

Our research finds that advice and community organisations on Anglesey, and across North Wales, face significant challenges, many of which are mirrored across our other case-study areas. Some of these challenges for Wales are reported in more detail in our write up of our session with the North Wales Regional Advice Network.[50] Advice providers and community organisations are facing increased demand for their services, coupled with a reduction in funding. Despite initiatives such as the

49 https://www.gov.wales/social-welfare-information-and-advice-services-wales

50 https://swladviceandcommunities.com/social-welfare-advice-research-with-the-north-wales-regional-advice-network

SAF, funding is still often based on contracts rather than grants, is short-term, and project based. The increase in the SAF funding period to three years (with potential for extension) is welcome in terms of sustainability and opportunities for planning for advice providers, but a minimum period of five years would be welcomed. New funding streams can lead to projects that identify previously unmet needs, the project succeeds in raising awareness of needs, but these can no longer be met once the funding period ends, and it appears almost as if the project itself has created "new need". Once project-based funding ends, other advice and/or public services then must fill the gaps that are left.

Advice providers engaged in our research also reported limits to the advice that can be given, especially when people face negative budgets (income is not enough to cover essential costs), and the impact on staff and volunteers who both feel they have fewer solutions available, and who are also increasingly experiencing some of the same problems as their clients.

Our research finds significant issues for the advice sector in recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers, as well as issues with wellbeing, due in part to the limits of advice noted above, but also to employee/volunteer expectations, low salaries, job insecurity, and some external perceptions about the advice sector. For larger organisations whose advice services are directed towards people with particular characteristics (age, homeless people, disability etc), providing advice may be only one of an advisor's roles funded by a particular stream/pot of funding. Advisors in various types of organisations might also only be providing advice as ancillary to their main or other roles.

Across our research we found that community organisations were increasingly filling in gaps caused by reduction in access to more formal advice services, and that this was leading them to act beyond their expertise in areas such as benefits advice, and particularly in filling in forms related to benefits claims and/or reviews or appeals. There is an assumption that many people can fill in forms without or with little advice and support, whereas this is simply not the case. Professional support is required to fill in forms effectively and the borderline between "support" and "advice" is particularly challenging in this context. Incorrect and incomplete forms have a significant impact on people's outcomes and on service provider resources. However, this problem was not as significant on Anglesey as it was in other case-study areas, and, along with other evidence, this indicates some more effective connections and engagement between formal advice services and community organisations, though relative demand is also an issue (if we compared for example the demand in deprived densely populated urban areas in Rochdale and Hackney, as compared to parts of Anglesey).

7.3 Prevention is better than cure, but Welsh policies are not yet having much distinctive impact

Advice providers and community organisations participating in our research noted that better provision of public services, particularly in health, social care and transport, would prevent various advice needs from occurring and/or from reaching a crisis stage. It was agreed across our research that there could be more investment

on Anglesey in preventing SWL problems from occurring or worsening. There seems to be an increase in situations where people are referred to advocacy when what they really need is a support worker, and their association in the course of their work with social services tends to mean that advocacy organisations can be asked (even by professionals) for social services type help that is not within their remit. This seems to chime generally with reports of lack of availability of social workers on the Island and of their struggling to manage high caseloads and high staff turnover.

The Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 (WFGA) requires that relevant public bodies must carry out sustainable development and any reference to a public body doing something in accordance with the sustainable development principle means that the body must act in a manner which seeks to ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Public bodies must set and publish wellbeing objectives designed to maximise their contribution to meeting the wellbeing goals. To show that they have applied the sustainable development principle, public bodies have to work in particular ways, two of which are especially relevant here, namely: thinking long-term, which is "the importance of balancing short term needs with the need to safeguard the ability to meet long term needs, especially where things done to meet short term needs may have a detrimental long term effect"; and prevention, "how deploying resources to prevent problems occurring or getting worse may contribute to meeting the body's well-being objectives, or another body's objectives" (WFGA section 5(2)). These duties should mean that preventing social welfare problems occurring is high on the policy agenda for Welsh public bodies, however, there has been an acknowledged implementation challenge in giving practical effect to the requirements of the WFGA.[51] At least in the context of our research, and comparing our three English case-studies to Anglesey in Wales, it is not clear that distinct Welsh policies and law around future generations, sustainability and ways of working are yet leading to any reports of comparatively better performance when it comes to preventing SWL problems occurring or worsening. From our research, WFGA and particularly the requirement to develop wellbeing plans, is however helping to improve the identification of wellbeing issues and good practices locally, but public bodies then lack resources to make improvements, with budget cuts leading to difficult choices and reduced public services provision.

A common theme emerging from our research across all case-study areas was of poor decision-making in particular government departments, and specifically the UK Government Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), and of problems with contracted out eligibility assessments for Personal Independence Payments (PIP) performed by Capita. So-called "failure demand" where another part of the social welfare system fails to do something, or fails to do it properly, is a significant cause of SWL advice needs, with UK Government departments such as the DWP and HMRC seen as the worst offenders in causing such demands. As noted above, social security schemes, including their administration, are not devolved to Wales. In contrast, some social security benefits have been devolved to Scotland (namely, Attendance Allowance, Severe Disablement Allowance, Disability Living Allowance, Personal Independence Payment (PIP) and parts of the Industrial Injuries

51 https://senedd.wales/media/sjrp5vm0/cr-ld14223-e.pdf

Disablement Scheme). Scotland has developed its own social security system based on underlying principles of dignity, fairness and respect, acknowledging that social security is a communal good; it is "an investment in the people of Scotland".[52] The Welsh Government and local authorities in Wales already provide a number of different social welfare schemes that have tended to be seen as discrete, whereas increasingly there are calls to view them in a more coherent way as part of a developing Welsh benefits system.[53] A Welsh Benefits Charter has been developed, setting out guiding principles for the design and roll-out of payments and grants that are devolved to the Welsh Government.[54] Anglesey County Council is among the signatories agreeing to the Charter principles, and to work with Welsh Government and others to realise the outcomes stated in the Charter. Ongoing monitoring of work towards the Charter principles will be valuable in understanding, in particular, what a more preventative and long-term approach might look like, and whether the principles can also improve the number of decisions made "right first time". More broadly, further devolution of additional social security benefits may at least have the potential to redress some of the systemic failure demand that is a significant cause of the SWL problems experienced by individuals and communities on Anglesey engaged with our research. However, such devolution would need to be accompanied by a fair allocation of additional financial resource. The current introduction and monitoring of the Welsh Benefits Charter providers a very useful learning exercise.

7.4 Advice networks are important, but they are largely voluntary, lack sustainability and should include more localised engagement

We found the advice services landscape on Anglesey to be amongst the most well connected of our four case-study areas (to recap, these are Anglesey, Hackney, Rochdale and Dartmouth/South Hams). Our workshops and other engagement with advice and community sector professionals evidenced good working relationships, generally clear understanding of the services provided by other organisations, and effective referrals and partnership working. The Welsh National Advice Network and Regional Advice Networks have facilitated the sharing of common concerns and best practices and have improved Welsh Government awareness of the issues facing the advice sector. Nevertheless, the engagement and partnership working on Anglesey has developed from the ground up, through the work of dedicated staff and volunteers. It is local leadership and key community individuals that are crucial to well-networked advice services that fully appreciate and are sensitive to the needs of local communities on Anglesey. We found that much of this engagement and networking occurs due to the efforts and goodwill of the advice and community sectors, and that there is no specific financial support for developing networks and forums, and specifically no funding for maintaining networks and forums. Notably, the Steering Groups of the Regional Advice Networks across Wales are made up of volunteers, with the scope of work from time to time being largely dependent on

52 *https://www.gov.scot/publications/social-security-independent-scotland/pages/8/*

53 *https://www.bevanfoundation.org/current-projects/welsh_benefits_system/*

54 *https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2024-02/welsh-benefits-charter.pdf*

volunteer capacity, and the goodwill of some volunteer's employing organisations (such as Citizens Advice and universities). The requirement for those awarded new funding under the SAF to support their local Regional Advice Networks is to be welcomed, but it is noted that no additional funding is provided for this.

There has also, to an extent, been a proliferation of different smaller forums and networks responding to policy issues or "crises" with smaller pots of funding, often on a short-term basis, and this runs a risk of duplicating services and causing confusion. Despite the aims of the NAN and the SAF, there remains a need for better co-ordination of funding sources, particularly where these incentivise the community sector to provide help and support with cost-of-living problems, that shades into advice work. Advice providers and community organisations responding to our research considered that Welsh Government ought to further develop existing platforms and networks into a single portal, as Welsh Government has the most extensive overview of the information and advice landscape and has the capacity to draw on existing good practice whilst avoiding duplication.

7.5 Larger, more connected, and more diverse social networks do correlate with SWL problem resolution

Across our research we found a positive correlation between social network size and problem resolution, that is people with larger social networks were somewhat more likely to report that their problems had been either partially or fully resolved. The data also came close to showing a weak correlation between the connectedness of social networks and problem resolution, those with more connected social networks were somewhat more likely to report having their problems at least partially resolved. More broadly our data suggests that it is not just the size and connectedness of social networks that matters for problem resolution, but also who is in someone's social network, and the social and economic capital such people have (that includes, for example, their own social connections, including connections to people outside of the community, and their education, employment status and so on). We found that there may be a link between Bryngwran interviewees' greater tendency towards having professionals in their social networks, as well as their having more connected social networks, and their self-reported ability to access formal SWL advice without referral or signposting.

Across the research we found that in local case-study areas where social networks were on average larger and more connected, people generally had better awareness of organisations/ services offering SWL advice and were more likely to have contacted at least one organisation/service when they experienced a problem. Despite this, it is still the case that greater levels of inter-community connectedness alone are unlikely to be key to resolving the SWL problems experienced by individuals. Rather, our research appears to indicate that the ease with which SWL problems are resolved in communities depends on multiple nuanced factors, including the community's access to knowledge and political resources; its socio-geographical features and public authority structure; and the type and complexity of the problems people experience.

7.6 There is a need to improve education on rights and entitlements, to reduce stigma, and to raise awareness of advice services

Among our Bryngwran interviewees, awareness of organisations/services providing help and advice was variable, and several people could not name any organisations/services helping people with social welfare problems, although they generally linked this to not having experienced any such problems themselves. Several interviewees also felt that waiting for a problem to occur before learning about which organisations/services are available negatively impacted the chances of resolution.

Some interviewees reported experiencing "shame" around having problems and felt "pride" in managing their problems themselves rather than sharing them with people in their networks, and advice and community organisations also saw pride and shame as a common reason for people on Anglesey, especially those in rural areas and older people, not seeking help with problems, often waiting until a crisis point is reached. Both individual interviewees and advice and community organisations participating in our research noted that social connections can be important in helping people overcome these feelings of shame or stigma around having problems, especially through other people sharing their own experiences, though this has its limits, as noted in the following section. Advice providers and community organisations were aware of Welsh Government's "Claim what's yours" initiative, provided through Advicelink Cymru aiming to support people to understand and claim financial support they are entitled to. Campaigns like this are having some impact, but stigma remains, and social support from peers continues to be important in alleviating this.

Several Bryngwran interviewees thought that there could be more varied information available in the village to raise awareness about advice services (before a problem is experienced) and how to access them when needed. Across our research there was a lack of awareness of legal rights and entitlements, with the need to raise awareness both through the school curriculum, and continuing, lifelong learning, which was stressed as a priority for action.

7.7 There are limits to social networks and strong communities on access to justice

In comparison to other local case-study areas, Bryngwran interviewees were more likely to share their problems directly with formal advice providers, such as Citizens Advice and the Council Welfare Rights Advice Service, without requiring an obvious intermediary step of signposting or referral. Partly, this is due to some good visibility of these advice services, including through outreach activities at the Iorwerth Arms, and word of mouth through social networks. However, these services were sometimes considered more appealing than say, sharing a problem with Iorwerth Arms staff or volunteers, or other services providers in the village, as people can access the formal advice providers without this being evident to others in the close-knit rural community.

The connectedness of the community in Bryngwran appears to have had at least some impact on whether some interviewees sought advice about their problems

or not. Several interviewees noted the sense of visibility in a small village, that it is often known who is struggling and that there are others with difficulties. The sense that there is "always someone worse off" and awareness of this particularly in a small, close-knit community, discouraged some people from sharing their problems or seeking advice about them. Awareness of stretched public services had also influenced some people to handle problems alone.

Across our research case-study areas, we found that communities can and do provide substantial support to people, in terms of food, goods, furniture, social support, connections to advice and other services, and so on. However, a key theme of our research was that community support reaches a limit in circumstances where three distinct but often overlapping circumstances apply. The first is where the problem cannot be fully resolved without specialist advice from formal SWL advisers who are better placed to address underlying legal rights and entitlements, due to their training, expertise, and quality assurance processes; and, rightly or wrongly, due to perceptions (and some reality) that they alone have the "power" and "standing" within state structures and processes to push for the enforcement of rights and entitlements. On Anglesey, we generally found that access to such specialist SWL advice providers was better than in other case-study areas, but that providers continue to face challenges, discussed above in section 5.2, with respect to increasing demand, funding that is insufficient, project-based and short-term, and challenges recruiting and retaining staff and volunteers.

The second situation when community support reaches its limit is where problems are due to the so-called "failure demand", discussed above in section 7.4, that is generated through the poor administration of rights or entitlements. This has recently been seen particularly in welfare benefits decision-making, and in areas where there have been severe cutbacks to public services. In terms of central government, the punitive nature of the benefits system had caused mistrust among interviewees in Bryngwran (as well as in our other case-study areas) who had engaged with the system, and we heard poignant examples of official errors made by the DWP, and some by HMRC, that were ultimately resolved in the interviewee's favour with formal SWL advice but not without lengthy waits, deepening financial problems, and impacts on mental health. As noted above, this makes work to implement the Welsh Benefits Charter especially important and raises the question as to whether further devolution of social security, accompanied with full financial devolution of the associated delivery budget, has the potential to reduce some of the failure demand that is leading to significant advice needs.

The third context is cuts to local public services provision that cause significant challenges to people in communities, which can later result in SWL problems. Overall, our research shows that many of the problems faced by people in local communities stemmed from austerity cuts to services and shrinking state provision; Anglesey was no exception here. Across the local case-study areas, including on Anglesey, we heard accounts of people not able to make contact with their local authorities, of being "passed from pillar to post", or of getting through on the phone only to be referred to the same online services that were inaccessible to them in the first place due to digital literacy or connectivity problems. Interviewees across the case-study areas said they felt like their local authorities sometimes had neither the time nor inclination to help. On Anglesey problems had been experienced as a result of

health and social care cutbacks, inconsistent provision of social workers/social care services, lack of provision for children and young people, waits for accessing GPs and other healthcare services, patchy rural public transport, difficulties accessing appropriate social housing, and police services being nonresponsive to anti-social behaviour and other community safety issues.

Our research finds that neither stronger social networks nor more effective advice seeking behaviour can compensate for the lack of investment in public services; when service closures result in the loss of the very physical community spaces where people meet to build and develop their social networks in the first place, it is even harder for communities to make a difference. Community based local and cultural organisations, such as the Iorwerth Arms in Bryngwran, step in to help, but their impact can often depend on the resourcefulness, personalities, and skills of individual community members. Our research shows that access to SWL advice is a social issue, and policy should be directed towards our collective responsibility, as communities and as a society, to resolve people's problems to benefit individual and societal wellbeing, and to tackle inequality. Particularly in Wales, policies with respect to communities, wellbeing, equality, and advice services, must be developed with this in mind, and must be properly financed and effectively implemented,

7.8 There is a need for more research with diverse communities in Wales

Our direct fieldwork with the public in Wales was limited to a small case-study locality, the rural village of Bryngwran. Understandably, our findings cannot be statistically generalised to Anglesey as a whole, or to Wales more widely. That said, the depth of our qualitative investigation, alongside the several different research methods adopted (desk-based research, workshops and other engagement with advice services providers and community organisations, and wider engagement with networks of organisations across Wales) provides a solid foundation for wider policy recommendations. There is, however, a clear need for further research examining the role of communities and connections in SWL advice across different localities in Wales, particularly focusing on a diverse collection of geographical areas with varying population densities, and on areas experiencing the highest rates of multiple deprivation, and/or where communities are otherwise marginalised.

8. Recommendations

Our Full report makes several recommendations for local governments and statutory authorities, and for the advice sector, which are also relevant to Anglesey. These recommendations are reproduced below after a set of recommendations more specific to Anglesey and to Wales.

WELSH GOVERNMENT

1. Neither stronger social networks nor more effective advice seeking behaviour can compensate for lack of investment in public services. Welsh Government should continue to invest in public services, with a particular view to furthering the wellbeing goals and

ways of working (particularly prevention and thinking long-term) enshrined in the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015. **[Sections 4.1; 5.1; 6.5; 7.3; 7.7]**

2. Continued funding for the Single Advice Fund is welcome and central to enabling people to realise their social welfare rights and entitlements, this funding should at the very least be maintained. **[Sections 4.1; 4.2; 5.2; 5.5; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4]**

3. Continue monitoring and evaluating implementation of the Welsh Benefits Charter particularly to determine the impact of implementing the Charter on the occurrence of social welfare problems, and its impact on ensuring that decisions are made "right first time" and that "failure demand" (where something is not done or not done properly in the benefits administration system) is reduced. Learn lessons relevant to the potential devolution of other social security benefits. **[Sections 5.1; 5.6; 7.3; 7.7]**

4. Continue to support the "Claim what's yours" campaign, and other similar campaigns, and continue work around reducing the stigma associated with experiencing social welfare problems and with seeking help and advice in relation to these problems.**[Sections 5.3; 6.7.3; 7.6]**

5. Support lifelong learning initiatives relating to education around social welfare rights and entitlements, and sources of information, advice and redress, especially in the context of progressing social and economic rights and commitments to reducing social and economic inequality. **[Sections 5.4; 6.7; 7.3; 7.6]**

6. Provide more clarity around the various sources of both devolved and non-devolved funding for the advice and communities sectors in Wales, particularly where these interact and overlap in relation to the provision of social welfare help, information and advice. **[Sections 4; 5.2; 5.4; 5.5; 7.2; 7.3; 7.4]**

7. Continue monitoring the impact of introducing the category, "associated services", into the Information and Advice Quality Framework including the number and type of organisations seeking (and receiving) accreditation in this category. Consider funding additional research into the impact of this additional category on the delivery of services by the Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise sector alongside the advice sector. **[Sections 4.1; 4.2; 5.3]**

8. Learn from the strong collaborative partnership working demonstrated between the advice sector, local authority and communities on Anglesey. Acknowledge that this takes significant time to develop and is heavily based on the leadership of key individuals within each sector. Consider how Welsh Government advice and communities policies could support the sustainability of such partnerships for the future, and in particular provide support for the next generation of community leaders. **[Sections 4; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 6.4; 6.7; 7.4]**

9. Consider funding additional research examining the role of communities of place, culture and language in how people seek and access help and advice with social welfare legal problems in diverse communities across Wales. This research should also be used, alongside quantitative research, to inform further policy development and resourcing for advice services. **[Sections 6.6; 7.1; 7.5; 7.8]**

ANGLESEY AND GWYNEDD PUBLIC SERVICES BOARD

10. Actively consider the contribution of information and advice services to improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural wellbeing of Anglesey and Gwynedd, and actively consider the important roles played by both the advice and communities sectors in supporting public services delivery and supporting joint working across public services providers locally. **[Sections 5, 6 and 7]**

ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL

11. Whilst Regional Advice Networks are an important source of learning and partnership working, consider facilitating the development of an Anglesey Community Advice and Information Partnership (CAIP) bringing together key public services providers, the advice sector, and community organisations operating on Anglesey. The CAIP would aim to share information about services, assist referrals, and ensure a coordinated response to shared problems, including new and emerging problems. The CAIP would also be a forum for sharing best practices around engaging with diverse communities on Anglesey. **[Sections 5.3; 5.4; 7.2; 7.4; 7.5]**

12. Continue to support the resourcing of services provided by place-based, culturally and linguistically sensitive community organisations across Anglesey to prevent social welfare problems from occurring or worsening. **[Sections 4.2; 5.2; 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2; 7.4]**

13. Continue (financially and non-financially) supporting the creation and maintenance of community hubs. **[Sections 4.2; 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.1; 7.2]**

14. Ensure that policies, including those relating to communities and advice, comply with both the letter and spirit of the Wellbeing of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015, especially provisions around the importance of prevention; assisting people to access the right help at the right time is a crucial facet of preventing problems occurring and/or worsening. **[Sections 5.1; 7.3]**

15. Consider the findings of this research related to the challenges faced by people seeking information about Council services, or seeking to contact the Council, who either cannot or prefer not to use online communication. **[Sections 6.7; 7.1; 7.7**]

ADVICE PROVIDERS AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS

16. Continue to maintain and develop partnerships between advice and communities sector organisations operating on Anglesey. Share best practice about how relationships are developed and maintained. **[Sections 4.2; 5.3; 5.4; 5.5; 7.4; 7.6]**

17. Continue to facilitate and develop rural outreach and the genuine co-location of advice and community services, where appropriate. **[Sections 5.3; 6.4; 6.7; 7.6]**

Recommendations extracted from our Full Report

For local governments and statutory authorities

FUNDING ADVICE SERVICES IN COMMUNITIES

9. Undertake local advice needs surveys in conjunction with civic organisations, local statutory bodies, and communities to understand which local areas and communities have the highest advice needs, and how people in these areas and communities wish to access services.

10. Collaborate with other statutory bodies that stand to benefit from improved SWL advice in terms of the effectiveness of their own delivery (e.g., health services, social care, education, etc.) to build a comprehensive, sustainable, and ring-fenced budget for advice and coherent approaches to provision, possibly involving co-location.

11. Move towards grant funding of advice services based on partnerships and collaboration across the sector, which can grow the breadth of the advice provision that is appropriate for local communities.

12. Take note that the emerging roles of community connectors/community navigators remains a novel approach with a limited evidence base. Review the approach, including these individuals' connections to SWL advice, to identify the most effective way to use such roles to resolve legal needs. Ensure that any such roles created are accompanied by clear role descriptions that precisely explain the nature and limits of the role in relation to the SWL advice sector.

13. Recognise the role of local Community, Voluntary and Social Enterprise Sector (CVSE) development/infrastructure organisations in maintaining networks between SWL advice providers and the wider voluntary sector, and resource them adequately and sustainably to fulfil it.

14. Recognise that key individuals locally, including those not explicitly employed as service providers, and their networks, can also be facilitative in strengthening relationships locally and can assist in devising a place-based community development policy. Work in partnership with the local CVSE sector to identify and support them.

For the advice sector

RELATIONSHIP WITH COMMUNITIES

15. Continually engage with communities in the localities they serve to better understand the issues faced, and jointly develop strategies to address the range of issues arising around legal rights and entitlements. Communities should be equal partners in the delivery of services to them.

16. In-person services should always be available as an option and accessible within local communities. 'Digital by default' is out of touch with people's needs.

17. Thought should be given to how services can be provided outside working and school hours, particularly during the evenings and weekends.

18. Recognise the importance of place in determining the shape and nature of the SWL advice issues people experience and consider how to best to build trust over time within local place-based communities as a means to effective service delivery.

19. Understand the cultural and linguistic contexts of local communities, and deliver services in people's first languages wherever possible.

20. In order to develop, maintain and retain the trust of the community, which is crucial to effective SWL advice services delivery:

a. Regularly consider the diversity of paid staff and volunteers and the extent to which this reflects the characteristics of the communities served.

b. Develop clear pathways for local people, particularly those from marginalised communities, towards working or volunteering within the advice sector.

21. Recognise that strong communities need support to be built, and that sustaining networks of key community connectors, CVSE sector organisations and SWL advice organisations has an important role to play in supporting and securing future community sustainability.

BALANCE OF GENERAL VERSUS SPECIALIST SWL ADVICE

22. Consider what roles different organisations and services can play within a locality in helping meet SWL advice needs with an appropriate range of provision, from a universal offering of general advice to more targeted support and specialist legal advice.

23. Engage more regularly and actively with the formal legal sector, including lawyers providing Legal Aid and those with a pro bono offer, to improve awareness of legal sector services, and to share information about potential systemic injustices.

24. Develop further work around public education to ensure that communities are aware of SWL advice services more generally and how people can access them, as well as raising awareness of the areas where Legal Aid funding for advice services is still available, and how such services can be accessed.

DIGITAL SUPPORT AND AUGMENTATION TO SWL ADVICE

25. Work with communities to address the lack of access to digital services, and lack of skills in using them.

26. Development of digital services should be based on tried and tested technology and take account of existing levels of digital competence and lack of access within some parts of local communities.

27. Only use digital products and modes of delivery to augment, not replace, in-person and telephone services.

PUBLIC LEGAL EDUCATION AND CAMPAIGN WORK

28. Consider whether to direct more resources to providing public legal education, equipping people within communities with the skills and expertise to address some SWL issues, undertake campaigns, or use legal tools to challenge decisions.

29. Explore the further use of Judicial Reviews and high-profile campaigns to change practices, as this can impact on many more people than those who can be seen during an advice session.