

## Case study: Cyngor Gwynedd

### The Challenge

- Building a fair and sustainable care market in Gwynedd
- A need to work with providers and data to understand the true cost of care
- The council has a policy of paying the same as the host authority for out-of-area placements
- Becoming the first council to adopt CareCubed in Wales

### The Solution

- Implementing CareCubed on older person's and working age adult's specialist care for new placements and uplifts
- Training for commissioning staff on the CareCubed system and negotiation training to support provider relationships and speed up processes
- Starting regional collaboration in North Wales by using CareCubed to understand the costs of care and build a positive and transparent working relationship with providers

### Why CareCubed ?

- The CareCubed team is responsive and approachable. Several changes have been made to the English version of CareCubed to improve usability for Wales
- The tool is very easy to use
- Extra training and support is readily available from the CareCubed team
- CareCubed is proven to deliver benefits across all-age commissioning in a single, common currency

### Results

- Uplift requests and new placements now agreed much quicker than previously
- Increased confidence to use CareCubed to support an evidence-based negotiation
- Improved, constructive conversations and relationships with care providers
- The desired outcomes have been delivered very quickly and this has led to a wider rollout across the North Wales region



Cyngor Gwynedd in North Wales was the first Welsh local authority to sign up to the adult version of CareCubed in June 2023. The authority had been experiencing some difficulties assessing the validity of some cost bases submitted by providers and was looking for a robust way to benchmark. CareCubed was identified as a unique solution and the council purchased a CareCubed licence in June 2023.

The council has been using the tool to negotiate uplift requests and new placements for older person's and working age adults standard and specialist care and for residents who go out-of-area in both cases. Since it has adopted CareCubed, the local authority has been able to demonstrate to other councils in Wales how the tool works and its benefits. This has led to greater collaborative commissioning work through a regional group, with four out of five of the other local authorities in North Wales now also looking at procuring CareCubed across a range of different cohorts and age groups from children's through to older people.

The tool uses a unique, nationally recognised costing model built on robust data to help ensure that limited budgets are used in the best possible way and for those who really need it. This has led to some uplift requests being reduced or not given where they are already overfunded, with other placements that are underfunded and potentially unsustainable being uplifted at an appropriate rate.

Gemma Moss Owen, Commissioning and Contracts Specialist in the Adult Health and Wellbeing Department at Cyngor Gwynedd, explains: "While we have achieved some cost avoidance and savings, our main goal is to understand the costs of care, build positive and transparent working relationships with providers and identify the true cost of care. We have limited budgets and a tool



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**Alun Gwilym Williams,**  
Senior Business  
Manager, Adults,  
Health and Wellbeing,  
Cyngor Gwynedd.

*“CareCubed has enabled Gwynedd to discuss and negotiate fees with providers using a sound evidence base, which has benefited us as a commissioner and providers as well.”*



**Gemma Moss Owen,**  
Commissioning and  
Contracts Specialist in  
the Adult Health and  
Wellbeing Department,  
Cyngor Gwynedd.

*“Our aim is to ensure providers are properly supported and to create a sustainable, vibrant market in Gwynedd. CareCubed is allowing us to direct every pound to those who really need it. Over time this will hopefully stabilise the market and have a consistency in the prices we are paying for placements.”*

like CareCubed ensures we are spending the money wisely. We have been able to agree on a Fair Cost of Care with providers faster using CareCubed which is beneficial for everyone involved. Having a transparent tool based on lots of evidence and data is a good thing for us and our providers.”

Alun Gwilym Williams, Senior Business Manager, Adults, Health and Wellbeing at Cyngor Gwynedd, agrees: “Historically, we were having to do a time-consuming piece of manual work with providers which took several months in many instances. The process was so time-consuming and resource intensive, we couldn’t do this piece of work with each provider and did not have an evidence base for all fees we were paying. CareCubed has enabled us to have much more open discussions with providers and reach an agreement based on the Welsh Government’s ‘Lets agree to agree’ principles.”

Moss Owen, who is the primary user of the tool at Gwynedd, says she has found CareCubed very easy to use. Some negotiation training provided by the CareCubed team was also useful. “We did two sessions, and this gave me a really good understanding of the figures and the softer skills needed for negotiation”, she explains, “Now I have the confidence to say when a price seems too high, ask the right questions in a constructive way and request evidence where needed. Our aim is to ensure providers are properly supported and to create a sustainable, vibrant market in Gwynedd. Over time this will stabilise the market and have a consistency in the prices we are paying for placements.”

Moss Owen says most providers see the merits and opportunities the tool presents and understand the council’s budget constraints.

As a first adopter in Wales, Gwynedd has worked closely with the CareCubed team to help make the tool more user-friendly for the region: “Working with iESE and the CareCubed team has been a really positive experience,” Moss Owen stresses. Gwilym Williams agrees: “As the first users of CareCubed in Wales, I can only praise the support iESE provided whilst we were getting to grips with the new way of working, and the continued support we are getting now. The team has been more than ready to work with us to develop the system to suit our requirements in Wales.”