

Public Document Pack

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To: Cllr Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Michelle Perfect and David Wisinger

3 September 2021

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING
SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 9 SEPTEMBER, 2021 at 2.00 PM

Yours faithfully

Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: This will be a remote meeting and 'attendance' will be restricted to Committee Members and those Members of Council who have asked the Head of Democratic Services for an invitation. Such attendees may only speak at the Chair's discretion.

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

A G E N D A

1 **APOLOGIES**

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 14)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 1 July, 2021.

4 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 15 - 24)

Report of Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

Purpose: To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

5 **CARE INSPECTORATE WALES (CIW) - ASSURANCE CHECK** (Pages 25 - 46)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council (Partnerships) and Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To note the content of the Annual Performance letter, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW's) assessment of the authority's performance during the year 2020/21 and CIW's Performance Review Plan for 2020/21.

6 **PROGRESS UPDATE ON LLYS YR IARLL AND GLAN Y MORFA** (Pages 47 - 52)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council (Partnerships) and Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To receive a report on Llys Yr Iarll and Glan y Morfa Court – supporting independence for people with a disability

7 **ANNUAL REPORT ON THE SOCIAL SERVICES COMPLAINTS AND COMPLIMENTS PROCEDURE 2020-21** (Pages 53 - 76)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Deputy Leader of the Council (Partnerships) and Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To receive the Annual report.

Please note that there may be a 10 minute adjournment of this meeting if it lasts longer than two hours

Procedural Note on the conduct of meetings

The Chair will open the meeting and introduce themselves.

The meeting will be attended by a number of Councillors. Officers will also be in attendance to present reports, with Democratic Services officers acting as hosts of the meeting.

All attendees are asked to ensure their mobile phones are switched off and that any background noise is kept to a minimum.

All microphones are to be kept muted during the meeting and should only be unmuted when invited to speak by the Chair. When invitees have finished speaking they should go back on mute.

To indicate to speak, Councillors will use the chat facility or use the electronic raise hand function. The chat function may also be used for questions, relevant comments and officer advice and updates.

The Chair will call the speakers, with elected Members addressed as 'Councillor' and officers addressed by their job title e.g. Chief Executive' or name. From time to time, the officer advising the Chair will explain procedural points or suggest alternative wording for proposals, to assist the Committee.

If and when a vote is taken, the Chair will explain that only those who oppose the proposal(s), or who wish to abstain will need to indicate, using the chat function. The officer advising the Chair will indicate whether the proposals are carried.

If a more formal vote is needed, this will be by roll call – where each Councillor will be asked in turn (alphabetically) how s/he wishes to vote

At County Council and Planning Committee meetings speaker's times are limited. A bell will be sounded to alert that the speaker has one minute remaining

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **1 JULY, 2021**

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held remotely on Thursday 1 July 2021

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie and David Wisinger

SUBSTITUTIONS: Councillor Sean Bibby (for Cindy Hinds) and Councillor Geoff Collett (for Michelle Perfect)

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones (Deputy Leader for Partnerships and Cabinet Member for Social Services); Chief Officer (Social Services); Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults, Senior Manager – Children and Workforce; ADM and TSS Programme Manager; Early Years and Family Support Service Manager; Marketing and Recruitment Officer; Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning; Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager

IN ATTENDANCE: Social Care and Environment Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator; Community and Education Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

None were received.

14. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 27 May 2021 were approved and moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Lowe.

Councillors Gladys Healey asked if a reply had been received from Welsh Government regarding Mental Health Services. The Facilitator advised that a holding response had been received.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

15. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme. She advised that an item on Children Services Transformation would be added to the meeting on 9th September and that they were waiting for confirmation from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board as to whether they were able to attend the meeting on 4th November. She also added that two reports had come forward for the meeting on 9 December being Direct Payments Update and Extra Care Update Report and invited Members to get in touch if they had any items that they wanted to add to future agendas.

The Facilitator refereed to the action tracking report and advised members that they were waiting for a letter from BCUHB regarding lack of face to face GP appointments and Long Covid. Also that no feedback had been received from the Children's Services Forum as they had not met since the last meeting. The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce advised that they wanted to meet the Children first so they could decide on the key points they wanted to bring to the Forum.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Lowe.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Forward Work Programme be noted;
- (b) That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises; and
- (c) That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

16. SOCIAL SERVICES DIRECTOR'S ANNUAL REPORT

The Chief Officer (Social Services) advised that he and the Cabinet Member produced the Annual Report which was a statutory requirement to review the services in 2020/21 and the year ahead. He pointed out that as it was the Chief Executive's last year it was fitting for him to write the introduction leaving behind him a fantastic legacy of support for Social Services. He went through the main issues of the report and praised Double Click – Mental Health Social Enterprise for the work they had done in producing the report which the Committee agreed with. The ADM and TSS Programme Manager added that this report had been through the design process with Double Click and welcomed any comments from the Committee before it was finalised.

The Deputy Leader for Partnerships and Cabinet Member for Social Services said that to get so much achieved in such a difficult time was evidence to how wonderful the service was and that this Annual report stands out as one of the best reports due to the difficult circumstances.

Councillor Wisinger wanted clarification about the Queensferry GP Surgery being moved to Connah's Quay and asked what impact it could have on elderly residents.

Councillor Mackie advised that this had been referred to the Community Health Council and that the move to Connah's Quay was an option but there were other options within the proposal which were more local. He reported that he did not favour Connah's Quay as patients would have to pass another surgery in order to get to Connah's Quay Health Centre. He believed that it was going to be raised with Queensferry Community Council. He would keep the Committee informed about any progress updates he gets through the CHC.

Councillor Davies reported about ongoing problems with the Connah's Quay Medical Centre. Also St. Marks Surgery didn't have any Doctors in one day and all appointments were cancelled.

Transport links were a concern for Councillor Cunningham and Councillor Healey was concerned about why there was a shortage of GP's and why they couldn't be recruited.

The Committee agreed with the Chairman that a letter should be written to the Health Board with all the concerns raised at the meeting. The Chief Officer (Social Services) advised that the letter should be sent to the Area Director of the Health Board – Rob Smith and The Director of Primary Care Services - Gareth Bowdler and that he was happy to assist the Facilitator with the writing of it.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Gladys Healey and seconded by Councillor Mike Lowe.

RESOLVED:

That the final report, which includes the key developments of the past year and priorities for next year, be approved.

17. EARLY YEARS

The Early Years and Family Support Service Manager shared a short video showing the progress to date of some of the capital work that had happened around Flintshire for the 3 to 4 Year Old Funded Childcare Offer and some of the Flying Start Capital Funding that had been received from Welsh Government.

The Chairman asked how we reached out to families where English was not their first language particularly Eastern Europeans who may not have family here to support them with childcare to enable them to work. The Early Years and Family Support Service Manager advised that the large capital schemes were primarily for 3 to 4 year old Funded Childcare which supported working parents, and children funded through the Childcare Offer. However, if places are available the childcare places could be made available to other ages of children based upon the Settings CIW registration. Welsh Government may change the Childcare Offer eligibility criteria in the future to include parents in training which would widen the scope. As for Early Entitlement places these were linked with childcare and education which were opened out to anyone who was interested. Childcare would be registered in the usual way for people to apply and the demographic was monitored to see who was making use of the facilities.

Councillor Mackie congratulated the Early Years and Family Support Service Manager on an excellent report as it had so much information covered in each paragraph in section one and that each paragraph could have been a separate report for this Committee he also added that appendix was simple to read and understand.

Councillor Bateman reported that the progress on the new building at Ysgol Sychdyn was progressing well.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee support the approach to Early Years and Family Support provision, and collaborations with key partners, and future development of an Early Years Strategy;
- (b) That the progress and impact being achieved through Welsh Government capital funding be noted;
- (c) That the Committee support the development of programmes with a strong evidence base of impact and cost effectiveness when commissioning early years and early intervention services. And that the council and partners continue to develop its own local evidence base to support positive early intervention; and
- (d) That the Committee support the refresh of the Parenting in Flintshire Parenting Programmes Framework, and support action being taken to raise awareness and the benefits of parenting programmes with key partners so that there is an increase in accessibility and availability of programmes that meet parent's needs.

18. CHILDCARE SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT

Due to the overlap this item was included in the previous presentation for Early Years and the Early Years and Family Support Service Manager explained that the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment which was a statutory report was refreshed each year and a full report would be available next year.

Councillor Mackie gave mention to the gain of 27 registered childcare places compared with the end of last year due to the injection into the grants.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Wisinger and seconded by Councillor Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the report be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee support the on-going work and commitment to the delivery of the Childcare Sufficiency Assessment every five years and the annual Progress Report.

19. DISABILITY AND DISRIMINATION

The Strategic Policy Advisor introduced the report which provided an overview of disability discrimination. She outline the activity underway to

promote equality for disabled people regarding the following issues which had been previously raised by the Committee:-

- Reassurance that no discrimination takes place for housing, job and education aspects of life, both for seen and unseen disabilities;
- Reluctance to help older disabled people;
- Transport;
- Disabled Facilities Grants.

The Chairman confirmed that the comments made by the Strategic Policy Advisor about the closure of the Queensferry surgery would be included in the letter to Betsi Cadwaladr.

Councillor Mackie stated that these inequalities were becoming a requirement and shouldn't be restricted. Decision makers should take them into consideration at the planning stages and show evidence that all steps have been taken into consideration to reduce them.

Councillor Wisinger added that with disability in mind when developers were building new big developments then they should put forward new Doctors Surgeries at the planning stage to accommodate the extra people as many surgeries were outdated and at capacity. Councillor Mackie agreed and said that he raised it at a CHC meeting that he attended and advised the Committee that there would be a consultation with all patients for them to put their comments forward.

Councillor Bateman shared with the Committee that when a new development was being built in Sychdyn it was requested that 4 affordable houses were bungalows due to the lack of new housing for disabled people. These were gifted by the Developer. She also suggested that, when able to, the Committee should walk around Town Centres to experience the everyday problems that a disabled person has to contend with. The Chief Officer (Social Services) agreed that this was an excellent idea.

The Deputy Leader for Partnerships and Cabinet Member for Social Services advised the Committee that they had been pushing for this to be included in planning policy for future town regeneration programmes to have facilities for everyone with disabilities.

Councillor Healy stated that there was a percentage of people that do not declare that they are disabled because the pay was not equal in response the Strategic Policy Advisor confirmed that HR were working with employees to encourage them to fill in their equality monitoring data on iTrent which would enable them to complete Equal Pay audits. The Chief Officer (Social Services) added that the Project Search Development was a small but important part of this to address access to work for people with disabilities and were currently looking for placements within the Council for Project Search Students.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Lowe and seconded by Councillor Davies.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the actions being taken to eliminate discrimination and promote Equality for disabled people be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee receive the Strategic Equality Plan annual report 2020/21 prior to approval by Cabinet.

20. END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the new revised format report and he stated that the monitoring of the services was mainly positive but had been a challenging year and the delivery of some services had not met their targets but that both Adult and Children's Services had been very resilient and provided very good levels of service given the circumstances of the pandemic.

The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce expanded on the indicator of children who had been reported to have run away he explained that Flintshire now have a dedicated worker who meets with the young people to find out where they have been and what they have been doing and puts a risk management plan around the individual child. It also helps build a picture as to where they are congregating together and where appropriate intelligence is shared with the Police. The indicator shows that just under 75% of children had had an interview and data is now being collected to show those who had been offered an interview but declined to give a better indication.

In response to issues raised by Councillor Ellis the Senior Manager – Children and Workforce explained that they had continued to recruit Foster Carers through the pandemic and targets would have been met but this was down to timing issues with the Panel meeting in April. If the Panel had met in March targets would have been met.

He explained that in relation to the Family Group Meetings demand grew during the pandemic - the target was to support 280 families and 382 families were actually supported. Due to the increase in demand work had been done to expand the service.

Child Protection was showing amber due to the fact that they were 1% away from target. The Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning added that they were at 94.14% and the target was 95% and that quarter 3 coincided with the Christmas period which can be a challenging time to contact families and the Chief Officer (Social Services) responded to the final issue she raised concerning the issues on a downward trend reporting that this was partly due to the additional pressures on the services due to the pandemic but performances need to be maintained and they cannot use this as a reason for everything.

Councillor Healey questioned if the 75% of runaways were the ones that came back. The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce confirmed that all runaways return but have to be classed as missing if they don't return at certain times even though their whereabouts is known. 75% of them accept an interview to talk about where they have been, the risks they might have been

subjected to and the importance of sticking to boundaries. The other 25% are the ones that decline the interview.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) said that he would feed back the comments to the Team that Councillor Mackie made about the ease to follow report and the Committees thanks to the SPOA Team in respect to how they dealt with the significant increase in demand to service.

The recommendation in the report was moved by Councillor Healey and seconded by Councillor Ellis

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

21. JOINT FUNDED CARE PACKAGES

The Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning introduced the report outlining how the funding was split and the work that had been done to support Joint Funded Care Packages.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Ellis the Senior Manager – Integrated Services and Lead Adults advised that no people were waiting in hospital for a care package unless they needed treatment. In terms of any Continuing Health Care (CHC) disputes or agreements for funding within in the 2014 Framework it incumbents on Social Services and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board who agree a placement or care and support at home and then the dispute process kicks in but the individual wasn't waiting in hospital. CHC Funding was across board and Adult Services were quite successful with the funding but Children's Services was an ongoing challenge. The Senior Manager – Safeguarding and Commissioning advised that there were currently 153 cases with delayed invoices of which 50 were over 60 days overdue.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Lowe.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee is assured of the robust and proactive budget management approach Flintshire County Council takes to ensure joint funded care packages are financially well managed; and
- (b) That the plan to introduce a CHC Monitoring Officer post, supported by 'Invest to Save' funding be noted.

22. COMMENCEMENT OF THE SOCIOECONOMIC DUTY

The Strategic Policy Advisor and Benefits Manager gave a joint presentation on the Council's preparations for the commencement of the Socio-Economic Duty. This was a statutory requirement upon relevant public bodies to have due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcomes resulting from socio-economic disadvantage.

The presentation covering the following:

- What is the Socio-economic Duty and what does it do?
- Key terms
- Inequalities of outcomes
- Examples of poverty
- Demonstrating due regard - audit trail
- Meeting the duty - what we are doing
- Better outcomes
- Case study
- Applying the Duty
- After the Duty

The presentation highlighted the broader examples of poverty which linked to one of the priorities within the Council Plan. The report was being shared with all Overview & Scrutiny Committees to raise awareness of the new obligations. Amongst the actions, the inclusion of Integrated Impact Assessment outcomes on committee reports would help to demonstrate consideration of potential impacts of poverty in strategic decision-making.

The Chairman asked what the Council was doing about Children who received free school meals that were having to self-isolate due to a member of their pod testing positive sometimes on multiple occasions. The Benefits Manager confirmed that due to all the work they did during lockdown last year on direct payments to families and championing with Welsh Government the need to pay the free school meal allowance during the school holidays has enabled them to make direct payments to the families when a child has to self-isolate.

In response to a comment Councillor Bateman raised on digital poverty the Strategic Policy Advisor said that as part of the Council Pan they were looking at developing Champions who would go with devices and support people getting online. The Benefits Manager added that in the interim Connects Staff were able to scan and email documents and also complete forms electronically on their behalf.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Bateman and seconded by Councillor Cunningham.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the requirements of the Socio-economic Duty be noted; and
- (b) That the Committee is assured of the Council's preparedness in meeting the new duty

23. LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 – TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

24. CORPORATE PARENTING AND FOSTERING STRATEGY UPDATE (VERBAL ITEM)

The Marketing and Recruitment Officer shared some news on a National Initiative to improve Foster Care Recruitment for Local Authorities due to be launched mid-July. She explained background to Fostering and the difference between Local Authority Fostering and Businesses advertising for Foster Carers for profit making organisations.

The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce advised that today was just to make members aware that an announce was going to be made in mid-July and that The Marketing and Recruitment Officer would come back and give a presentation once it had gone live.

RESOLVED:

That the update be noted.

25. MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE

There was no members of the press or public in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 am and ended at 12.16 pm)

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Chair

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SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 9 September 2021
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Report Author	Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Overview & Scrutiny presents a unique opportunity for Members to determine the Forward Work programme of the Committee of which they are Members. By reviewing and prioritising the Forward Work Programme Members are able to ensure it is Member-led and includes the right issues. A copy of the Forward Work Programme is attached at Appendix 1 for Members' consideration which has been updated following the last meeting.

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The report also shows actions arising from previous meetings of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee and the progress made in completing them. Any outstanding actions will be continued to be reported to the Committee as shown in Appendix 2.

RECOMMENDATION

1	That the Committee considers the draft Forward Work Programme and approve/amend as necessary.
2	That the Facilitator, in consultation with the Chair of the Committee be authorised to vary the Forward Work Programme between meetings, as the need arises.
3	That the Committee notes the progress made in completing the outstanding actions.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING
1.01	Items feed into a Committee's Forward Work Programme from a number of sources. Members can suggest topics for review by Overview & Scrutiny Committees, members of the public can suggest topics, items can be referred by the Cabinet for consultation purposes, or by County Council or Chief Officers. Other possible items are identified from the Cabinet Work Programme and the Improvement Plan.
1.02	<p>In identifying topics for future consideration, it is useful for a 'test of significance' to be applied. This can be achieved by asking a range of questions as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Will the review contribute to the Council's priorities and/or objectives?2. Is it an area of major change or risk?3. Are there issues of concern in performance?4. Is there new Government guidance of legislation?5. Is it prompted by the work carried out by Regulators/Internal Audit?6. Is the issue of public or Member concern?
1.03	In previous meetings, requests for information, reports or actions have been made. These have been summarised as action points. Following a meeting of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee in July 2018, it was recognised that there was a need to formalise such reporting back to Overview & Scrutiny Committees, as 'Matters Arising' was not an item which can feature on an agenda.
1.04	It was suggested that the 'Action tracking' approach be trialled for the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee. Following a successful trial, it was agreed to extend the approach to all Overview & Scrutiny Committees.
1.05	The Action Tracking details including an update on progress is attached at Appendix 2.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None as a result of this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	In some cases, action owners have been contacted to provide an update on their actions.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None as a result of this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Social & Health Care OSC.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2. Contact Officer: Margaret Parry-Jones Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator Telephone: 01352 702427 E-mail: Margaret.parry-jones@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Improvement Plan: the document which sets out the annual priorities of the Council. It is a requirement of the Local Government (Wales) Measure 2009 to set Improvement Objectives and publish an Improvement Plan.

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Forward Work Programme

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
9 September 2.00 pm	Care Inspectorate Wales – Assurance Visit Outcomes	To note positive feedback received from CIW following the recent Assurance Visit, and the response to any areas of improvement identified	Assurance	Neil Ayling	
	Glan y Morfa Court - supporting independence for people with a disability	To receive a report on Glan y Morfa Court – supporting independence for people with a disability	Awareness raising	Susie Lunt	
	Comments, Compliments and Complaints	To receive the Annual Report	Assurance	Jane Davies	
4 November 10.00 am	Transition Programmes – Update on Achievements	To receive an update on the achievements of transition programmes.	Assurance	Susie Lunt	
	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board	To receive a presentation from the Chief Executive of BCUHB	Partnership working	Facilitator	
9 December 2.00 pm	Social Care workforce pressures and responses	To advise Committee of the challenges associated with recruitment within the social care sector and the national, regional and local responses.	Assurance	Craig Macleod and Susie Lunt	

	Supporting the stability of the social care market	To identify pressure points within the social care market and the associated action to support sufficiency and stability of high quality provision (to include fees and funding).	Assurance	Jane Davies	
	Early Years and Flying Start programmes	To report on the extensive work to support parents and families and the address the impact the pandemic has had on babies and young children.	Assurance	Gail Bennett	
	Direct Payments	To receive an update.	Assurance	Susie Lunt	
	Children’s Services Transformation	To receive an update	Assurance	Craig Macleod	
20January 2.00 pm	January 2022 - Young Carers Contract (NEWCIS) Review of budget risk	To consider the latest budget position as agreed at the meeting on 21 January 2021.		Craig Macleod	
	Extra Care	To receive an update		Mark Holt	
3 March 2.00 pm					
9 June 2.00 pm					
21 July 10.00 am					

Regular Items

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible/Contact Officer
Nov/Dec	Safeguarding	To provide Members with statistical information in relation to Safeguarding - & Adults & Children	Chief Officer (Social Services)
May	Educational Attainment of Looked After Children	Education officers offered to share the annual educational attainment report with goes to Education & Youth OSC with this Committee.	Chief Officer (Social Services)
May	Corporate Parenting	Report to Social & Health Care and Education & Youth Overview & Scrutiny.	Chief Officer (Social Services)
	Comments, Compliments and Complaints	To consider the Annual Report	Chief Officer (Social Services)
	Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Update	BCUHB are invited to attend on an annual basis – partnership working.	Facilitator

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ACTION TRACKING FOR THE SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action Required	Action Officers	Action taken	Timescale
27 May 2021	Forward Work Programme	<p>Letter to be sent to Rob Smith and Gareth Bowdler BCUHB re lack of face to face GP appointments.</p> <p>Cllr Cindy Hinds raised concerns around the lack of support provided to residents who were suffering from long Covid symptoms. It was suggested that this be raised with BCUHB following the meeting.</p>	<p>Facilitator</p> <p>Facilitator</p>	<p>Letter sent to BCUHB regarding lack of face to face GP appointments and Long Covid.</p> <p>E-mail seeking a response to initial correspondence sent on 31.08.21</p>	Ongoing
27 May 2021	North Wales Adoption Service	In response to comments from Cllrs, Craig Macleod suggested that young people be asked what was important to them during a meeting of the Children's Services Forum, with their responses being fed back to the Committee.	Craig Macleod	The Children's Services Forum to progress.	Ongoing
27 May 2021	Mental Health Services in Flintshire	Following comments made by Cllr Gladys Healey, it was agreed that a letter be written to Welsh Government to ask if a proportion of the additional funding provided to Health Boards across Wales would be provided to Local	Facilitator	Letter sent to Welsh Government. Response awaited	Ongoing

		<p>Authorities to provide mental health support services and whether additional funding would be provided specifically to address mental health issues arising as a result of the pandemic. Also to ask how many child and adult psychiatrists were in post across Wales and whether there were any concerns around recruitment and retention.</p>			
1 July 2021	Directors Annual Report	<p>The Committee agreed with the Chairman that a letter should be written to the Health Board with all the concerns raised at the meeting. The Chief Officer (Social Services) advised that the letter should be sent to the Area Director of the Health Board – Rob Smith and The Director of Primary Care Services</p>		<p>Letter to be sent to BCUHB by Chair of the Committee.</p> <p>Response received</p>	Completed
1 July 2021	Disability and Discrimination	<p>Cllr Bateman suggested that, when able to, the Committee should walk around Town Centres to experience the everyday problems that a disabled person has to contend with.</p>		<p>To be arranged in the future.</p>	Facilitator/Fiona Mocko



SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Report Subject	Care Inspectorate Wales – Assurance Check
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) are the independent regulator of Social Care and Childcare in Wales. They regulate social care and early years services using the regulations and national minimum standards set out by Welsh Government through the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

This report presents the findings of the recent CIW Assurance Check of Flintshire Social Services and sets out the Council's clear action plan in response to improvement areas identified the findings letter of the 26th May 2021.

The Assurance Check visit took place from the 19th to 23rd April 2021 with eight inspectors undertaking case file reading, meetings with individuals, families, practitioners, managers and partner agencies. All activities were undertaken virtually through Webex and some telephone conversations where this was appropriate. The inspectors were afforded remote access to PARIS for the duration of the visit.

CIW focused its key lines of enquiry within the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 which are:

- People – Voice and Control
- Prevention
- Well-being
- Partnership and Integration.

The inspectorate also had particular focus on:

1. How well is the local authority discharging its statutory functions to keep people who need care and support and carers who need support, safe and promote their well-being during the pandemic?

2. What is the local authority doing to prevent the need for children to come into care; and are children returning home to their families quickly enough where safe to do so?

This report reflects CIW feedback that there are many strengths in Flintshire Social Services and the inspectors were “assured” that Flintshire is discharging its statutory functions to keep people safe and promote their well-being during the pandemic, and that the Council prevent the need for children to come in to care; and are children returning home to their families where appropriate.

In the verbal feedback received on the final day of the visit, inspectors found evidence of “very good practice” across all areas in Social Services and that staff were “dedicated, knowledgeable and focused on outcomes” for people.

The letter also identified areas for improvement including giving further consideration to the value of independent advocates to support children and young people. It was also identified that an area of improvement was to ensure that there is sufficient evidence in children’s services of the analysis of need and decision making in care records.

Finally, during child protection enquiries it was noted that children are seen and seen alone by the social worker.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members to note the positive feedback received from CIW following the Assurance Check in April 2021.
2	Members to note the response to areas of improvement identified by CIW and the Service’s Action plan to address these.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	BACKGROUND
1.01	Care Inspectorate Wales undertook their Assurance Check of Flintshire Social Services from the 19 th to 23 rd April 2021. Eight inspectors reviewed 36 cases (18 in Children’s Services and 18 in Adult Services) plus 6 carer assessments.
1.02	Ten cases were tracked, meaning that the inspectors met with all the key professionals involved in the case as well as the individuals themselves, their families or foster carers.
1.03	Over the course of the week, inspectors attended 61 virtual meetings consisting of tracked case interviews, meetings with practitioners, managers, partners, carers and young people.

1.04	It is worth noting that this is the first fully-virtual CIW visit undertaken in Flintshire Social Services and it was pleasing to note that with the full support of IT colleagues, the 5 days took place with no technical issues or concerns.
1.05	Summary of findings and priorities for improvement
1.06	<u>People – Voice and Control</u> CIW asked ‘how well is the local authority ensuring people, carers and practitioners are having their voices heard, making informed choices and maintaining control over their lives?’ The inspectorate was also mindful of the Public Health Wales and Welsh Government guidelines associated with the COVID-19 pandemic.
1.07	The inspectorate found evidence that people are involved in the planning and delivery of their care and support and that they were supported to identify what matters to them. In most cases outcomes were clearly described and actions to achieve them identified.
1.08	There was evidence that people were supported by informal advocates who assisted them to participate in assessments and decisions affecting them. There was also positive reference to the Case Conference buddies who support children and young people through the child protection case conference process. There was also recognition by the inspectors that whilst the offer of advocates was made, it was always accepted.
1.09	CIW also noted that it was positive to see practitioners seeing themselves as advocates for the children they work with, but as an area of improvement it was identified that there needs to be an increased understanding of the added value and function of independent advocacy and is included in the Action Plan (appendix 2). This is an area where practitioners need to refresh to ensure consistent consideration is given to both informal and formal advocacy offers.
1.10	There was also recognition by CIW of the additional pressures the pandemic had placed on carers and evidence seen that they had been appropriately supported by the service. Particular positive regard was given to the direct payment offer which allows people the opportunity to manager their own tailored support. The inspectors also commented positively on the work being undertaken to support young carers.
1.11	The inspectors commented on the positive work undertaken by the new in-house direct payment team who have created a pool of personal assistants and used technology to support people to search for a personal assistant and make informed choices about who will support them.
1.12	Practitioners responded to CIW through either a survey or during virtual meetings and they reported feeling supported by colleagues, managers and described feeling valued and said managers were supportive and accessible, whilst senior managers were described as being visible and responsive.

1.13	<p><u>Prevention</u></p> <p>CIW asked ‘to what extent is the local authority successful in promoting prevention and reducing need for increased or formal support from statutory agencies?’ Linked to this inspectors also sought evidence of the support for people bringing up children and how their own mental health was cared for.</p>
1.14	<p>The inspectors noted in their letter that the Council works hard to ensure prevention is an inherent part of its business. They found positive integrated approaches with partners and the allocation of resources to provide the right help and the right time.</p>
1.15	<p>In adult services the inspector saw a focus on preventative and targeted support including specialist dementia support workers, timely access to equipment and assistive technology. They also heard about a solutions focused approach in mental health services to avoid escalation.</p>
1.16	<p>In children’s services there was much emphasis on the Early Help Hub and the development of parental coping mechanisms from a range of resources. The close working arrangements between agencies was positively commented upon during the pandemic and examples given around children and young people’s mental health services (CAMHS) represented in the Early Help Hub.</p>
1.17	<p>CIW also commented that senior managers had a good understanding of the looked after children population in Flintshire and that the well-being of the child was seen as a priority in all decisions. Positive reference was also made about the authority’s investment in Multi-Systemic Therapy.</p>
1.18	<p><u>Partnership and Integration</u></p> <p>CIW were looking to extent the local authority was able to assure itself opportunities for partnership working and positively exploit it to maximise person centred planning.</p>
1.19	<p>The inspectors found that partnership worked well at all levels and that there was evidence of integrated sustainable approached which met the needs of individuals and promoted well-being.</p>
1.20	<p>Senior leaders and partners were asked to complete a survey and the outcomes from that told CIW that the strategic partnership between Flintshire County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board had developed and strengthened during the pandemic. Reference was made to the work undertaken to establish Ysbyty Enfys Glannau Dyfrdwy.</p>
1.21	<p>Care Providers spoke positively of the support they had received during the pandemic and that they had valued the communication, and quality of advice and support provided to them by the local authority.</p>

1.22	CIW also recognised the strategic approach used by the local authority to manage the pandemic and the targeted collaboration working across portfolios. Particular mention was made around the effective collaborative working between education and children's services to make appropriate provision for the most vulnerable children. The work of the Play Officers, Theatr Clwyd and Aura Sports was also singled out for positive comment.
1.23	Finally, the inspectors commented positively on the work undertaken to expand the North East Wales Community Equipment Stores to provide a PPE Hub and promote the effective delivery of PPE to the sector.
1.24	<u>Well-being</u> The inspectors asked 'to what extent is the local authority promoting well-being, ensuring people maintain their safety and achieving positive outcomes that matter to them?'
1.25	CIW gave positive regard to the strong political support for both adults and children's services and noted that there was a well-developed and thorough understanding of the services' strengths and current challenges.
1.26	The inspectors saw evidence of good practice with child protection review minutes being written directly to the child, acknowledging the child's wishes and explaining in child-friendly language the outcomes and decisions affecting them.
1.27	Inspectors found in some cases, timely responses to child protection concerns but also found in other cases reviewed there was a delay in the development of multi-agency safety plans. This is an area of improvement for the authority and is identified in the Action Plan (appendix 2).
1.28	The inspectors also identified that the local authority needs to assure itself that children are seen and seen alone during the child protection enquiry stage and that core groups for children on the child protection register are consistently conducted in line with statutory requirements. This too is addressed in the Action Plan.
1.29	CIW saw evidence of good working relationships between the care management teams and key partners and that the right people were around involved in discussions.
1.30	In adult services, the importance of timely hospital discharges was understood and the authority had created additional capacity during the pandemic to facilitate safe discharges and support people to return home, thus avoiding unnecessary hospital delays.
1.32	Next Steps
1.33	CIW will be reviewing progress on the areas of improvement through performance evaluation review meetings and the heads of service and director.

1.34	To facilitate this progress an Action Plan has been brought together to capture the areas of improvement. The timeframe for completion is the end of September 2021 with the majority of actions to be completed by the end of June 2021.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Resources necessary to implement improvements identified by CIW are within existing budgets.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The risk relates to the reputation of the Council should there be significant areas for improvement identified by CIW which were not addresses by the service, resulting in non-compliance. The level of risk is currently low.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	Regular meetings between managers and CIW representative.
4.02	Information and feedback from the Assurance Check has been shared with the workforce and regular update are provided on any feedback received from CIW.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - CIW Assurance Visit Letter. Appendix 2 - Action Plan

6.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
6.01	Contact Officer: Jane Davies Telephone: 01352 702503 E-mail: jane.m.davies@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	The Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW): The inspectorate for Care and Social Services formally known as Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW). Early Help Hub: The newly developed multi agency Hub for Children

and Families in Flintshire. This collective response to future referrals will negate the need for no further action responses and will provide a transformation of practice.

Direct Payments: Are a payment made by a local authority social services department to an individual who has been assessed as having care and support needs who wish to arrange their own care and support services.

Carer: Someone, usually unpaid, and often a friend or family member who supports a person with social care needs either full time or part time.

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Neil Ayling
Director of Social Services
Flintshire County Council
County Hall
Mold
Flintshire
CH7 6NB

Dyddiad/Date: 26 May 2021

Dear Director,

Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – Assurance Check 2021: Flintshire County Council

This letter summarises the findings of our assurance check on 19 to 23 April 2021. The purpose of this assurance check was to review how well local authority social services continue to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being.

We focused our key lines of enquiry within the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and have recorded our judgements and findings aligned to these - People - Voice and Control, Prevention, Well-Being, Partnerships and Integration.

Overview

In March 2020, CIW suspended its routine programme in response to the COVID-19 pandemic to enable local authorities and providers to focus fully on responding to the challenging circumstances. A revised programme with local authorities recommenced in September to provide assurance about how people are being safeguarded and well-being promoted during the pandemic. We considered safety and well-being of people who use or may need to use services, the safety of services they access and the safety and well-being of people who work in services. We focused our key lines of enquiry within the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and have recorded our judgements and findings aligned to these: People - Voice and Control, Prevention, Partnerships and Integration, Well-being.

Our focus was on:

1. How well is the local authority discharging its statutory functions to keep people who need care and support and carers who need support, safe and promote their well-being during the pandemic?

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Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)
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LL31 9RZ
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Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

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We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

2. What is the local authority doing to prevent the need for children to come into care; and are children returning home to their families quickly enough where safe to do so?

Summary of findings and priorities for improvement

People - voice and control - We asked: How well is the local authority ensuring people, carers and practitioners are having their voices heard, making informed choices, and maintaining control over their lives. While also balancing the recommendations and requirements made by Public Health Wales and Welsh Government to limit the spread of COVID-19?

People are involved in the planning and delivery of their care and support services. They are supported to identify what matters to them and how they might achieve their personal well-being outcomes. In most of the cases we reviewed, outcomes are clearly described and the actions to achieve them are identified.

There was evidence of people being supported by informal advocates to participate in assessments and decisions that affect them and of children and families being supported by buddies to ensure their views are represented at child protection case conferences. The local authority gives regard to the rights of children to be offered formal advocacy. Whilst we heard and saw some examples of this offer being made, it was not always accepted. In speaking with practitioners it was positive that they see themselves as advocates for the children they work with, but it was less clear that there is a shared understanding of the added value and function of independent advocacy. This is an area where practitioners need to refresh to ensure consistent consideration is given to both informal and formal advocacy as outlined in Part 10 Code of Practice for the 2014 Act.

There was a recognition of the additional pressures experienced by carers during the pandemic. We found evidence of carers' needs including young carers being appropriately considered and supported alongside the cared for person.

People, including carers, were given the opportunity to tailor and manage their own support through use of direct payments. Evidence was seen of direct payments working well for individuals and carers and used creatively during the pandemic as a means of providing alternative respite.

The challenges of recruitment and retention of personal assistants is being addressed by the Flintshire Direct Payment Team who have re-designed the direct payment web page and created the Personal Assistant Portal. The web page provides the information and advice people need to enable them to make an informed choice whilst the portal aims to help people search for personal assistants as well as assisting personal assistants to find suitable employment. Alongside a learning provider, the team are designing specific training for personal assistants which includes an Induction Certificate which will be accessible to all employers wanting to provide training & development opportunities to their personal assistants.

People we spoke with told us the local authority had maintained safe contact with them throughout the pandemic. Where needed, direct safe face-to-face contact has continued, subject to a COVID risk assessment and Public Health Guidance. We saw examples of practitioners and providers working creatively as means of delivering their professional responsibilities, ensuing peoples voices were heard.

Most practitioners who responded to our survey felt supported by colleagues and managers and regarded their workload as manageable. We found the workforce to be knowledgeable, dedicated, and practitioners focused on positive outcomes for people. Whilst a small number of practitioners identified that vacancies and sickness created pressure for some teams, overall we found morale was good and practitioners were positive about their experience of working for the local authority. Staff described feeling valued and said managers were supportive and accessible, whilst senior managers were described as being visible and responsive.

Training opportunities have continued with a number of digital platforms used to enable the workforce to access online training. Flintshire County Council continue to support the professional development of practitioners and managers. Newly qualified staff told us they are supported in their first year of practice by regular supervision, mentoring arrangements, and a protected caseload. Whilst a senior practitioner told us of the support the local authority commissioned to develop her leadership skills.

Prevention - We asked: To what extent is the local authority successful in promoting prevention and reducing need for increased or formal support from statutory agencies? Including taking all necessary steps to support the upbringing of the child by the child's family and supporting people with mental health issues before they reach crisis.

Flintshire County Council have worked hard to ensure that prevention is an inherent part of the local authority's business and the importance of community support has been recognised during the pandemic.

We found a positive integrated approach resulting in a culture of prevention through joint working, supportive infrastructures, and aligned delivery systems. This was evident in a prudent approach to resource allocation ensuring the right help was available at the right time which prevents escalation of need and improves the quality of the individual's journey through the health and social care system.

In adults services we saw a focus on preventative and targeted support with the availability of step up/down and community resources to support people. This included specialist dementia workers, timely access to equipment, minor adaptations, and assistive technology. We heard how the solution focused approach in mental health prevented people from going on to need more intensive services.

In children's services the emphasis in the Early Help Hub is on helping parents to develop their own abilities, their coping mechanisms and strengths to identify and manage problems. Practitioners valued the range of resources available to support placement stability and improve emotional well-being and a better understanding of children's behavioural issues. We heard how closer working with other agencies during the pandemic had helped the authority to develop a better-shared awareness of the range of community

preventive services available to children and families. The inclusion of representation of the children and young people's mental health service (CAMHS) in the Early Help Hub during the pandemic was identified as a significant strength by practitioners. However, there is still a need to ensure the evidence/analysis which informs decision making in the Early Help Hub is consistently recorded to ensure people are getting the right support and assistance at the right time.

Senior managers have a good understanding and knowledge of the profile of children looked after. The well-being of the child is seen as the priority in all planning decisions, and there is a strong commitment to the preventative agenda and to the safe reduction of the children looked after population. The local authority has invested in Multi-Systemic Therapy and we heard how the team has worked to enable children at risk of coming in to care to remain with families without recourse to statutory services.

Partnership and Integration - We asked: To what extent is the local authority able to assure itself opportunities for partnership working are positively exploited to maximise person centred planning and ensure integrated service delivery and service sustainability?

Partnerships were found to be working well at all levels and are delivering an integrated sustainable approach to meeting need and promoting well-being in line with legislation and expectations. In the cases we reviewed we saw evidence of practitioners developing a professional working relationship with people built upon co-operation to promote independence and developing a shared understanding of what matters.

Senior leaders and partners who responded to our survey told us the strategic partnership between the Flintshire County Council and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) has developed and strengthened during the pandemic. Partners worked together in the early stages of the pandemic to prepare the Ysbyty Enfys in Deeside, as well as expanding care home provision to alleviate pressure on hospitals and to ensure positive well-being outcomes for the people of Flintshire.

Managers and practitioners described well-established operational relationships with partners and a clear commitment to collaborative working across the authority. The increased use of digital platforms has meant agencies are contributing more effectively in statutory meetings including safeguarding strategy discussions and reviews.

Practitioners told us some key partners were not undertaking face-to-face visits until recently and how this had hindered the completion of assessment and care planning during the pandemic. Providers spoke positively of the support they had received from the local authority during the pandemic. They valued the level of communication and the quality of the advice and support received.

The strategic approach implemented by the local authority during the pandemic facilitated targeted collaborative working across portfolios and services. In children's services for example, we saw effective working relationship between children's services and education in identifying and making appropriate provision for the most vulnerable children during the pandemic. In addition, we saw partners working creatively with children's services to support families. Parents told us how much they valued the package of care and activities

developed with Play Officers, Theatre Clwyd and Aura Sports to give children and young people the opportunity to try something different during school holidays. In adults services we heard how departments within the local authority worked together to identify a building to become the North East Wales Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) Hub. Within three days of acquiring the building, the service was fully operational and enabled the North East Wales Community Equipment Service (NEWCES) to promptly set-up an efficient delivery system.

Well-being - We asked: To what extent is the local authority promoting well-being, ensuring people maintain their safety and achieve positive outcomes that matter to them?

Flintshire County Council benefits from an experienced senior management team. There is strong commitment and political support for both adults and children's services and a thorough and well-developed understanding of their strengths and current challenges.

The local authority has exercised its functions under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and ensures it makes a positive contribution to the well-being of people who need care and support.

The timeliness and quality of statutory reviews seen were good in both adults and children's services. In children's services we saw good practice with minutes being written directly to the child, acknowledging the child's wishes, and explaining in child-friendly language the outcomes and decisions of their review. Independent reviewing officers (IROs) told us they contact children prior to the review and it was positive that they undertook midpoint checks on progress. We found issues were escalated as needed and relationships between professionals supported through a constructive early resolution approach.

We found variable practice in relation to how well the local authority responded to children safeguarding matters. The best examples involved timely responses with prompt information gathering to help address child protection concerns. Whilst in some of the case files reviewed, responses were delayed including the development of multi-agency safety plans. The local authority should review how it conducts safeguarding enquiries to ensure the individual needs of each child is identified and addressed and is resulting in safety plans. The local authority should assure itself children are seen and seen alone as appropriate during the enquiry period, and core groups for children named on the child protection register are consistently conducted in line with statutory requirements.

In the cases we reviewed adult safeguarding reports were screened and enquiries were conducted within statutory requirements. Safeguarding discussions and meetings involved the right people and evidenced good working relationships with care management teams as well as key partners. Providers felt supported by the safeguarding team, their willingness to offer advice and guidance was appreciated.

The importance of timely hospital discharge is understood and remains a priority for the local authority and partners. During the pandemic, the local authority has sought to promote the well-being of people in need of care and support by creating additional capacity to facilitate safe discharges and to support people at home therefore avoiding unnecessary hospital admissions. The local authority has implemented the discharge to assess model

and in the cases we reviewed we saw a focus on supporting people to regain their independence, enabling people to return home in accordance with their wishes.

Whilst the changing patterns of work in response to the pandemic has created challenges, the local authority has also been proactive and innovative in its approach to promoting people's well-being. During the assurance check, many positive examples of how the partnership responded to the pandemic were shared with us. This included promoting the well-being of people by loaning iPads to people to enable them to call family/friends, to attend online activities and access services such as virtual consultations with GP.

The local authority has continued to identify opportunities to use existing transformation programme to drive further integration as well as to develop new models of care and support to improve outcomes for people.

Method:

- we reviewed documentation supplied in advance of our visit
- we spoke with carers and people who were receiving or had received care and support
- we reviewed 26 case files
- we held case tracking discussions on a further ten case files
- we administered eight surveys
- we held six focus groups

Next Steps

We have identified strengths and areas for priority improvement and we will review the progress of these areas through our performance evaluation review meetings with the heads of service and director. We expect the areas of improvement we have identified to be included in the local authority's improvement plans. We would like to extend our thanks to all those who helped with the arrangements for this assurance check and to those people and staff who spoke with us.

Please see our Privacy Notice at <https://careinspectorate.wales/how-we-use-your-information>

Yours sincerely,



Lou Bushell-Bauers

Head of Local Authority Inspection

Care Inspectorate Wales

**Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) – Assurance Check 2021
Flintshire County Council**

1. Promote and encourage the rights of children to be offered formal advocacy	
Lead: Service Manager: Corporate Parenting	
Challenges & Baseline to be addressed	What success looks like
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good evidence that an active offer of advocacy is being made • However, there is a low take up the active offer • Need to better understand why young people do not take up the service • Practitioners can see themselves as an advocate - need to ensure this is complemented with a deeper appreciation of the added value of independent advocacy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All eligible children have an active offer of advocacy • Higher take up of the active offer – aim to double numbers • Understanding of why active offer is declined by young people and any associated corrective action if needed • Practitioners have a strong understanding of the added value of independent advocacy

Action Ref	Action /Task	Lead	Start	Finish	Milestone 30/06/2021	Milestone 30/09/2021	Status Update
1.1	Improve staff awareness of the independent advocacy provision and referral pathways	Peter Robson	12/05/21	30/09/2021	Service and access pathway promoted	Agreed plan for ongoing comprehensive awareness raising programme for independent advocacy	Open: On Track
1.1a	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Information sent to all staff on the service and how to refer a child for independent advocacy 	Peter Robson	12/05/21	30/06/2021	Service and access pathway promoted	Service and access pathway promoted	
1.1.b	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provider to meet all Teams to share information with staff directly and to discuss 	Claire Clements	12/05/21	30/09/2021	Provider attends Team Meetings	Provider attends Team Meetings	12/5/21 Provider attended Children's Team Managers Meeting

	approaches for promoting the service with children and their families.						
1.1.c	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provider to meet with newly qualified social workers as part of their development/ induction 	Jenny Frost	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Advocacy built into induction programme	Delivery of advocacy session on	
1.1.d	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensure there is information included on Community Care Inform of the rights of children to be offered independent advocacy 	Jenny Frost & Katrina Shankar	30/06/2021	30/07/2021	Prepare information and develop webpages	Advocacy information fully integrated into Community Care Inform	
1.2	Systems in place to monitor and understand take up/decline	Jacque Slee	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Systems in place	Systems in place to monitor and understand take up	Open: On Track
1.2a	Include a tick box in Paris to prompt practitioners to record their offer for advocacy, similar to the Welsh active offer, in the Part 2 Enquiry (What Matters) and Part 3 Assessment	Carol Dove Denise Allman Laura D'Arcy	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	System changes developed	System changes launched	
1.2b	Audit of why young people have declined the active offer and associated action	Jacque Slee	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	/	Prepare audit tool and complete case file audit	
1.2c	Quality assurance mechanisms refined to ensure independent advocacy is offered to children at appropriate points including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> child protection case conference meetings 	Jacque Slee & IRO's	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	/	Prepare audit tool and complete case file audit	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • review meetings • IRO mid-review monitoring • PLO processes 						
1.2d	Seek feedback from practitioners and partners on their experience of the current service to inform the future procurement of the service, regional tendering process.	Peter Robson	12/05/21	30/06/2021	Questionnaire circulated	Results analysed and used to inform specification for procurement	21/6/21 Questionnaire circulated to all Practitioners and results currently being analysed

2. Strengthening the recording of the evidence of front door decision making and analysis on PARIS

Lead: Service Manager: Protection and Support

Challenges & Baseline to be addressed

- Rationale for decisions not always recorded where referrals do not meet thresholds/need for support
- Volume of work can challenge capacity for detailed recording
- Timeliness of recording in some specific areas needs to be improved

What success looks like

- Timely and proportionate recording
- Consistent adherence to Recording Policy
- Case file audits consistently reach the criteria for a score of '2' for recording

Action Ref	Action /Task	Lead	Start	Finish	Milestone 30/06/2021	Milestone 30/09/2021	Status Update
2.1	Map front door recording processes to ensure that we are demonstrating the child's journey and the associated decision making.	Jane Turvey/ Karen Edwards	12/05/21	30/09/2021	Agree recording process for completed a Part 2 assessment	Reissue Service recording policy with Practice guidance for staff	Open: On Track
2.2	Finalise and implement 'Family Support Framework' to ensure	Jenny Frost/ Peter Robson	12/05/21	30/09/2021	First review and revisions completed	QA audit to evidence of positive use of	Open: On Track 21/6/21 Draft framework presented to team

consistency of threshold decision making and the associated recording requirements						thresholds in Service delivery	managers and mapped against real cases to understand potential impact
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3. Review of how we conduct our safeguarding enquiries, ensuring children are seen, seen alone within the enquiry period and that core groups for children on the child protection register are consistently conducted in line with statutory requirements.

Lead: Service Manager: Protection and Support

<p>Challenges & Baseline to be addressed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Processes for managing high volume of work to be streamlined Resources needed at the front door to facilitate recording and processing of reports Consistent compliance with timeliness and processes required from some partners 	<p>What success looks like</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Live time” recording of referrals and reports and associated decision making on PARIS Processes are lean with work following the most appropriate pathway Good quality referrals, reports and responsiveness of partners facilitating decision making and compliance with Procedures
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Action Ref	Action /Task	Lead	Start	Finish	Milestone 30/06/2021	Milestone 30/09/2021	Status Update
3.1	Facilitated event with Team Managers and Senior Practitioners to review existing practice and approaches, any barriers to compliance and to re-process our approach as part of the wider Vanguard review, ensuring compliance with statutory requirements.	Jenny Frost & Karen Edwards	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Support commissioned to work with Managers and develop a detailed action plan to ensure our systems are effective to support informed decision making and compliance	Action plan in place Review to ensure consistency of compliance with Safeguarding Procedures	Open: On Track Partner agencies have been advised of our refocus and their role in working in partnership to meet prescribed timelines

3.2	A Practice Directive will be issued to staff to ensure that core groups are held within statutory timeframes.	Jenny Frost & Jacque Slee	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Practice Directive issued. New process requires authorisation to take a core group meeting outside of prescribed timeframes.	Audit of compliance	Open: On Track
3.3	Redistribute capacity to our front door to ensure timely processing of reports (referrals) on our IT system	Jenny Frost & Claire Clements	12/05/21	30/09/2021	New process launched	Review to assess impact of new system	Open: On Track

4. . Whilst a small number of practitioners identified that vacancies and sickness created pressure for some teams, overall we found morale was good and practitioners were positive about their experience of working for the local authority.

Lead: Senior Manager: Children's Services

Challenges & Baseline to be addressed

- Social work vacancies not attracting applications
- Reliance agency worker in key Teams
- Volume and complexity of cases impacting on morale and wellbeing in small number of Teams – where there are vacancies and staff sickness
- Development of management experience and consistency of approach to support/supervise staff

What success looks like

- Fully staffed Teams with a reputation that attracts high quality practitioners
- Career and development pathways for staff
- Sufficiency of experienced managers
- Sufficiency of business support staff to ensure that our systems and processes support practitioners
- Framework for promoting staff well-being

Action Ref	Action /Task	Lead	Start	Finish	Milestone 30/06/2021	Milestone 30/09/2021	Status Update
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4.1	Improving Recruitment	Jenny Frost	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Plan to improve recruitment	Implementation of new approaches	Open: Amber
4.1.a	Recruitment to permanent Social Worker posts – develop innovative approach to targeted recruitment including a cohort of newly qualified staff	Jenny Frost	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Event to meet and attract 3 rd years students at Glyndwr	New approach to ‘marketing’ social worker leading to improved applications and recruitment	
4.1.b	Recruitment to permanent Business Support posts	Claire Clements	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	/	New approach to ‘marketing’ leading to improved applications and recruitment	
4.2	Development	Craig Macleod	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Development of pathways	Implementation of new approaches	Open: To be developed
4.2a	Development of CSA role and career development	Allison Lowry-Phillips	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	/	Development pathway agreed with aligned training	
4.2b	Updated first 3 years in Practitioner programme	Allison Lowry-Phillips	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	/	Development pathway agreed with aligned training	
4.3	Retention	Craig Macleod	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Plan to improve retention	Implementation of new approaches	Open: Amber
4.3a	Conduct focus groups with Children’s Social workers to better understand what keeping them in post, what has stopped them from leaving and what would make them leave in future.	Craig Macleod	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	Focus groups	Associated action plan	

4.3b	Embedding good practice from the BSWA document in to our work regionally focused on wellbeing and support.	Allison Lowry-Phillips	30/06/2021	30/09/2021	/	Associated action plan	
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SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Report Subject	Progress update on Llys Yr Iarll and Glan y Morfa
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of the report is to provide members with information relating to two new housing initiatives developed in partnership with Wales and West Housing Association, the Council's Housing Strategy, and the Housing and Assets team. The initiatives are:

- (i) Llys Yr Iarll (Flint) a development consisting of 12 one and two bedroomed self-contained apartments, which became operational in September 2020. The accommodation is for individuals with learning or physical disabilities in a convenient location close to Flint town centre, with relevant support to help them to live independently. It is a partnership between Wales and West Housing and Social Services Disabilities Team, with Wales and West Housing managing the building and Social Services responsible for managing the allocations to the apartments.
- (ii) Glan y Morfa (Connah's Quay) an ex-warden property owned by the Council, has been reinstated into a temporary step up step down shared accommodation for people who have a physical disability and are homeless or temporarily unable to return home, primarily from hospital. The building consists of two individual apartments, with the ground floor apartment suitable for people who are bariatric.

Glan y Morfa became operational in February 2021, and was a joint initiative between Social Services, Housing Strategy and Housing and Assets Team, and funded through an Intermediate Care Fund grant which covered the costs of the refurbishment.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	<p>Members are requested to note the contents of the report and the positive partnerships formed which has resulted in more housing opportunities for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Member also note the wellbeing outcomes for disabled people and the reduced demand on social service.</p>
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	PROGRESS UPDATE FOR LLYS YR IARLL AND GLAN Y MORFA
1.01	<p>Llys Yr Iarll in Flint was opened in September 2020 and features a mix of one and two bed apartments. It provides accommodation for 12 individuals with learning or physical disabilities in a convenient location close to Flint town centre. Llys yr Iarll was four years in the making, with suitable land for a supported housing facility first identified in 2016, the time and care taken to deliver the best outcomes for residents has been crucial.</p> <p>Many different options were discussed as to the design and it was agreed between the local authority and Wales and West Housing that the accommodation needed to provide wheelchair adapted and bariatric rooms on the ground floor, meeting an identified need on Flintshire's Specialist Accommodation Register.</p> <p>The 12 self-contained apartments provide self-contained accommodation for adults with Learning Disabilities, Autism and Physical Disabilities and, where there is an assessed need, individuals receive the appropriate care and support to enable them to live independently. The support is delivered through a commissioned package from the Council or through direct payments (where an individual receives payment to commission their own package of care and support).</p> <p>This approach aids independence, Improves wellbeing outcomes for people and reduce costs and demands on social care services.</p>
1.02	<p>This arrangement is formally managed through a Management Agreement, which incorporates that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All of the apartments are categorised as 'general needs', meaning the rent levels are lower than 'supported living' rents and there is flexibility for the future use of the apartments;• Where support is required, the care and support is bespoke to the individual's need;• Wales & West Housing is the landlord and manages the building. <p>On a day to day basis Wales and West Housing and Social Services Learning Disability Team work closely together to ensure the use of the apartments are maximised. Furthermore, the management agreement has been developed to incorporate the flexibility for people to be allocated to an apartment from the wider disability service.</p>

1.03	<p>Almost a year into opening, Llys yr Iarll is providing residents with disabilities the opportunity to live independently, greater choice of the way they lead their life and an environment where they are valued and treated with respect. For most of the new residents it is their first individual tenancy in supported housing, having moved out of their family home for the first time, or from shared living.</p> <p>With the right home and the right support in place they have flourished, integrating into the community and building a new, independent life. One of the young people explained: “I like the independence” of living at Earl Street. “It was daunting at first, but now it is OK”.</p> <p>The location means people are part of a local community, with one resident saying: “It is good to have my own flat and that I can see my friends, and I also like how I can walk to the castle.”</p> <p>Another resident said that they “found it hard at first but has settled well and enjoys being able to do more things with my friends”.</p> <p>The design of the flats gives people maximum independence in a safe way, with the space they need and the equipment to do as much for themselves as is possible. The young people living there have found jobs nearby with the support of project search in some instance, developed friendships with other residents, learned skills around their homes, and things to do locally.</p> <p>A resident confirmed: “I like living on my own” and also likes being able to access many local amenities, for example; “I can go to the sports centre whenever I want.”</p>
1.04	<p>Glan y Morfa is an ex-warden property owned by the Council in Connah’s Quay, which unfortunately had been empty for several years due to being unsuitable for families with a lack of garden / outside space and its location on a sheltered housing scheme.</p> <p>The Council’s Housing Assets Team worked closely with Social Services to reinstate the building into a transitional, shared accommodation for people who have a disability and are homeless or temporarily unable to return home, due to planned adaptations required in their existing home.</p> <p>This was a joint initiative utilising ICF grant funding to cover the costs of the refurbishment. The building consists of two individual apartments, with the ground floor apartment suitable for people who are bariatric. Glan y Morfa became operational in February 2021.</p>
1.05	<p>Glan y Morfa is a transitional property providing a stepping stone to more permanent premises. People receive an intensive rehabilitation / reablement service which includes people with physical, sensory or learning disabilities who are discharged from hospital but unable to return home immediately, with the intention of:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving wellbeing outcomes for tenants; • Reduce costs and demands on residential care; and • Reduce delayed transfer of care from hospitals.

	The Progression Team in Social Services alongside Micro Care Workers provide the support to the individual during their stay in Glan y Morfa.
1.06	<p>Encouragingly Glan Y Morfa has been operating up to capacity for the past few months, however the two tenants who are currently resident have not yet been able to move-on, even though they are ready to do so, as suitable properties have not yet been identified. The lead Officer for Social Services is managing the situation closely with colleagues from Housing to ensure they are prioritised for adaptations or new accommodation.</p> <p>Additional referrals have been received for placements in Glan y Morfa, but as there isn't any availability at present, the individuals have been considered for alternative options such as short term care. There are still two people on the waiting list and, should a vacancy become available, their circumstances will be reviewed. We are working close with housing Colleagues in developing the future housing needs plan.</p> <p>Ongoing activity continues to raise the profile of the service with relevant teams, for example hospital Social Workers and the Homeless Team in the Council.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Llys Yr Iarll Human Resources: There are implications for human resources, as the team ensures that the apartments remain occupied and where an apartment becomes empty, suitable referrals for the apartment are made promptly. Revenue: there are no implications for the approved revenue budget for this service for either the current financial year or for future financial years. Capital: there are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years</p>
2.02	<p>Glan y Morfa Human Resources: There are implications for human resources, as the team need to ensure the apartments are occupied and people are moved on promptly. Revenue: A Service Level Agreement has been developed which sets out the roles and responsibilities for Housing and Social Services, including the relevant costs. Capital: there are no implications for the approved capital programme for either the current financial year or for future financial years</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Impact Assessment is not required as this is an update report.

3.02	<p>The primary risk for Llys Yr Iarll is vacant apartments incurring costs for the Council, however this has been mitigated through the provisions in the Management Agreement with Wales and West Housing Association, which ensures shared vacancy costs for a specific period allowing Social Services enough time to reallocate.</p> <p>Further mitigation includes the Learning Disabilities Team holding regular Accommodation meetings to review the status of each of the residents and where there is potential for an apartment to become empty. Should it become empty, work is undertaken to identify a new person for that apartment. The Team have a register of people who require accommodation which they can draw upon.</p>
3.03	<p>In terms of Glan y Morfa, the primary risk currently is that people are not able to move-on for various reasons and subsequently the property is not available for those in need of the service. This is being managed through close working between the relevant teams (i.e. Housing and Social Services) to try and ensure the tenants are prioritised for either adaptations or a new home.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Not applicable.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Not applicable.

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Jo Taylor Service Manager - Disability, Progression and Recovery Telephone: 01352 701341 E-mail: jo.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Bariatric – people who are classes as obese as an example anyone over 25 stone.</p>

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SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th September 2021
Report Subject	Annual report on the Social Services Complaints and Compliments Procedure 2020-21
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 and Social Services Complaints Procedure Regulations 2014, requires Local Authorities to maintain a representations and complaints procedure for social services functions (referred to as the “procedure” from now on). The Welsh Government expects each Local Authority to report annually on its operation of the procedure.

There was a significant decrease in complaints made about Adult Social Care this year. Of the 3,876 people who received care and support during 2020-21 from Adult Social Care, 45 individuals complained about the service they received (1%). This compares to 60 complaints last year (2019-20) and 51 complaints during 2018-19.

In recognition of the quality and valued care and support received from Adult Social Care staff, there was a significant increase in the number of compliments recorded this year: 418 compliments were received.

48 complaints were received during the year regarding Children’s Social Services from the total of 1,969 children and families who received care and support (2.4%). This compares to 30 complaints received last year (2019-20) and 55 complaints during 2018-19). This year has seen an increase in the number of complaints received in Children’s Social Services. Last year’s figure of 30 complaints received was low and this year’s 48 complaints are comparable to previous years. It is pleasing to note the increase in compliments about the work of Children’s Services: almost double compared to previous years (303).

All complaints are scrutinised and used to improve both services as part of a ‘lessons learned’ process.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members scrutinise the effectiveness of the complaints procedure with lessons being learnt to improve service provision.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS RECEIVED, THE ISSUES RAISED AND THEIR OUTCOMES
1.01	Feedback in the form of compliments and complaints from service users, their family or carers can highlight where services are working well or where services need changing. Flintshire County Council wants to learn from this feedback and use the experiences to improve services for everyone who uses them.
1.02	As part of our day to day business staff deal with questions, concerns, problems, dissatisfaction, and general feedback which frequently includes praise. We encourage staff to listen to people, to explain decisions, to clarify where misunderstandings have arisen and to take action to put things right where they can. This approach enables us to provide a responsive and effective service. However, we recognise that there will also be complaints that we need to listen to, address and learn from.
1.03	Our assessment is that Social Services has a robust complaints procedure in place. We welcome complaints and want to ensure service users, carers and families are listened to, their views acted upon, and that receive a timely and open response. Staff and Managers work hard to resolve problems as soon as they arise, and advocacy is actively promoted. As part of our wider approach to quality assurance all complaints are reviewed to bring together information about the overall quality of services, to identify trends, and action required including any lessons learned to avoid similar issues arising again.
1.04	<u>Overview of complaints: Adult Social Care</u>
1.05	<p>There was a significant decrease in complaints made about Adult Social Care this year. Of the 3,876 who received care and support during 2020-21 from Adult Social Care, 45 individuals complained about the service they received (1%). This compares to 60 complaints last year (2019-20) and 51 complaints during 2018-19.</p> <p>This decrease in complaints made also needs to be considered against the global COVID pandemic and the unprecedented challenges and demands placed upon public health and social services.</p>

1.06	All complaints received across the Service are scrutinised to see if anything further could have been done to alleviate a complaint being made in the first place: broadly speaking there were no such instances where a complaint could have been avoided. Every effort is made by social work staff and Managers to resolve issues/concerns quickly with service users and families. See Appendix 1 for a summary of complaints grouped into themes.																																																				
1.07	There was an increase in the number of complaints in relation to Older People Services (O.T. and Community Support are included in these numbers) as they are the largest part of Adult Social Care.																																																				
1.08		<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th data-bbox="603 589 772 705">Service</th> <th data-bbox="603 705 772 822">2020-21</th> <th data-bbox="603 822 772 938">2019-20</th> <th data-bbox="603 938 772 1055">2018-19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 705 772 822">Older People Services</td> <td data-bbox="603 705 772 822">22</td> <td data-bbox="603 705 772 822">17</td> <td data-bbox="603 705 772 822">19</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 822 772 938">Older People – Provider</td> <td data-bbox="603 822 772 938">1</td> <td data-bbox="603 822 772 938">12</td> <td data-bbox="603 822 772 938">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 938 772 1104">Learning Disability Community Team</td> <td data-bbox="603 938 772 1104">1</td> <td data-bbox="603 938 772 1104">3</td> <td data-bbox="603 938 772 1104">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1104 772 1247">Learning Disability Provider</td> <td data-bbox="603 1104 772 1247">0</td> <td data-bbox="603 1104 772 1247">0</td> <td data-bbox="603 1104 772 1247">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1247 772 1429">Mental Health and Substance Misuse</td> <td data-bbox="603 1247 772 1429">2</td> <td data-bbox="603 1247 772 1429">3</td> <td data-bbox="603 1247 772 1429">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1429 772 1529">Disability Service</td> <td data-bbox="603 1429 772 1529">3</td> <td data-bbox="603 1429 772 1529">4</td> <td data-bbox="603 1429 772 1529">5</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1529 772 1592">Safeguarding</td> <td data-bbox="603 1529 772 1592">0</td> <td data-bbox="603 1529 772 1592">2</td> <td data-bbox="603 1529 772 1592">0</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1592 772 1736">Other (inc. Business Support etc.)</td> <td data-bbox="603 1592 772 1736">5</td> <td data-bbox="603 1592 772 1736">7</td> <td data-bbox="603 1592 772 1736">2</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1736 772 1901">Registered Residential Provider</td> <td data-bbox="603 1736 772 1901">6</td> <td data-bbox="603 1736 772 1901">7</td> <td data-bbox="603 1736 772 1901">6</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 1901 772 2036">Registered Domiciliary Providers</td> <td data-bbox="603 1901 772 2036">3</td> <td data-bbox="603 1901 772 2036">4</td> <td data-bbox="603 1901 772 2036">4</td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="603 2036 772 2101">Integrated</td> <td data-bbox="603 2036 772 2101">2</td> <td data-bbox="603 2036 772 2101">1</td> <td data-bbox="603 2036 772 2101">1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Service	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	Older People Services	22	17	19	Older People – Provider	1	12	2	Learning Disability Community Team	1	3	6	Learning Disability Provider	0	0	2	Mental Health and Substance Misuse	2	3	4	Disability Service	3	4	5	Safeguarding	0	2	0	Other (inc. Business Support etc.)	5	7	2	Registered Residential Provider	6	7	6	Registered Domiciliary Providers	3	4	4	Integrated	2	1	1			
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Autism Svc.									
Total number of complaints	45	60	51						
1.09	<p>Broadly speaking the complaint themes are broken down into the following areas with the number received in brackets).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dignity (0 / zero complaints) • Communication (4 complaints) • Timeliness of our decisions or actions (3 complaints) • Disagreements with our decisions or actions (8 complaints) • Quality of care (9 complaints) • Charges applied or financial issues (7 complaints) • Hospital discharges (3 complaints) • Process issues (10 complaints) • Lack of advice/assistance (4 complaints) • Staff issues (8 complaints) <p><i>* Note that often one complaint contains more than one theme</i></p>								
1.10	<p>A range of methods are used to resolve complaints including:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. A video conference meeting or telephone conversation with the complainant to discuss their concerns. b. Involving Advocates. c. A written explanation as to the reasons for a decision d. An apology where appropriate e. Action taken to review a decision f. Independent investigation (Stage 2 of the procedure) 								
1.11	<p>The Regulations place a duty to discuss and resolve any complaint within 10 working days and write formally to the complainant confirming the outcomes. There is a 25 working day timescale for Stage 2 complaints.</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Adult Social Care</td> <td>2020-21</td> <td>2019-20</td> <td>2018-19</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Within timescale at Stage 1</td> <td>89%</td> <td>87%</td> <td>98%</td> </tr> </table>	Adult Social Care	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	Within timescale at Stage 1	89%	87%	98%
Adult Social Care	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19						
Within timescale at Stage 1	89%	87%	98%						

1.12	The Service has consistent response times to complaints and always strives to ensure the ten day timescale is met. There are circumstances, however, when a timely response isn't possible. The complainant is kept informed of the progress of their complaint and complaints are often responded to or resolved shortly the ten day timescale.
1.13	<u>Stage 2 (Independent Investigation)</u>
1.14	<p>4 complaints were investigated at Stage 2 of the complaints procedure (Independent Investigation) compared to 3 in the last two years (2019-20 and 2018-19). All complaints that progress to Stage 2 are scrutinised to see if anything further could have been done to resolve the complaint formally at Stage 1: there was no option but to progress these 4 complaints to Stage 2 due to their nature or complexity.</p> <p>See appendix 3 for a summary of the Stage 2 investigations and their outcomes.</p>
1.15	<u>Ombudsman</u>
1.16	<p>The Ombudsman made 3 enquiries regarding Adult Social Care cases this year. All 3 were closed and no action taken following responses from the Local Authority.</p> <p>One complaint carried forward from last year regarding a Privately Registered Residential Provider was upheld. Although appropriate monitoring took place by the Council (assisted by C.I.W. and the Health Board) during an individual's stay, there were some learning opportunities for the Local Authority which it will take forward. The home has since closed.</p>
1.17	<u>Lessons Learned</u>
1.18	<p>Learning from complaints is important and we use the findings and outcomes to inform policy and practice in delivering services (known as the 'lessons learned' process). Examples of action taken on issues raised as a result of complaints to Adult Social Care include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The eligibility criteria for Panel has been reviewed and updated. • Reviewing the journey of referrals for works and the roles of the O.T and the Technical Support Officers working with the Registered Social Landlord throughout the process. • Reviewing how we hold the Responsible Individual for a registered provider even more accountable and ensure they have more of a presence in the home at times of escalating concerns. <p>Responsible Individuals will in future be required to take on board actions identified within Corrective Action Plans rather than the home's management.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring Social Workers actively make checks as to who has

	Power of Attorney/Deputyship for an individual.																																		
1.19	<u>Compliments</u>																																		
1.20	It is pleasing to report that Adult Social Care received 418 compliments during the year. This significant increase shows the high regard in which care and support was delivered during a challenging and demanding time. (285 received last year and 204 received the year before). Compliments are received in the form of cards, letters or emails from service users or their families when they recognise staff have done “over and above” what is expected. See Appendix 4 for a summary of some of the compliments received across service areas.																																		
1.21	<u>Overview of Complaints: Children’s Social Services</u>																																		
1.22	48 complaints were received during the course of the year, an increase compared to last year’s 30 complaints received. Last year’s low number may be viewed as a ‘one off’ as the 48 complaints received this year are in line with previous years (55 complaints in 2018-19 and 49 during 2017-18). Again this number should be considered against the number children and families (1,969) who received care and support from the Service. See appendix 2 for further details about these complaints.																																		
1.23	4 young people complained during the year. 3 young people were supported by their Advocate, the other was offered but did not want the services of an Advocate.																																		
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	<p>As explained earlier, a range of methods are used to resolve complaints. These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. A meeting or conversation with the complainant to discuss their concerns b. Involving Advocates. c. A written explanation as to the reasons for a decision d. An apology where appropriate e. Action taken to review a decision f. Independent investigation (Stage 2 of the procedure) 								
1.24	<p>Of the 48 Stage 1 complaints received, 42 out of 48 complaints were responded to within timescale (88%). The 6 late complaints were responded shortly outside timescale.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="304 763 1370 967"> <thead> <tr> <th>Social Services for Children</th> <th>2020-21</th> <th>2019-20</th> <th>2018-19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Within timescale at Stage 1</td> <td>88%</td> <td>90%</td> <td>93%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Social Services for Children	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19	Within timescale at Stage 1	88%	90%	93%
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1.25	<u>Stage 2 (Independent Investigation)</u>								
1.26	5 complaints proceeded to Stage 2 and independent investigation during the year, an increase compared to last year's 2 complaints. These were complex cases involving difficult family or personal dynamics. A summary of these Stage 2 complaints is described in Appendix 3.								
1.27	<u>Ombudsman</u>								
1.28	5 enquiries were made by the Ombudsman's office during the year. None proceeded to formal investigation: 3 enquiries were closed following resolutions reached, 2 enquiries were not taken further. No formal investigations were opened by the Ombudsman's office last year either.								

1.29	<u>Lessons Learned</u>								
1.30	<p>Among the lessons learned from complaints during the course of the year, they included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Developing a Service protocol for managing unallocated cases and cover for long term sickness absence. • Reviewing the processes for recording incoming calls and messages, records relating to managerial oversight and developing standard letters for members of the public who make referrals. 								
1.31	<u>Compliments</u>								
1.32	<p>Children’s Social Services recorded 303 compliments this year, almost double compared to last year’s 121 compliments. The compliments highlighted the good work of staff during a challenging and demanding year. Compliments are made by families, the Courts and other public bodies. They were in the form of cards, emails, texts or letters. See appendix 4 for a summary of some of the messages received.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>2020-21</th> <th>2019-21</th> <th>2018-19</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social Services for Children</td> <td>303</td> <td>121</td> <td>75</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		2020-21	2019-21	2018-19	Social Services for Children	303	121	75
	2020-21	2019-21	2018-19						
Social Services for Children	303	121	75						

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The Regulations state all Stage 2 complaints involving both Adult and Children’s Social Services are commissioned to Independent Investigators (and an Independent Person for Children’s Social Services as set out in the Children Act, 1989). The cost for Stage 2 complaints for the period 2019-2020 was £12,5552.25. The cost for 2018-19 year was £11,031.02.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	Impact Assessment is not required as this is an update report.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Not applicable.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Summary of complaints categorised into themes (Adult Social Care).

5.02	Appendix 2: Summary of complaints categorised into themes (Children's Social Services).
5.03	Appendix 3: Summary of Stage 2 independent complaint investigations and their outcomes (both Children and Adult Social Services).
5.04	Appendix 4: Summary of compliments received across service areas (both Children and Adult Social Services).

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	'A guide to handling complaints and representations by Local Authority Social Services', August 2014 (Welsh Government).

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Ian Maclaren, Complaints Officer for Social Services</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 702623</p> <p>E-mail: ian.maclaren@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Stage 2 complaint: the Regulations stipulate that where a complainant remains dissatisfied with their response from the Council, consideration must be given to progressing the complaint further in the statutory procedure, i.e. to Stage 2. An independent investigation is commissioned using a shared North Wales 'pool' of retired social care Officers.

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Adult Social Care

Summary of complaints by theme (2020-21)

Complaints relating to dignity

No complaints related to a lack of dignity during the year.

Complaints relating to communication

X complained that a carer whom she had complained about previously had turned up at her mother's home to provide care and support.

We apologised for this oversight and explained the team who organise such rotas advised this was a one off incident and was an oversight on their behalf. We asked for an immediate review of the rota system to ensure this doesn't happen again.

Complaints relating to timeliness of our decisions or actions

X complained about the length of time we were taking to complete an autism assessment with her.

We reiterated our original advice to X that there was a 28 week waiting list for an assessment. Lockdown had impacted on our work and assessments are now undertaken via video conference. In the meantime B.C.U.H.B. professionals sought to assess X, but she hasn't engaged with them or her Advocate. We have tried to engage with X when she has contacted the office but her language and behaviours have been unreasonable.

Complaints relating to disagreements with our decisions or actions

X complained she felt a scapegoat for her mother's package of care being withdrawn and she wasn't being listened to about concerns for her mother.

We explained we had no concerns about mother's care. Instead we brought to X's attention her own behaviour with carers which consistently jeopardises her mother's package of care (4 providers this year). We acknowledged that X is at odds with her family, but her mother has capacity to make a decision. The last provider was concerned of the risk X posed in terms of infecting their own carers and other clients as X is a risk working across a few hospitals.

Complaints relating to charges applied or financial issues

X complained of fraud committed against her vulnerable brother and questioned whether processes had been followed in terms of the matter.

This is the first instance of its kind and we have been working with partners including the Police and the C.I.W. We reassured that only X's brother's Appointee could access his main bank account but spending money was transferred into another account to promote their independence and this was where the concern was raised. X's brother now has a prepaid card so his Appointee can immediately identify any unusual transactions etc. The alleged criminal actions were not a failure of safeguards, but the action of a person intent on committing a crime. A review of practice will take place.

Complaints relating to hospital discharges

X complained about the length of time her mother was waiting for a package of care so she could be discharged from hospital.

Family had originally agreed then declined the offer of a temporary place in a local home. The original care package was passed back to us by the provider as they were unable to meet the increased hours. The usual procedure was followed and searches made by Brokerage but there was limited provision. Family instead agreed to a direct payment so they could arrange their own care.

Complaints relating to the quality of care from a home or carer

X asked why her father was left for such a long time on his own whilst he was talking on the telephone to family with no staff checking on him. X also asked what steps were taken to encourage him to take his medication.

Regarding the telephone conversation, staff could hear father talking and would not interrupt or 'butt' into a conversation unless requested to by him. In terms of medication, we explained we do not just offer medication on the one occasion if refused. Staff will offer medication and attempt to encourage individuals to accept on a number of occasions. This approach will be based on individual circumstances and medication routine. Ultimately though and as stated within the Medication Procedure, it is an individual's right to refuse medicines.

Complaints relating to a lack of support

X complained of our lack of help and support with her brother's mental health situation, and the impact his living with their parents is having upon them.

We were sorry to learn of the family's circumstances and sympathised with X's situation. However, upon checking with the Community Mental Health Team, they confirmed Y was open and closed to them in December 2019. Safeguarding had also reviewed the situation and provided advice at the time. We advised X she needed to contact Y's G.P. to move this matter forward. A referral was also made to

the Housing Duty Officer on Y's behalf with a view to identifying alternative accommodation so he could move from his parents' home and reduce their current stresses and anxieties.

Complaints relating to process issues

X raised her concern about the new electronic diary system the provider was implementing. Although there is a portal that loved ones can access to view information, not everyone is tech-savvy meaning some may have restricted access to important information

The provider agreed to add a Family Communications sheets to Y's file and carers will be instructed to leave brief notes about Y's health and eating etc. The provider regretted the changes weren't communicated to X (who is not next of kin). Contracts Monitoring had also raised their concern with the Provider about the new system prior to the complaint and will monitor the situation as a whole as part of their ongoing work with the Provider.

Complaints relating to staff

X complained about the professionalism of a member of staff during a home visit several months ago which left her feeling anxious.

We reviewed the visit and although there had been a misunderstanding on the day of the visit, we believed the matter had been resolved that day. We would have resolved the matter sooner had X chosen to contact us about the matter at the time. We reassessed husband's needs in the meantime and await the outcome of the recommendations made.

Complaints relating directly to COVID

X complained what authority we had by asking and checking up on him about people visiting his home which he shared with his disabled wife.

We explained we were acting upon concerns raised that people were visiting the property on a daily basis. Given our duty to protect vulnerable people during the COVID crisis, we were following up these concerns with X's wife's best interests in mind. We were also concerned about possible contamination risks posed to carers supporting X's wife who also provide care and support to other vulnerable adults. We were trying to protect X's wife's package of care.

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Children's Social Services

Summary of complaints by theme (2020-21)

Complaints relating to contact

X wanted her contact arrangements reviewed so she could spend more time with her son and it be unsupervised. She asked how care could be 50/50 between her and her ex.

We advised that contact arrangements could be reviewed once our assessment is completed. We can then explore reviewing the existing contact arrangements starting with decreasing the number of sessional workers that are currently present, but the review of contact arrangements is going to take time, shared care even longer.

Complaints relating to communication

X alleged we had shared information about a child protection investigation in an inappropriate way with her children resulting in a breakdown in trust.

We advised X we found no evidence that information was shared inappropriately. Indeed X conceded her daughter had overheard an adult conversation as X had her phone on loudspeaker. We instead sought to alleviate daughter's concerns about our role with the family. We reassured X we wanted nothing more than to continue to work with her to improve the outcomes for both X and their children. The Social Worker will continue as they are.

Complaints relating to a lack of advice or support

X complained about the lack of advice and support she received from us and other services last year.

We reminded X of the advice and support we had offered to her and the children but for her own reasons X had largely chosen to decline. They included: counselling, mentoring, adolescent strategy work, hub, return to school, DART course, outreach via Women's Aid, therapy work with Action for Children, family group meeting and advocacy.

Complaints relating to the timeliness of our decisions or actions

X complained about continuous mistakes made by us culminating in her daughter's residential placement being almost lost.

We believed we had followed process in terms of meeting daughter's social care needs. We explained that placing a child/young person in care has to be very carefully considered and planned from a Local Authority perspective. We have to take a number of additional factors into consideration including the legality of the decision and process, financial implications for Education, Social Services and Health etc. We also have to ensure a placement is regulated, responsive and accountable to the Local Authority who place children there. Subsequently a 42 week placement was identified and agreed at Panel.

Complaints relating to disagreements with our decisions or actions

X complained about a range of issues following our involvement with her children including: lack of support, our view the children were being neglected, non-adherence to the child protection process, records not being shared and their accuracy, and of being discriminated against.

We reminded parents of the joint visit we did with Police earlier in the summer when their home's conditions were deemed unliveable and parents' suggestion the children stay with their grandparents whilst improvements were made. We explained the process around Conference decision making and our belief that procedures had been followed. We did not agree with parents' view they had been discriminated against because of their hoarding disorder.

Complaints relating to staff

X shared his feelings via his advocate that he didn't get on with his Social Worker and that we didn't listen to him

We spoke with X and his Advocate about the way he felt and mediated between X and his Social Worker, which went well. We sought to reassure X he could contact us again if he felt the same and reassured him his views were always listened to.

Complaints relating to process

X complained about the content of documents sent to Court and our decision not to consider her as a kinship carer for her grandchildren.

We explained Court proceedings had ended and changes couldn't now be made. X had been written to separately as to why she had been turned down as a kinship carer and the opportunity to appeal, but we hadn't heard back from her. The children concerned are now going through the adoption process.

Complaints relating to foster placements

X complained that we were planning to move her from her present home where she was settled, to a new home. Her views and wishes weren't being listened to.

We explained that X's present placement was an emergency only and we never considered it to be long term. This was because there were three other children living in the same home and we would be in breach of Regulations if it continued. An alternative placement has been identified that can better meet her longer term needs.

Complaints relating to COVID

X complained why the maternal grandparents were placing his daughter at risk of COVID as they had someone visiting them during Lockdown when daughter visited for contact.

We found the visitor had called round unannounced where X's daughter was staying for and we reminded grandparents of the restrictions in place. In the meantime X has exercised his parental rights and changed contact arrangements so they now take place at his property. Although outside the Court Order, we believe X is taking appropriate measures to promote contact safely and in his daughter's best interests.

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Summary of independent investigations and their outcomes at Stage 2

Social Services for Adults

X complained it had taken 18 months for a bath to be installed in their son's home. The complaint was upheld, an apology was made and there were a number of recommendations we agreed to take forward.

X complained we weren't taking the safeguarding concerns she had about their mother seriously enough. None of the 9 elements to the complaint she made were upheld. There was no evidence to substantiate any of the allegations made and the independent view of the adult children's behaviour in the family was not conducive to their mother's continued improvement or her health and wellbeing.

X complained about the management of their child's case that X believed almost cost their child a place at the residential school of choice. The complaint was not upheld but the investigation made some recommendations that could improve communication between service users and professionals in the future.

X complained of the lack of sufficient hours allocated to meet his wife's needs and that 10 hours in respite had in fact been deducted from her pack of care. This Stage 2 complaint was made late into the period and remains ongoing at the time of writing this report.

Children's Social Services

X complained about our communication with them, X being asked to accept and sign an agreement without fully understanding what was expected, and X not being kept fully involved or formally advised of the closure of the case, and the reasons why. The complaint was upheld overall. We apologised that our communication and responses have not always been sufficient, and not being fully informed of our progress. With new evidence presented during the course of the complaint investigation, an independent Social Worker reviewed the case but found the child concerned was not at risk of significant harm and the claims made by X could not be substantiated.

X complained about the management of their child's case. The parts of the complaint upheld included our failure to follow process, failing to handle situations appropriately and our poor communication with them. We apologised for our shortcomings and there were lessons learned that have been taken forward.

X complained about the overall management of their children's case. However, the Independent Investigator commissioned to review the complaint concluded the issues raised could impact on forthcoming legal proceedings and the matters raised should be addressed at the Final Hearing.

X complained about the work around contact with their child was taking too long and the times identified didn't meet their own requirements. This Stage 2 complaint was made late into the period and remains ongoing at the time of writing this report.

X complained the Social Services involvement with them and our child protection investigation had been 'unnecessary and disproportionate'. This Stage 2 complaint was made late into the period and remains ongoing at the time of writing this report.

Examples of compliments received during 2020-21

Compliments received are shared with all staff via email and a selection are included in the staff bulletin.

Adult Social Services:

Single Point of Access: "I would like to thank the team for everything that you are doing for people like me who are self-isolating and unable to go out. Once again thank you I really appreciate what you are doing you have been really helpful today".

Older People Localities: "I echo my dad's opinion, the service is fantastic that you guys have provided, I'm not sure how I'd have coped without it. A huge thanks to you. You've been so easy to work with, easy to get hold of and what you've said you'll do, you've done. In my book, that's invaluable. I can't tell you what a relief it's been to be dealing with people so obviously kind caring and compassionate"

Hospital Social Work Teams and their Admin.: "I would personally like to give praise to the hospital social work team and the admin staff for all their support through the COVID situation. It must be extremely difficult for them to work from home and I would like to say their professionalism and prompt return of phone calls and assessments has been phenomenal".

O.T.: "I feel like the Queen. Does everybody have this sort of treatment? I have lived in Flintshire all my life and I am so proud of FCC this service is fabulous ,I just want to say thank you".

Reviewing Team: "The 2 extra calls you put in for Mum really helped over the last few months. The Service we have had from you and the Team has been second to none. As a family we are eternally grateful. Thank you for what you have done".

Carelink/Telecare: "Professionals thanked the team for their help and support who have worked together as a team and gone over and above to ensure clients get the equipment fitted needed to help them feel safe at home".

Older People Provider Service:

Llys Gwenffrwd: "First of all can I say how much we appreciate the diligent and resolute work you and your staff are devoting to the residents at this extremely difficult time. A big thank you to all the staff for keeping the residents safe at this difficult time".

Llys Raddington: "This is a big shout out to the Staff at Llys Raddington in Flint. Just video called my Dad and he was all smiles and looking forward to playing Corridor Bingo. We Can't thank you enough for what you do for him and all the other residents #KeyworkersRock".

Plas Yr Ywen: A tenant was overjoyed to be moving in and her family gave the team a card and chocolates to say thanks for everything they have done to get to this point. "It is beautiful , oh my goodness , I don't know how I held the tears back when we walked in . Everyone was so lovely and friendly too!"

Llys Eleanor: "We are experiencing some strange and scary times. Thank you for all the care and compassion you have shown my grandmother. For yesterday, today and tomorrow, there's not enough to say how much we appreciate you. You're all truly amazing!"

Marleyfield home: "Just wanted you to know that I and many others respect how hard you all work and that you are the key workers not just now, but always for the people you care for."

Croes Atti: "Just to say a huge thank you for all that you are doing during these difficult times. You are all amazing and it's a great comfort to all of the relatives to know how well everyone is looked after. Everytime we clap on our doorstep at 8pm Thursdays, we send you our thanks."

Llys Jasmine: "Thank you so much for all the wonderful care you gave to mum. We are all so grateful for your patience and understanding, care and compassion. I don't know how we would have managed without you".

Ty Trefynnon: "Just wanted to say that the staff of Ty Treffynnon were great, so organised and happy. The home was playing Christmas songs and really made the residents' day a joy".

Homecare: "I would like it be known that the team have without exception always provided exceptional care, and compassion to my Dad, taking the time to understand his needs and ensure his whole person is cared for. They treat him with dignity, respect, patience and good humour. His mood visibly lightens when he knows the team are attending."

Reablement: "The professionalism, care and support X has received from the Reablement Team has been outstanding. They have got X at ease in their company making it a pleasure instead of feeling embarrassed. I would like to thank them as X's wife for the care and support during the dark days."

Learning Disability Community Team: "You have been a huge help to us with the ladies and for that I'll always be grateful. You stuck with us even though things looked very precarious at the beginning but I'm so grateful that you trusted us to do what we said we would. I only wish for the benefit of the people we support they could all be like you".

Learning Disability Provider Service: "'X's mental & physical health continue to noticeably improve as a result of the Service. We know this is really good for X but in an oddly pleasing way it's also really obvious how much she wants to get back to you, often within an hour of a visit or trip out. As a family we could not be more

impressed by, or happy with, the care provided. There are so many examples I could provide”.

Child to Adult Team: A parent gave their heartfelt feedback about the team’s support during Lockdown that included: “If it wasn’t for you I wouldn’t have got through this. You have made my life easier during lockdown, sometimes with actions or sometimes just a phone call. When I heard that schools were closing from March to Sept, it was awful. You were there to talk me through this and got (child) into the school hub which wasn’t easy as they turned him down twice due to him shielding”.

Physical Disability Service: “X asked me to thank you personally for all you have done for her and her family. She knows it was difficult and you have paid a price yourself in stress and anguish. I'd like to thank you too. I don't have the words anymore to express how dark a time it has been. It's going take time to recover.”

Mental Health and Substance Team: Next Steps were thanked by a young service user who shared their touching and personal story about ups and downs with school, college and Lockdown, and how the Service had helped them through it all: “I would like to thank Next Steps for all the support and guidance that they have shown me over the years. I would not most certainly not be an undergraduate at University today without them.”

Integrated Autism Service: “I was met with nothing but care, kindness and support and it honestly meant the world to me because I really struggle to believe that I deserve any of it. You have been kind, honest, caring, funny and so supportive. You have helped me to begin to understand that there is a place for everyone and I will always carry with me your quote, “I’m not weird, I’m limited edition!”

N.E.W.C.E.S.: “...compliment you on the system in place for accessing P.P.E. Their request was turned around in 20 minutes this morning and staff at NEWCES are always really pleasant and helpful. So thank you for our supplies this week. The work you are doing is really appreciated and is making a difference.”

Safeguarding: The Team were thanked by a local hospital. They said how sensible and consistent the safeguarding response is in Flintshire compared with some of the places they’ve worked in England. He said that the experience of the team shows through.

Financial Assessment and Charging Team: “I would just like thank you so much for your help in what has been a most frustrating issue I have had to deal with. Knowing at least you understand my problem I probably had the first night’s sleep in weeks”.

Contracts Monitoring Team: There has been a great sense of collaboration and support from all professionals during this time. We have found the connection with the different departments within the sector has been overwhelming and the support and trust that has been afforded to us has been gratefully received. We would like to

thank you for being so supportive to us during this time and allowing us to develop the coping strategies to support our clients through this pandemic.”

Children’s Social Services:

Protection and Support, and Resources:

“I would just like to inform you both that i would like to praise you, you have been absolutely amazing due to my circumstances!!! Honestly couldn’t fault you, you’ve rang everyday to make sure i’m ok, you’ve got the process going to help me with my living accommodation. Thank you all so much for all your support and help!!”.

“I just want to say a big thank you for everything you have done for our family. you have supported us so much and I’m always very grateful for your home visit because you have helped me and have also given me the motivation I needed to sort our home life out which is so much more better and happier too. You are all such an amazing team who help so many families in need and thank you very much for all your support with school too. You have definitely been the support we all needed and i needed. Thank you so so much for everything you have done for our family, you’ve really been amazing xxx.”.

Business Support Team: “We have been having to rely on admin staff quite a lot this last few weeks for one reason or another and they have all been great, nothing has been too much trouble for them, even in the difficult situation we find ourselves in at the moment, nothing has changed they are all as helpful as they always are”

Safeguarding: “The way the conferences have been arranged and chaired has also been effective, being both very well organised and managed. I was wondering how it would work out (during the crisis), but it has been very effective, so that praise is also note-worthy to yourselves as Chairs and to your Admin support.”

Early Years and Family Support, and Family Information Service

“Mum stated that she was so happy to be receiving support as her sister had also received support and said how fantastic the service had been. Mum stated she felt that the support that a family worker could give would be very beneficial. Mum said she felt like we understood her situation and was very happy to start the process of working together.”

“I just want to say thank you for all the hard work you continue to do for your Flintshire childminders. During this difficult time for us, you have continued to provide us with information as soon as you get it regarding our 30 hour funding payments / what we can and can’t do / and the new C-CAS funding. The application processes have been made simple to complete for the parents, and all three of my families were approved without delay. So just a little thank you from me for all the support you continue to provide”.