

Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)

Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To:

Councillors: Helen Brown, Mel Buckley, Teresa Carberry, Tina Claydon, Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Gladys Healey, Andy Hughes, Dennis Hutchinson, Dave Mackie, Gina Maddison, Allan Marshall, Hilary McGuill, Ryan McKeown, Debbie Owen, Andrew Parkhurst, Michelle Perfect, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson, Jason Shallcross and Linda Thomas

Co-opted Members:

Lynn Bartlett and Wendy White

24 June 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING
JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE
OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
THURSDAY, 30 JUNE, 2022 at 2.00 PM

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum
Democratic Services Manager

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. The live streaming will stop when any confidential items are considered. 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 **APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR**

Purpose: To appoint a Chair for the meeting.

2 **APOLOGIES**

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

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

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

4 **WELSH GOVERNMENT (WG) PROGRAMMES SUMMER OF FUN AND WINTER OF WELL-BEING** (Pages 5 - 58)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the Welsh Government (WG) Programmes - Summer of Fun and Winter of Well-being.

5 **SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION** (Pages 59 - 64)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To provide an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education portfolio.

6 **PLACEMENT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY (CHILDREN)** (Pages 65 - 136)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on the Placement Commissioning Strategy.

7 **ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL (WALES) ACT 2018** (Pages 137 - 142)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To provide an update on the Authority's implementation plan and any national/regional updates.

8 **LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE** (Pages 143 - 150)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To provide an update on the provision for Looked After Children.

9 **PERIOD DIGNITY UPDATE** (Pages 151 - 156)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

Purpose: To provide Members with an update on the Council's support for Period Dignity.

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>



JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Welsh Government (WG) Programmes - Winter of Wellbeing and Summer of Fun
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

During the spring of 2021 the Children’s Commissioner for Wales initiated a discussion with Welsh Government and local authorities about the need to make provision for children and young people to have access to fun activities to try and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on their emotional, social and physical wellbeing. Welsh Government made funding available to local authorities and other national organisations to deliver a ‘Summer of Fun’.

This was successfully delivered in Flintshire alongside our play schemes and reported to Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2021. The success of the scheme, which was independently evaluated, resulted in Welsh Government providing more funding for a ‘Winter of Wellbeing programme over the winter of 2021-2022 and has recently confirmed additional funding for another ‘Summer of Fun’ this year.

This report provides an overview of the Council’s delivery of these programmes and the Welsh Government evaluation report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members are reassured that children and young people in Flintshire have benefitted from Welsh Government funding through the Winter of Wellbeing Programme.
2	Members are satisfied with the arrangements for the Summer of Fun programme for 2022.

3	Members acknowledge the feedback from the national evaluation of these Welsh Government programmes which provide evidence of their positive impact on children and young people.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NATIONAL EVALUATION OF THE SUMMER OF FUN PROGRAMME 2021
1.01	Members of the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee received a report in December 2021 which provided an overview of the successful provision of a ‘Summer of Fun’ – a Welsh Government funded initiative designed to provide children and young people with positive and fun activities during the summer of 2021. In Flintshire, this was delivered alongside our very successful and long standing summer play scheme offer. This report is attached at Appendix 1 and the committee welcomed the opportunity to receive further updates in the future.
1.02	<p>Initiated by the Children’s Commissioner for Wales and funded by Welsh Government, the focus of the Summer of Fun was on developing interactive, creative and play-based initiatives for children and young people from the age of 0-25 that were free and accessible, available in Welsh, English and bilingually. There was a focus on children who were already disadvantaged before the pandemic, including disabled children, children of black, Asian, ethnic minorities, children who are ‘looked after’ and those on the edge of care, as well as children who had been effected by Covid-19 themselves due to bereavement, trauma and illness.</p> <p>The Council, supported by some of its key partners, delivered a successful programme of activities under the ‘Summer of Fun’ banner between July and September 2021.</p>
1.03	<p>Welsh Government commissioned an evaluation of the ‘Summer of Fun’ programme by an independent company, Ecorys. The evaluation aims were to assess the programme; how it was implemented across local authorities; perceived outcomes for its participants and to gather learning to inform future policy and practice within Welsh Government.</p> <p>At the time of the report being presented to the Education, Youth and Culture Scrutiny Committee in December, the national evaluation report on the Summer of Fun Programme 2021 was not available. It has since been published with conclusions and recommendations for Welsh Government and providers.</p>
1.04	The evaluation evidence was gathered from qualitative interviews with 15 senior stakeholders, 19 local authority Summer of Fun leads, and 27 children and young people across Wales. A breadth of views were gained from 969 programme participants and 249 providers, who completed an online survey. Management information was analysed from 409 providers. A virtual round table event involved discussion of early findings with local

	<p>authority leads and providers and co-development of the conclusions and recommendations.</p> <p>Senior officers from Flintshire County Council contributed to this evaluation process through the provision of management information and attendance at national review events.</p>
1.05	<p>The evaluation report for the 'Summer of Fun' 2021 is included at Appendix 2.</p> <p>The reports reflects the positive engagement of children and young people across Wales, which mirrored the experiences and feedback of our children, young people and their families locally. It also acknowledged the challenges that providers had managed to overcome, particularly the need to pull together a comprehensive offer in very limited timescales.</p> <p>The success of our programme in Flintshire was a reflection of the commitment of our staff and the well-established partnership working with other local providers.</p> <p>The outcome of the positive evaluation was that Welsh Government offered further funding for the provision of a 'Winter of Wellbeing' programme.</p>
	EXPLAINING THE WINTER OF WELLBEING PROGRAMME 2021-22
1.06	<p>In late October 2021 the Council received confirmation that it would receive additional funding to provide a 'Winter of Wellbeing' programme totalling £302,753. There was also an additional element of capital funding of £152,000 to improve resources to support children's play by supporting local Play Sufficiency Assessments. Individual schools and funded early years settings also received a funding allocation under the same banner of 'Winter of Wellbeing' to be able to offer enrichment activities to their pupils.</p>
1.07	<p>As with the previous Summer of Fun programme, the priority was to support the wellbeing of children and young people by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing the space and time for play, supporting their fun and the opportunity to express themselves through play; • community based interactive, creative and play-based initiatives for all ages; • providing opportunities to develop and build their social skills by providing opportunities to engage with friends and peers; • creating space and opportunity for free play and physical activity.
1.08	<p>Building on the experiences from the 'Summer of Fun' and consolidating partnership working with a number of key agencies, the Council was able to deliver a wide-ranging programme in both English and Welsh across the age range of 0 to 25 years.</p> <p>These included :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Residential adventurous activities at the Urdd Centre at Glan Llyn and at the ROWEN centre in Conwy, building skills and confidence,

including health and wellbeing training and a first aid certificate as well as improving Welsh language skills.

- Arts and crafts sessions within ten Flintshire youth clubs, involving over 100 young people, focusing on creative skills as well as mental wellbeing. The funding also supported the membership fees of the Urdd enabling young people to submit their creations into the Arts and Crafts competition of the Urdd Eisteddfod recently held in Denbigh.
- Music/song writing sessions for young people from our Welsh medium secondary school, Ysgol Maes Garmon, to enable them to reflect on their experiences of the pandemic and improve their coping strategies. This has resulted in a Welsh song titled 'Dal i Ddod' (Still to Come) being composed, recorded and published on You Tube. It was formally launched at the Urdd Eisteddfod and Welsh Government celebrated it by having it playing in their official pavilion during the week of the Eisteddfod. A link to the song is included under the List of Accessible Background Documents below.
- 45 health and wellbeing packs being provided to care leavers and other vulnerable young people.
- Play sessions in schools and communities e.g. Kicks for Kids to promote physical and mental health.
- Cultural, sports and leisure activities to families who have sought sanctuary in Flintshire.
- Traditional countryside and farming skills for youngsters aged 18-25 at risk of disengaging from education, employment and training to promote confidence, resilience, perseverance, social skills and collaboration.
- Pathway to Work Programme to increase employability skills through fun activities delivered by Aura. 24 young people gained valuable qualifications in First Aid, Safeguarding, Dragon Sports, Sports Leaders and positively experienced the world of work.
- Emotional Coaching and Intuitive Thinking programmes designed to improve personal decision making.
- 500 book bags distributed through Aura Libraries to promote reading and literacy skills – an English and a Welsh Version of 'The boy, the mole, the fox and the horse' by Charlie Mackesy. School visits to libraries supported.
- Gym sessions in Aura facilities to promote physical health and wellbeing – 360 pupils accessed gym passes.
- Holiday sports clubs – 100 children's places supported
- Football camps – 400 spaces provided
- Skate Parks – 500 free passes provided
- Soft play – 300 free passes provided
- Ten Pin Bowling – 100 hours' worth of lane times
- Family Swimming Pods – 35 families
- Swimming Lessons – 50 blocks of swimming lessons to teens
- Forest Schools Sessions – 40 families with under 5s
- A range of different activities focussed on individuals at risk of becoming NEET (not in employment, training or education) and at risk of substance misuse or anti-social behaviour e.g. fishing lessons, graffiti workshops, Lego project, photography, cookery.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Theatre projects – workshops, theatre groups, music lessons in the community, creative wellbeing packs. • Welsh Language parent and toddler groups - 22 families supported. • Spring Half Term Holiday Play sessions in a registered childcare setting – 45 children supported. <p>This list is not exhaustive but demonstrates the range of activities that were offered, particularly for the ‘harder to reach’ group of older teens and the increased provision for activities through the medium of Welsh.</p>
1.09	The Winter of Wellbeing programme has also been independently evaluated but the publication of the report has been delayed until the autumn.
	EXPLAINING THE ‘SUMMER OF FUN’ 2022
1.10	In March 2022, Welsh Government confirmed that funding would be made available again to deliver a ‘Summer of Fun’ programme for 2022. Flintshire’s allocation is £276,559.
1.11	<p>This package of support aims to build on the success of the previous schemes and to continue important support for the wellbeing of children and young people aged 0 – 25 years.</p> <p>The guidance issued to all providers requires us to ensure:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a universal entitlement to free at the point of entry play, sporting and cultural activities for all children and young people aged 0-25 to help towards reducing the cost of living for families across Wales; • further support for the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of participating children and young people aged 0-25, enabling them to better engage with learning and to reengage with wider society; and • further sustainability for the providers operating in this space, to move towards a more sustainable footing both financially and in terms of what they can offer to children, young people and their families.
1.12	<p>In their bids, providers should :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure there is an inclusive and balanced programme of age appropriate activities, easily accessible by all children and young people who want to take part; • Provide equality of access for children and young people – this may mean tailoring or increasing some services to address inherent disadvantages; • Offer a range of play, sporting, cultural and other activities for children and young people in a variety of settings; • Make provision available in Welsh or English. Bilingual provision may be appropriate in some circumstances, but should not be used in place of specific and dedicated Welsh medium provision.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wherever possible, activities should be held in accessible locations that can be accessed on foot or by public transport.
1.13	<p>The well-established team of officers and key partners have reconvened to develop the summer offer for 2022 within the funding envelope and plans have been submitted to Welsh Government which have been approved.</p> <p>There has been significant learning over the delivery of the last two programmes to understand the range of activities which are valued by children, young people and their families and many will be repeated again this summer as they have proven to be successful and rewarding.</p> <p>The offer will encompass all ages and consolidate our partnership working with key organisations such as Theatr Clwyd, Aura Libraries & Leisure, NEWCIS, Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam as well as joint working across Council departments including Education & Youth, Children’s Services and the Early Years/Childcare Team.</p> <p>The Summer of Fun offer will also enhance our traditional summer play scheme programme delivered in conjunction with Town and Community Councils. The funding will support children with disabilities to participate in their local play scheme by the provision of ‘buddies’ and will also have a stronger element of Welsh language provision after the positive feedback received from children about having the opportunity to use their Welsh language skills informally at play scheme sessions.</p> <p>The Summer of Fun programme will be advertised through the Council’s social media channels, website and Family Information Service. Partners will also use their usual communication channels and Welsh Government have provided a media support pack.</p> <p>The tag line is: Haf o Hwyl / Summer of Fun.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>There are no additional financial resource implications in relation to this report as the Summer of Fun is a fully grant funded Welsh Government programme.</p> <p>There has been, however, a significant commitment of officers’ time in addition to their usual roles and responsibilities to develop and deliver the Summer of Fun programme.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	N/A

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Welsh Government have undertaken consultation and evaluation activities in relation to the 'Summer of Fun' and 'Winter of Wellbeing' programmes.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – EY&C Scrutiny Report Summer of Fun Dec 2021 Appendix 2 – Summer of Fun 2021 Evaluation Report Appendix 3 – Welsh Government Guidelines for Summer of Fun

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Dal i Ddod Song – https://youtu.be/Y3lnoWA_Gq0

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Claire Homard, Chief Officer (Education & Youth) Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Summer of Fun – a Welsh Government initiative to provide a range of activities for children and young people aged 0-25 during the summer holiday period 2021. Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam - an independent community organisation working to increase and strengthen the use of Welsh locally. Menter Iaith organise community events, host activities for children and families, and help businesses and services who wish to use more Welsh.

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EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 2 December 2021
Report Subject	Flintshire Summer Playschemes and Summer of Fun
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The summer holiday period in Flintshire was particularly busy this year with two key programmes of activity to support children and young people.

2021 was the 26th year for the successful delivery of the Flintshire County Summer Playscheme programme. There were 55 summer playscheme site locations in towns and villages across the county. There were a total of 2,779 individual child registrations and a total recorded attendance for the 6 weeks of the playschemes of 14,019 children and young people.

In June 2021 Welsh Government launched its 'Summer of Fun' programme which was jointly developed with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, (CCfW) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Welsh Government made £5m available across Wales and Flintshire received an allocation of £218,000 to deliver a 'Summer of Fun' for children and young people from the age of 0 to 25 to help to alleviate some of the negative impacts of the necessary restrictions in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

This report provide details of how both programmes – Summer Playschemes and the Summer of Fun were delivered in Flintshire.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members are reassured that children and young people in Flintshire had the opportunity to access and benefit from a range of suitable activities over the summer holidays through the Flintshire Playschemes and Summer of Fun programme.
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2	Members acknowledge the significant effort by council officers and officers in key partner organisations in delivering these successful programmes, particularly within challenging timescales.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FLINTSHIRE SUMMER PLAYSCHMES AND SUMMER OF FUN
1.01	<p>FLINTSHIRE COUNTY SUMMER PLAYSCHME 2021</p> <p>2021 was the 26th year for the successful delivery of the Flintshire County Summer Playscheme programme. There were 55 summer playscheme site locations in towns and villages across the county (See Appendix 4). There were 2,779 child registrations and a total recorded attendance for the 6 weeks of 14,019 children and young people.</p> <p>To avoid any inequalities as a result of any limited access to digital devices, there were opportunities for families to register manually for the play schemes as well as online. Information about the playschemes were widely advertised (See Appendix 1).</p>
1.02	<p>For 2021, there was an even greater demand for localised play provision, largely due to the impact of lockdown and appreciation for the opportunities for their children to play and have fun.</p> <p>Summer playschemes were delivered from Monday 19th July through to Friday 27th August, 2021 for a duration of 3, 4, 5 or 6 weeks depending on the level of finance available locally. The ‘County offer’ was for a minimum of 3 weeks to allow us to employ temporary staff for at least 4 weeks duration, including a full training week in advance (Training programme attached – Appendix 2).</p> <p>The recruitment commenced in early March 2021, with a full team in place in time for all checks to be completed, including full reference and DBS checks. A total of 85 play workers were recruited in total with the majority of the team generally aged between 18 - 25 years and all were Flintshire residents.</p>
1.03	<p>Summer playschemes were delivered in partnership with 28 local town and community councils. The local town and community councils are very supportive of children’s play. The local town and community councils identify the local area need for play during the summer and also advise on appropriate and preferred locations.</p>
1.04	<p>All summer playschemes in Flintshire are funded jointly by local Town and Community Councils and Welsh Government, via the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant and Families First Grant.</p>

1.05	Playschemes across the county were delivered for children and young people aged 5 -12 years. Older children up to the ages of 17 with disabilities attended the Flintshire Buddy scheme.
1.06	<p>Flintshire Buddy Scheme 2021</p> <p>2021 was the 16th year for the delivery of the Flintshire Buddy scheme. The Buddy Scheme for 2021 was delivered in partnership and funded via the Welsh Government Families First grant, the Flintshire Disability Cohort and the Welsh Government Summer of Fun Grant, and there were 38 children attending this year who needed a higher level of support. This funding enables children and young people who have disabilities or specific needs to have equal access to their local playscheme.</p> <p>Children and young people were supported as necessary, with the majority receiving 1 -1 support with the same team member for continuity for the duration of the scheme. Children and young people attended their own local scheme. The Buddy Scheme is a rights-based service. All children and young people have a right to play out locally with their peers. Our Buddy Team makes that happen. We go to where the children and young people are.</p> <p>The relationship and communication with the family, the team, the child or young person is paramount to the scheme’s success. Our team buddies made ‘garden visits’ before the scheme to get to know their individual children and family whilst working safely with Covid regulations.</p> <p>There were a number of children who are ‘looked after’ (i.e. the Council fulfils the role of corporate parent) and children living in refuges who were also registered to the buddy scheme for 2021. This provided greater reassurance for parents and carers to encourage their children to join the scheme and was greatly appreciated.</p> <p>The age range to access the scheme for these children and young people was extended to 17 years. All playschemes are inclusive and staff are fully trained.</p>
1.07	<p>COVID 19 Management at Playscheme Sites</p> <p>The Play Development Team planned and managed control systems to minimise risk of Covid-19 to ensure the safe delivery of play sessions. There was no evidence of any infections stemming from children attending summer playschemes. All of the measures that were in place provided an effective control on site and enabled playschemes to be delivered throughout the summer. No playschemes were cancelled.</p> <p>The measures on site included :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Crucially - information in advance of the summer was circulated to parents; carers; all schools; town and community councils via the FCC website and Flintshire Family Information Service. This information enabled a co-ordinated approach to safety and risk management. • Pre-registration for all children at all sites – including a Covid-19 ‘declaration’ (Attached - Appendix 1).

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management of numbers – site restrictions were in place to allow no more than 30 children at each session. Where sites were ‘over-subscribed’ parents and carers were contacted via the registers and were asked to provide their preferred dates. This reduced the risk of greater numbers than our Covid-19 risk assessments would allow. • Team and Visitor Covid-19 declarations were completed before any work or visit. • Parents and carers were very supportive and appreciative of the control measures on site for Covid-19 and that we could offer a service in the circumstances because of this good practice. • Team members were advised to reduce their external contacts for the duration of the scheme. All understood the importance of ‘getting this right’ for children. • Compulsory hand gels were placed at entrances to site locations for all entering and leaving. • All equipment was thoroughly cleaned and wiped down before each use. • Team members changed their clothing between morning and afternoon sites. • Lateral flow tests were undertaken on Sunday and Wednesday evenings by all 85 team members. Results were uploaded to the Play Development Officer and the NHS. All completed – no positive cases. • The Play Development Officer, and the Chief Officer for Education and Youth worked closely with the TTP team to identify and manage any concerns. • Training was provided to all team members with regard to ‘Emergency Covid-19’ procedures on site i.e. what to do if cases are reported by parents as children are at play or if a child becomes unwell. • Emergency Covid-19 packs were available at all sites. • Training, advice and support was provided by FCC Health and Safety Officers. • The Health and Safety Advisor for Education and Youth inspected playschemes during the summer with regard to all risk management issues and particularly with regard to Covid-19 controls being implemented.
1.08	<p>Overall, across the 2,799 pupils registered, there were 4 reported Covid-19 cases via the TTP team during the 6 weeks. These children obviously withdrew from the playscheme and observed the appropriate period of isolation.</p> <p>The parents of other children in the scheme were advised that a positive case had been identified but that they did not have to isolate their children from playscheme because being outdoors, the risk of transmission was significantly reduced. It was for parents and carers to decide whether or not to withdraw.</p> <p>We were made aware early on in the scheme that children were isolating in some areas of the county following school infections at the end of the</p>

	school year. Attendances were minimal in those areas as expected but returned to normal expected levels following the end of self-isolation.
1.09	<p>Welsh Language Summer Playschemes 2021</p> <p>A total of 120 children were registered to the Welsh Language playschemes held for 6 weeks at Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton (32 children), and Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold (88 children).</p>
1.10	<p>During the summer of 2021 Flintshire Play Development had two Welsh first language sites for those children who preferred to play through the medium of Welsh. These Welsh playschemes offered the opportunity for children who attend Welsh medium schools the opportunity to use their Welsh during the summer holidays. A high percentage of these children come from households where there is no Welsh spoken so to be able to play and use their Welsh language during the school holidays is very important for them. Parents commented regularly during the playschemes on how important this is for their children to keep up their Welsh. The obvious outcome was how happy and social the children were with each other and how much it helped their wellbeing. To be able to spend time with their peers and to have a safe space to do this and to use their Welsh is invaluable.</p>
1.11	<p>As part of the Council's focus on its Welsh in Education Plan and encouraging all children to use Welsh more regularly, the Welsh Language Officer undertook an informal audit across the play work team to identify those which had Welsh language skills and this revealed that 14 of them identified as a Welsh speaker and virtually all the rest described themselves as a Welsh learner.</p> <p>All play workers in the English schemes were encouraged to spontaneously use every day Welsh phrases and the response from the children was very positive with many reports that children were naturally moving between the two languages using phrases they were familiar with in schools. Developing more bilingualism during future play schemes will be actively encouraged.</p>
1.12	<p>SUMMER OF FUN 2021</p>
1.13	<p>Since March 2020 when the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of Covid-19 to be a global pandemic, there has been a growing recognition of some of the adverse impacts of the necessary restrictions imposed on the population and particularly on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.</p>
1.14	<p>As in other parts of Wales, Flintshire children and young people had spent a large part of the last year at home, often online and only mixing with parents, siblings or small groups of friends. The research evidence on the impact of the pandemic on children and young people references consistent themes which include the impacts on socialisation, communication, emotional and mental health, low levels of physical activity, increased sedentary behaviour, healthy eating and obesity.</p>

1.15	As a response, the Children’s Commissioner for Wales (CCfW) began to promote a vision that every child (0-25yrs) should be ‘entitled’ to a week of fun activities within the school summer holiday period 2021. Many partners, organisations and agencies had been in touch with the CCfW expressing an interest in offering their services and resources to put on activities for children and young people during the school summer holiday period in order to try and mitigate some of these negative impacts and experiences.
1.16	This concept of a ‘Summer of Fun’ was jointly explored by the CCfW, Welsh Government (WG) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Welsh Government made £5m available across Wales and Flintshire received an allocation of £218,000. This notification was received in late June with a window for delivery of activity to be from 1 st July to 30 th September 2021. Whilst the funding was very welcome, there was very little time for the Council to create a delivery plan within the terms and conditions of the grant and get providers on board.
1.17	The focus of the Summer of Fun was on developing interactive, creative and play-based initiatives for children and young people from the age of 0-25 that were free and accessible. Councils were directed to particularly focus on children who were already disadvantaged before the pandemic, including disabled children, children of black, Asian, ethnic minorities, children who are ‘looked after’ and those on the edge of care. Children who have been effected by Covid themselves due to bereavement, trauma and illness and children aged 7 and under were also a priority. The grant also directed organisations to make provision for activities in English, Welsh and bilingually. The Summer of Fun was intended to be an inclusive programme of activities, easily accessible by all children and young people who wanted to take part.
1.18	<p>The terms and conditions of the funding encouraged provision through as many different council services or stakeholder organisations as possible. The response in Flintshire was co-ordinated by the Chief Officer, Education and Youth, supported by the Senior Manager for Children’s Services. A working group of officers from relevant services across the Council and key strategic partners was quickly established. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children’s Services • Flying Start Team • Childcare Team • Play Team • Integrated Youth Provision including Estyn Llaw and Forest Schools • Youth Justice Services • Drug and Alcohol Team (SORTED) • Progression Team • Integrated Transport Unit • Aura Libraries and Leisure • Theatr Clwyd • Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam <p>This working group was also very ably supported by a Planning and Development Officer from Children’s Services and by an Accountancy Technician from Corporate Finance.</p>

1.19	<p>Within a matter of weeks officers from each service area or organisation developed a range of activities suitable to meet the needs of children and young people within the remit of the grant funding. Some activities were open to any child or young person whilst others were specifically targeted at those who needed particular support. Funding was directed to supporting childcare settings to offer additional sessions for the youngest children during the holidays and particular attention was also paid to the young people at the upper end of the age range to offer activities that would interest them and which they could access more independently. A number of activities across the age ranges were delivered through the medium of Welsh through the commissioning of Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam and wherever possible through the expertise within council teams.</p> <p>The range of activities over the summer holidays, which ran alongside Flintshire's Summer Playschemes and the Aura Summer Programme included :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Summer Reading Challenge • Football Camp • Junior Holiday Camp • Fit, Fed and Read • Forest School Sessions • Pet First Aid • Fun cooking activities • Swimming passes • Gym Passes • Day Bus Tickets • Theatre Clwyd Summer Hub • Horse Riding • Hair and Beauty activities • Graffiti Vinyl • Crafts • Climbing Wall • Go Karting • Guided Family Walks • Story sessions and family picnics • Gardening activities • Treasure Hunts • Puppet and Magic Shows
1.20	<p>The anecdotal feedback from officers and partners who worked with children, young people and their families is that the Summer of Fun programme was very successful, gave them lots of opportunities to engage in a range of fun activities which boosted their physical health and emotional wellbeing and also gave them valuable opportunities to interact with others.</p> <p>Through the joint working approach across the Council, new collaborations and partnerships have emerged which have been hugely beneficial e.g. Integrated Youth Provision's Forest School delivered to families entitled to support from the Flying Start programme. These will now be further developed to enhance future provision for children and families.</p>

1.21	<p>The biggest challenge, which has been fed back to Welsh Government and acknowledged, was although the funding was welcomed, the late notification of the funding was hugely problematic as it gave very little time for planning and organising activities. Flintshire's approach was to build on a number of planned summer activities as well as creating new opportunities for groups not normally supported during the summer holidays.</p> <p>This programme could not have been delivered without the enthusiasm and creativity of all the officers involved who developed it in a matter of weeks, in addition to their usual work streams and who gave up/delayed their own annual leave to prioritise it. This programme truly reflected the effective joint working across the Council and its key external partners.</p>
1.22	<p>Feedback from the Summer of Fun programme is now being collated by Welsh Government into a formal evaluation. Each delivery partner had to complete an online survey form to record the number of children and young people participating and to identify those particularly from the more vulnerable groups identified as the priority for support as well as the range of activities offered. A few individual officers have also been interviewed by the external company appointed by Welsh Government to evaluate the programme to share their experience of planning and delivery and the impact on the participants.</p> <p>A Wales wide evaluation report will be available in the new year and it is hoped that we will also receive a Flintshire specific report where all of the information has been collated to be able to share with members later in the year at the joint committee meeting with Health and Social Care.</p>
1.23	<p>Welsh Government have now committed to continuing funding for this kind of support until the end of the financial year and have allocated further money to the Council to deliver a 'Winter of Wellbeing' programme. This is now being planned by the working group, building on the success of the Summer of Fun. An update report will be presented at the joint committee with Health and Social Care later next year.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>There are no additional resource implications in relation to this report as the activity for both the Summer Playschemes and the Summer of Fun were fully grant funded.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	N/A

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Engagement/informal consultation around the provision for summer playschemes are undertaken with Town and Community Councils on an annual basis.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 – Flintshire Summer Programme 2021 Appendix 2 – Playscheme 2021 Team Training Appendix 3 – Connah’s Quay Central Park – Risk Assessment 2021 Appendix 4 - Site List 2021

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/A

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Claire Homard, Chief Officer (Education & Youth) Telephone: 01352 704190 E-mail: claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Summer of Fun – a Welsh Government initiative to provide a range of activities for children and young people aged 0-25 during the summer holiday period 2021. Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam - an independent community organisation working to increase and strengthen the use of Welsh locally. Menter Iaith organise community events, host activities for children and families, and help businesses and services who wish to use more Welsh.

Appendix 1

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY SUMMER PROGRAMME 2021

SUMMER OF FUN!

Flintshire Summer Playschemes will be delivered in partnership with local town and community councils, Flintshire Families Disability Service and Welsh Government.

All summer playschemes will be delivered in line with Welsh Government Guidelines for the Delivery of play services.

We will manage the playschemes safely for all children registered and for our team on site.

The majority of our team are returning staff from playscheme 2020. They will have undertaken a full enhanced DBS check and will have completed a full and comprehensive training programme, including risk management and health and safety in the workplace (Including COVID 19 controls), First aid; child protection and safeguarding; disability awareness and the delivery of playwork in compliance with COVID 19 measures.

All games and activities will be organised in compliance with Welsh Government Guidelines for the safe delivery of open access playschemes.

Consideration has been given to the space available and ratios of staff and children on site. A full risk-assessment of each play space and all possible activities will have been undertaken by the team before the summer.

Pre-registration will be essential for all site locations. This contains a COVID 19 declaration, essential before any visits.

DATES: Monday 19th July – Friday 27th August (Monday to Friday)

DURATION: The number of weeks at sites can vary. The 2021 site list will indicate whether sites are to be delivered during mornings (10:30 am to 12:30 pm), or afternoons (2:00 pm -4:00 pm)

NO COST: All sessions will be free of charge

AGES: 5 – 12 YEARS – ALL SITES

EXCEPT 5 -11 YEARS – CONNAHS QUAY, CENTRAL PARK ONLY

The play sessions will be delivered by the Flintshire Play Development Team.

There will be a maximum permitted of 30 children per session. (Except at Connah's Quay Central Park where ratios are different).

We will advise by e mail if any sites are 'oversubscribed' for the summer. In this instance we will contact you to request your 'preferred dates'.

Paper Copies of Parent/Carer Consent forms.

Full information and parent/carers consent forms can be provided.

Contact: Janet.Roberts2@flintshire.gov.uk 01352 704415

Flintshire Buddy Scheme – Support for Children with Disabilities to attend their local playscheme site with support

The Flintshire Buddy scheme as in previous years, will be an integral part of the summer playscheme providing 1- 1 support for children with disabilities. Parents and Carers of children attending the Buddy scheme will need to complete their site registration online and complete additional forms for the Buddy Scheme.

Please contact 01352 704415 or Janet.Roberts2@flintshire.gov.uk for further information.

Could you please transfer the authorisation access for Etarmis from myself to Matt Hayes, Senior Manager, Integrated Youth Provision – for approving the adjustments received from Mick Holt and Janet A Roberts.

Appendix 3

RISK ASSESSMENT FORM RA1 (CF/01/01)



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Directorate	Education and Youth	Activity (Brief Description)	Play		
Service	Play Development	People at Risk	Children and Employees		
Location	Connah's Quay, Central Park	Date	30/07/20	Review Date	12/07/2021
Assessor	Janet Roberts Romaine Halfpenny-Williams	Issue Number	2		

Item No	Hazard (include effects)	RISK RATING (without controls) High/Medium/ Low	Existing Control Measures	RISK RATING (with existing controls) High/Medium/ Low
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1	Spread of COVID-19	High	Public Health Wales guidance must be followed at all times. The control measures required for COVID-19 are as per standard hygiene practices with enhanced attention such as frequency.	Low
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		<p>Risk assessment excludes 'at risk' categories and potential for infection occurring outside the sites.</p> <p>Training provided by FCC Health and Safety team and supervisory team for all team members before the scheme start, including specific training for COVID protocols and procedures</p> <p>There is an emergency contingency plan for when a child is identified with Covid symptoms or it is reported that they are Covid positive whilst they are at playscheme</p> <p>This is part of the summer playscheme team training provided by OH&S and Play Development Supervisors</p> <p>Emergency packs (Including aprons/goggles/gloves/masks) are held by each team for a COVID emergency</p> <p>The child is isolated but supervised and kept calm diverted with activities until parents or carers are able to collect from site</p> <p>EMERGENCY CONTACT DETAILS FOR FAMILIES ARE KEPT ON SITE AT ALL TIMES</p> <p>This would be reported to TPP team and OH&S</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sanitising station setup for cleaning hands and equipment before, during and after the session. 	<p>Low</p> <p>Low</p>
--	--	--	-----------------------

2	<p>Cleaning and sanitising activities - All users - if areas are not regularly cleaned and sanitised, then there is a risk of the virus spreading.</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Enhanced cleaning of high contact areas arranged throughout the session. ● Wash hands following any cleaning. ● Where cleaning products are used wear appropriate PPE (e.g. vinyl or nitrile gloves/aprons) ● Children cannot leave the facility unless collected by an agreed adult or prior arrangements have been made. ● All staff/volunteers/supervisors to have valid DBS clearance. ● Toilets – to be sanitised after every use –one in one out – gels on entrance and exit ● Under 8’s to use Community Centre toilets ● Over 8’s to use scout hut toilets 	
3	<p>Person-to-person transmission - All users - (If care is not taken to reduce the impact or likelihood of person to person transmission, then the virus could spread to others).</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Parents and children on arrival to be encouraged to maintain social distancing. ● Staff and volunteers to be made aware of COVID-19 symptoms and to remain alert for symptoms in others - new continuous cough, fever or high temperature. ● Activities developed and coordinated to minimise close contact and following the national guidance in Coronavirus (COVID-19); implementing social distancing. ● Social hygiene skills (e.g. using/disposal of tissues and face touching) to be reinforced throughout the day. ● Activities including play and eating should all take place at 2 metres apart. ● All users to wash hands upon entry, regularly throughout the session and to follow good hygiene practices when not in the session. ● Hand sanitiser and disinfectant wipes provide for each site. ● Water bottles and food to not be shared. Water bottled to be labelled with individual names. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Sharing of objects to be minimised wherever possible. ● Communal objects/surfaces to be cleaned using standard cleaning methods but on a more frequent basis. 	Low

5	<p>Persons becoming symptomatic while at the hub - All users - (If arrangements are not made swiftly once a child displays symptoms at the site, then this could result in the virus spreading to all those in attendance).</p>	High	<p style="text-align: center;">Refer to separate risk assessment for this section.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Make sure that children are sensible and socially distance when entering and exiting the site ● Main Access point near car park - make children aware of the busy car park ● Open access site with no fence. Busy main road running alongside the site ● Supervision for children crossing the road ● Divert all play away from the road ● Actively remind children about the road hazards - for example if a ball is kicked off site onto the road, child is not to retrieve the ball (playworker will retrieve it). 	Low
6	<p>Symptomatic children entering the site</p>	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● There is a steep bank at the main access point of the site, walk down with caution - Make children aware of the hazard and dangers of running down the bank. - divert play away if necessary ● Especially careful on wet surfaces as the falling risk is greater. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Woodland area alongside bank, trees branches and nettles all pose a risk - Divert play away from the area - Remind children of the hazards ● Soft ground / potholes towards the back end of the site. - divert play / cone off if necessary ● As part of the daily risk assessment sheets (morning and afternoon tick sheets) check for any dangerous hazards, like fallen branches and potholes that could cause harm. 	Low

<p>7</p>	<p>Play Activities/Sport</p> <p>Access / egress point</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Car park - risk of collision with oncoming traffic • Busy road on the back of the site <p>Terrain on site</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Steep bank running down main access point - trip / fall hazard when entering site 	<p>Medium</p> <p>Medium</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concrete surface by the scouts hut, slips / trips and falls - remind children of dangers, divert play if necessary (especially in wet conditions). • Don't allow children to swing / climb on the metal railings as they pose a significant falling hazard. 	
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9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Woodland area running alongside the steep bank• Soft ground / potholes towards back of site (opposite end to the scout hut). <p>Area around scouts hut</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Concrete surface• Metal rails	Medium		
10		Medium		

	Ultimate Risk		Ultimate Existing Risk	
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FURTHER ACTION REQUIRED TO REDUCE RISK TO ACCEPTABLE LEVEL

Item No	Further action necessary to control risk	Action by	Date Completed	Residual Risk (with further controls) High/Medium/Low

		Ultimate Residual Risk		

Assessor(s) Signature(s) ROMI HALFPENNY-WILLIAMS	Managers Name: JANET ROBERTS	Managers Signature: JANET ROBERTS
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Other relevant Risk Assessments:	
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RISK RANKING MATRIX (RISK RANKING = SEVERITY X LIKELIHOOD)

High (3) Death, Major injury or work related illness, permanent harm or disability	Se	3	6	9
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	ve rit y			
Medium (2) Injuries or work related illness where people are unable to undertake their normal work for more than 3 days; semi-permanent harm or injury		2	4	6
Low(1) All other minor injuries – first aid treatment with no permanent harm – minor cuts and bruises		1	2	3
		Likelihood		
		Low (1) Where harm is unlikely to occur under normal circumstances. Low expectation of occurrence. - And – there is full compliance with relevant health and safety legislation	Medium (2) Where harm is likely to occur in time. - Or - Exposure to the hazard exists intermittently or hazardous event occurs occasionally - And / Or – not fully compliant with relevant health and safety legislation	High (3) Where the hazard is likely to occur imminently or in the very short term. - Or - Exposure is permanent or occurs frequently. - Or - Much evidence of previous harm - And / Or –

			Major non-compliances with relevant health and safety legislation
OUTCOME / REQUIRED ACTION (Severity x Likelihood “score”)			
	HIGH (6-9)	MEDIUM (3-4)	LOW (1-2)
	Immediate action is required to control the risk before any further activity.	Work may proceed if additional control measures are implemented within strict timescales. These measures must be proportionate to the potential consequences.	Work can proceed – no significant action is required other than monitoring that things do not change and that existing measures are being monitored and maintained.

Appendix 4

Flintshire County Summer Playscheme, 2021.

In Partnership with Local Town and Community Councils, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, Flintshire Families Disability Service and Welsh Government

Playschemes commences across the county from Monday 19th July
(Monday to Friday)

4 week playschemes will run from the 19th July until Friday, 13th August

5 week playschemes will run from the 19th July until Friday, 20th August

6 week playschemes will run from Monday the 19th July until Friday 27th August

All sessions are free of charge for children aged 5 to 12 years delivered by the Flintshire Play Development Team

All Covid 19 controls will be in place on site, including gel stations on arrival.

Pre-registration (Online) will be essential for all site locations.

There will be a maximum permitted of 30 children per session (TBC).

Parent/carer information is available via the Flintshire County Council website. The Flintshire Buddy scheme as in previous years is an integral part of this provision providing 1- 1 support for children with disabilities.

For further details please contact:-

Janet Roberts, Flintshire Play Development Officer

Mob. 07518602614 e:mailJanet.Roberts2@flintshire.gov.uk

Morning Playscheme Sites - 10:30 am -12:30 pm

Number of weeks for delivery in brackets

Bagillt, Victoria Road Rec Ground. (6)
Broughton, Brookes Avenue Playing Field (3)
Buckley Elfed Field (4)
Buckley, Westwood CP School TBC (4)
Carmel, Ysgol Bro Carmel (TBC) (5)
Connah's Quay, Central Park (6) (5 -11 years)
Flint Mountain, Play Area (4)
Flint, Albert Avenue Rec Ground. (4)
Greenfield, Community Centre (Ground) (6)
Holywell, Pen y Maes Rec. Ground. (6)
Leeswood, Phoenix Park (6)
Mold, Parkfields Play Area (4)
Mold, Ysgol Maes Garmon (Welsh Medium) (6)
Mynydd Isa, Wat's Dyke Play Area (4)
Northop Hall, Rec Ground (4)
Sealand Manor, Rec Ground (6)
Trelawnyd Recreation Ground (5)

Afternoon Playscheme Sites - 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm

(Number of weeks in brackets)

Bagillt, Ysgol Merllyn (6)
Buckley, Common (4)
Buckley, Drury Park (4)
Flint, Coed Onn (4)
Flint, Cornist Park (4)
Flint, Dee Cottages (4)
Garden City, Welsh Road (6)
Holway, Meadowbank Rec Ground (6)
Holywell, Penrhyn Play Area (6)

Mold, Gas Lane Play Area (4)

New Brighton, Football Field (4)

Shotton, 33 Club Field (5)

Shotton, Ysgol Croes Atti, Monday/Tuesday (Welsh Medium) (6)

Treuddyn, Ysgol Terrig, Wednesday/Thursday/Friday (Welsh Medium) (6)

Whitford, Glebe Field. (5)

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Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

PUBLICATION

Summer of Fun evaluation (summary)

A process evaluation of a scheme supporting the wellbeing of children and young people (aged 0 to 25)

First published: 16 December 2021

Last updated: 16 December 2021

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[Findings](#)

[Conclusions and recommendations](#)

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Background, aims and methodology

On 16 June 2021, the Welsh Government announced a £5 million Summer of Fun for children and young people aged 0 to 25 to play and participate in leisure, recreational, sporting and cultural activities to help rebuild their social and emotional skills in both Welsh and English. The fund was awarded to local authorities to provide access to activities to support the social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of all children and young people. That, in turn, is integral to supporting them in reengaging with learning and education, enabling all children and young people to reach their full potential and critical in the recovery of the COVID-19 pandemic. The programme was delivered from 01 July to 31 September 2021.

Ecorys delivered a mixed methods process evaluation of the SoF programme. The evaluation aims were to assess the programme; how it was implemented across local authorities; perceived outcomes for its participants and gather learning to inform future policy and practice.

Rich and varied insights were gathered from qualitative interviews with 15 senior stakeholders, 19 local authority SoF leads, and 27 children and young people. A

breadth of views were gained from 969 programme participants and 249 providers, who completed an online survey. Management information was analysed from 409 providers. A virtual round table event involved discussion of early findings with local authority leads and providers and co-development of the conclusions and recommendations.

Findings

Programme reach

Over 67,500 children and young people were reached by the SoF programme 2021 across Wales. Almost half of all providers offered family activities, alongside children and young person facing activities. Reach was better among younger age groups, with 70% of participants aged 5 to 11. Only 7% of participants were aged 16 to 25. Most local authorities struggled to know how to best engage older age group.

Local authority leads sought to develop inclusive programmes. Reach by ethnicity was in alignment with the national population, with 9% of programme participants being Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic. Across participants, 5% had additional learning needs (ALN) and disabled people accounted for 3%. Welsh medium provision was available: 43% of SoF sessions were delivered with bilingual aspects and 11% of sessions were delivered solely in Welsh medium. Local authority leads in some areas reported a lack of specialist provision for those with additional needs and Welsh language.

Local authority programme implementation

Local authorities reported that the funding offered additionality to business-as-usual provision. Local authorities broadly adopted one of three SoF delivery models. Most local authorities had both open access and targeted provision (Model 1). Some local authorities had a largely open access (Model 2) or entirely targeted programme (Model 3). Local authority approaches depended on local

interpretation of the guidance, team capacity, and whether they had an existing summer offer to build on.

A key challenge was the short timeframe between funding announcement and programme start date. As a result, most local authorities started delivery in late July 2021. Most local authorities favoured working with existing approved providers for efficiency but there was evidence of some local authorities appointing new providers. Local authorities leads explained that there was limited time and capacity to quality assure delivery. Providers received differing levels of guidance, support, and training depending on the local authority they worked with.

Participant motivations and enablers to attend

Parents, children and young people reported three key motivators to attend SoF: firstly, as it was free-to-access; secondly, the chance to try a variety of activities that they otherwise may not had access to; and finally, the opportunity to spend time out of the home and meet people. Additionally, children and young people were motivated to attend by the prospect of having fun. The friendliness of provider staff further encouraged attendance. Providers believed the key barriers for participant attendance to SoF activities related to transport, parent/carer related reasons and concerns about COVID-19 or self-isolation.

Programme outcomes and benefits

Almost all (99%) of the children and young people who completed the participant survey reported that they had fun attending SoF activities. Programme participants were supported to re-engage with community provision and develop a range of personal and social skills following the lockdowns. It also supported the physical and mental wellbeing of participants.

Providers benefited from much-needed financial investment following lockdowns. They developed relationships with new children and young people. Local authority leads believed that communities felt positive about the investment in them. A potential unintended outcome is that SoF has raised local

community expectations of having a similar programme next year.

Conclusions and recommendations

There was widespread support for the programme across national and local stakeholders. The SoF programme provided children and young people with a range of opportunities to play, socialise and have fun.

Senior stakeholders, local authorities and children and young people recommended sustained funding to support COVID-19 recovery of children and young people over the longer-term. Local authority leads saw potential to build on their learning from the 2021 SoF programme. Similarly, providers wanted to build on the relationships they had formed with children and young people.

Recommendations emerging from the research to enhance future provision included:

- retain the focus on fun and play
- longer-term investment in year round provision for children and young people
- the inclusion of food provision or light refreshments
- allow sufficient time to effectively plan and set-up programmes
- strengthen support for local authorities
 - clarification on use funding for childcare, open access or targeted provision
 - spaces for local authorities to share learning and good practice
 - support for programme marketing and branding
 - streamline reporting and evaluation processes.
- refine provider appointment, support and delivery
 - help national providers to better support the programme
 - strengthening quality assurance of delivery
 - space for parents at provision
- enhance reach and inclusivity for 16 to 25 year olds, children with ALN and disabilities and of Welsh medium provision

Contact details

Report Authors: Valdeep Gill, Erica Bertolotto, Helen Bickley, Natasha Burnley, Gabriela Freitas and Katharine Mckenna

Views expressed in this report are those of the researchers and not necessarily those of the Welsh Government

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Social research number: 81/2021

Digital ISBN: 978-1-80391-471-8



About this document

This document is a copy of the web page [Summer of Fun evaluation \(summary\)](#) downloaded.

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The Summer of Fun 2022

1 July 2022 – 30 September 2022

To support children and young people's recovery from the impact of the Coronavirus pandemic

Guidance for stakeholders

May 2022

This is non-statutory guidance from the Welsh Government to support the approach to utilising the Summer of Fun funding allocation. Queries about this guidance should be directed to: PlayOpportunities@gov.wales

1. Foreword

In 2021, the Welsh Government provided £5m in funding to support children and young people across Wales with access to a range of free activities and opportunities to support their wellbeing and development through a Summer of Fun. Building on this, we went on to provide £20m towards a Winter of Wellbeing, which took place from October 2021 and ended in March 2022.

Both the Summer of Fun 2021 and Winter of Wellbeing programmes formed a core part of our response to the Coronavirus pandemic. They aimed to support the social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of our children and young people and allow them to start to recover from the events of the past two years and re-engage with the wider society.

On 17 March 2022, the Deputy Minister for Social Services announced £7 million additional funding to support a further Summer of Fun in 2022.

This increased package of support aims to build on the success of the previous schemes and to continue important support for the wellbeing of children and young people aged 0 – 25 years. Engagement with play, sporting and cultural activities will enable children and young people to continue their recovery from the restrictions of the last two years, with the added benefit of supporting families with the costs of activities over the summer holidays.

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3. Core Purpose

Aims

- 3.1 The Summer of Fun 2022 aims to provide all children and young people aged 0 – 25 in Wales with the opportunity to access free activities aimed at supporting their development and wellbeing. Ministers have agreed it should build on the Summer of Fun 2021 and the Winter of Wellbeing to provide:

- a universal entitlement to free at the point of entry play, sporting and cultural activities for all children and young people aged 0-25 to help towards reducing the cost of living for families across Wales;
 - further supporting the physical, emotional and social wellbeing of participating children and young people aged 0-25, enabling them to better engage with learning and to reengage with wider society; and
 - further sustainability for the providers operating in this space, to move towards a more sustainable footing both financially and in terms of what they can offer to children, young people and their families.
- 3.2 To achieve this, we are providing funding to our stakeholders to deliver opportunities and activities that are:
- free at the point of entry
 - easily accessible and hosted within local communities
 - age appropriate
 - support equality of access for children and young people of all abilities
 - available and provided in Welsh or English. Bilingual provision should not be used in place of specific and dedicated Welsh medium provision
 - support digital enablement
 - delivered according to Welsh Government [COVID-19 Advice guidance](#)
- 3.3 We believe access to activities such as these is critical in the recovery from Covid-19 and will support the social, emotional, physical and mental wellbeing of all children and young people, and that in turn is integral to supporting them in reengaging with learning and education, enabling all children and young people to reach their full potential.

Outcomes

- 3.4 Our desired outcome from this package of wellbeing support is to make a direct contribution to our Programme for Government commitments and wellbeing goals. We want to work with our partners and stakeholders to contribute towards the following wellbeing objectives and related commitments:
- 3.5 Push forward towards a million Welsh speakers, and enable our tourism, sports and arts industries to thrive by:
- widening access to our heritage, harnessing the creativity and sporting ability of people in Wales, and ensuring that these industries have the support they need to maintain their proper place on the world stage.
 - promoting equal access to sports and support young and talented athletes and grassroots clubs.
 - promote the Welsh language and strengthen Welsh language education provision.
- 3.6 Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people by:
- increasing sustainability for the providers operating in this space and supporting local supply chains. With the funding from this scheme, we want to support them in resetting their services and moving to a more

sustainable footing, both financially and in terms of what they can offer to children, young people and their families.

- making sure no child or young person in Wales is left behind after the coronavirus pandemic by providing funding for their wellbeing.

3.7 Celebrate diversity and move to eliminate inequality in all of its forms by:

- continuing our strong partnership with voluntary organisations.
- encouraging inclusion to ensure that activities / opportunities / provision can be accessed with support which is mindful of the diverse communities and cultures.

3.8 Make our cities, towns and villages even better places in which to live and work by:

- continuing to support our partners in local government and invest in local public services and local democracy – the glue that binds communities together.
- supporting Wales' long tradition of volunteering, local charities, faith groups and community organisations, and ensure that communities can thrive as centres of social exchange, leisure, sport and culture.

Audience

3.9 The Summer of Fun is an opportunity for all children and young people from 0 to 25 years. However, providers may want to consider how they can reach those groups who have experienced the greatest impacts and provide inclusivity within this age range. A different approach to providing accessible activities and communication may be required.

3.10 Any funding allocations or referral to schemes should not result in any stigmatisation of children and young people.

4. Local Authority - Approach to Funding

4.1 A [Smart Survey proposal form](#) must be completed and returned by **30 May 2022**. Please email the PlayOpportunities@gov.wales to inform the Play Policy team that you have completed a proposal form.

You should complete one form to cover your whole programme of activities for the Summer of Fun 2022. Some of the questions in this form will ask you to enter information about the individual initiatives or organisations that you intend to fund. The questions in this form allow you to enter information about 20 separate initiatives – if you plan to fund more than 20 separate initiatives, please complete an additional form.

Funding Expectations

- 4.2 Funding will be allocated to the 22 Local Authorities in Wales to deliver the Summer of Fun programme in their authority area. The allocation is calculated using the sum of the three main schools Indicator Based Assessments (IBAs) from the local government settlement funding formula. The formula is intended to reflect variations in the need to spend which might be expected if all authorities responded in a similar way to the demand for services in their area. This is the mechanism for distributing Revenue Support Grant (RSG)¹ to unitary authority and police forces. It has also been used by the Welsh Government to allocate other grants. Local Authorities have experience of funding being allocated using this method and are involved in the development of the formula.
- 4.3 Local Authorities are expected to make the best use of the funding allocated to maximise the outcomes for children and young people. Local Authorities who feel they are not able to spend their full allocation should discuss this with the Welsh Government Play Policy team as soon as possible so that possible solutions can be sought, including allocation of any underspends to another local authority. There is no obligation to accept this additional funding.

Programme of Activities

- 4.4 The primary purpose of the funding is to provide free activities aimed at supporting the development and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-25. The activities must take place between 1 July and 30 September 2022. The Summer of Fun is intended to be an inclusive programme of activities, easily accessible by all children and young people who want to take part.
- 4.5 Some considerations are outlined below:
- Ensure there is an inclusive and balanced programme of age appropriate activities, easily accessible by all children and young people who want to take part;
 - Provide equality of access for children and young people – this may mean tailoring or increasing some services to address inherent disadvantages;
 - Offer a range of play, sporting, cultural and other activities for children and young people in a variety of settings;
 - Provision should be available and provided in Welsh or English. Bilingual provision may be appropriate in some circumstances, but should not be used in place of specific and dedicated Welsh medium provision.
 - Wherever possible, activities should be held in accessible locations that can be accessed on foot or by public transport.

What can be funded

- 4.6 Funding can be used to complement or extend the support you provide in your local authority and should not replace any existing funding. The funding can be used for provision on weekdays or weekends, held during the day or in the evenings.

¹ <https://gov.wales/local-government-revenue-and-capital-settlement-2021-2022>

Points to consider when organising activities:

- 4.7 Support pre-existing providers and programmes to put on more activities, or run their planned programmes over longer periods offering more opportunities to benefit children and young people.
- 4.8 Enable pre-existing providers to hire more staff with the relevant qualifications and training, increasing the numbers of children and young people they can support if regulations allow.
- 4.9 Invest in additional spaces at pre-existing programmes to enable more children and young people to benefit.
- 4.10 Boost volunteer-led activities, or those provided by grass-roots organisations, including opportunities for children and young people to engage in volunteering activities and accreditation.
- 4.11 Work together with other local authorities to procure services to arrange and fund regional activities.
- 4.12 The funding must link to your Play Sufficiency Action plans and be reported on in your 2022-23 Progress on Action plans, which are due to be submitted to the Welsh Government on 1 June 2023.
- 4.13 Funding can be used for the provision of healthy meals, snacks and drinks (it does not need to be a hot meal) which must be provided in line with the [Welsh Government's food and nutrition guidance for childcare providers](#).

Points to consider when making food available

- Food must be provided by a food provider registered to provide food with their local authority and hold relevant Food Hygiene certificates, or providers must hold such certificates themselves.
- Providers must obtain consent to provide food to children, ideally, as part of their registration process. This consent must include information on allergy risks and treatment plans. Risk assessments relating to food provision must be carried out.

Note: Currently Free School Meals (FSM) are available to vulnerable children and young people in Wales during the school day and during school holidays until the end of the Summer holiday 2022. Food can also be provided via the Summer of Fun programme at this time, at the discretion of local authorities.

The offer of food must be for all participants, not just the vulnerable, to avoid any stigmatisation.

- 4.14 You are able to support national organisations funded under part 5 of this guidance to run your activities as long as they are separate from the activities that are directly funded and no double funding takes place.

- 4.15 In order to ensure that children attending childcare or out of school holiday provision in vulnerable communities are not disadvantaged, you are able to offer:
- funding to cover travel and additional staffing costs to enable children and young people to attend Summer of Fun provision or low cost day trips to local amenities.
 - You are able to offer funding to enable childcare and out of school providers to participate in and celebrate National Playday which takes place on **3 August 2022**.
- 4.16 You must claim all project related costs, for example: additional cleaning, PPE etc.
- 4.17 Up to 10% administration costs can be claimed to cover general administration costs, translation costs and staff costs.

What cannot be funded?

- 4.18 The funding should not be used for junk food, sweets and unhealthy treats, either as part of meals or snacks or as part of activities (for example as prizes for games).
- 4.19 The funding should not be used to fund childcare or places in out of school holiday provision, unless the children are deemed as vulnerable by your local authority.

Points to note

- 4.20 Be aware of what activities other organisations might also be planning in your community and how you can complement their programme (or vice versa) and ensure you don't duplicate or compete.
- 4.21 Consider the providers available in your local area and how you can support them to develop and grow following the pandemic.

Collaborative working

- 4.22 Local authorities should inform social prescribing services about their plans as this will help signpost people to activities.
- 4.23 Local authorities should consider what teams within their authority they will need to include in planning and delivering the Summer of Fun. Consider Children's Services, Families First, Youth Engagement, Youth Workers, Flying Start, Youth Offending Services, childcare, play and others.
- 4.24 Specifically, local authorities should work collaboratively to ensure arrangements are in place to support vulnerable children to access activities.

These may be children with a social worker, or known to Child Services and partner organisations.

4.25 In order to assist you with cross policy working, we will provide you with a list of key contacts we would encourage you to work closely with. The list will only include contacts for your local authority area. This will include:

- your local County Voluntary Council (CVC);
- Local authority transport co-ordinating officers re the purchase of bus passes to enable young people to attend provision; □ Local authority community cohesion officers;
- Local authority people seeking sanctuary contacts.

5 National Organisations - Approach to Funding

5.1 A [Smart Survey proposal form](#) must be completed and returned by **30 May 2022**. Please email the PlayOpportunities@gov.wales mailbox to inform the Play Policy team that you have completed a proposal form.

You should complete one form to cover your whole programme of activities for the Summer of Fun 2022. Some of the questions in this form will ask you to enter information about the individual initiatives or organisations that you intend to fund. The questions in this form allow you to enter information about 20 separate initiatives – if you plan to fund more than 20 separate initiatives, please complete an additional form.

Funding Expectations

5.2 Funding will be allocated to the national organisations on a direct award basis and for delivery of the activities agreed as part of the smart survey proposal form. Organisations are expected to make the best use of the funding allocated to maximise the outcomes for children and young people. Any Organisation who feels they are not able to spend their full allocation should discuss this with the Welsh Government Play Policy team as soon as possible so that possible solutions can be sought, including allocation of any underspends to another Organisation. There is no obligation to accept this additional funding.

Programme of Activities

5.3 The primary purpose of the funding is to provide free activities aimed at supporting the development and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-25. The activities must take place between 1 July and 30 September 2022. The Summer of Fun is intended to be an inclusive programme of activities, easily accessible by all children and young people who want to take part.

Points to consider when organising activities:

5.4 Provide equality of access for children and young people – this may mean tailoring or increasing some services to address inherent disadvantages.

5.5 Provision should be available and provided in Welsh or English. Bilingual provision may be appropriate in some circumstances, but should not be used in place of specific and dedicated Welsh medium provision.

5.6 Wherever possible activities should be held in accessible locations that can be accessed on foot or by public transport.

What can be funded

5.7 As with the funding for local authorities, the primary purpose of the funding is to provide free activities aimed at supporting the development and wellbeing of children and young people aged 0-25. The activities must take place between 1 July and 30 September 2022.

5.8 This could include:

- establishing new activities, or running activities in new areas;
- creating more spaces within existing programmes;
- providing activities currently only available through the medium of English to be available through the medium of Welsh;
- allowing existing programmes to run for longer periods;
- providing activities for an age group or within another area where it wasn't possible before due to funding barriers.

5.9 Funding can be used to complement or extend existing provision, but only where additional benefits can be clearly demonstrated. This should not duplicate or replace existing funding.

5.10 Funding can be used for the provision of healthy meals, snacks and drinks (it does not need to be a hot meal) which must be provided in line with the [Welsh Government's food and nutrition guidance for childcare providers](#).

Points to consider when making food available

- Food must be provided by a food provider registered to provide food with their local authority and hold relevant Food Hygiene certificates, or providers must hold such certificates themselves.
- Providers must obtain consent to provide food to children, ideally, as part of their registration process. This consent must include information on allergy risks and treatment plans. Risk assessments relating to food provision must be carried out.

Note: Currently Free School Meals (FSM) are available to vulnerable children and young people in Wales during the school day and during school holidays until the end of the Summer holiday 2022. Food can also be provided via the Summer of Fun programme at this time, at the discretion of the provider.

The offer of food must be for all participants, not just the vulnerable, to avoid any stigmatisation.

5.11 In order to ensure that children attending childcare or out of school holiday provision in vulnerable communities are not disadvantaged, you are able to offer:

- funding to cover travel and additional staffing costs to enable children and young people to attend Summer of Fun provision or low cost day trips to local amenities.

5.12 You must claim all project related costs, for example: additional cleaning, PPE etc.

What cannot be funded?

5.13 The funding should not be used for junk food, sweets and unhealthy treats, either as part of meals or snacks or as part of activities (for example as prizes for games).

6 Marketing and Communications:

6.1 All funding derived from the Summer of Fun will be branded as “The Summer of Fun” or “Haf o Hwyl” in Welsh.

6.2 The Welsh Government communications lead Sioned Glyn – email: Sioned.Glyn@gov.wales, will continue to liaise with the local authority communications leads. We will ask the successful national organisations to provide us with a communications contact.

6.3 All creative assets developed to promote your activities will adhere to the Welsh language standards and be branded The Summer of Fun. A media pack (to follow) will be distributed to all communications leads. Documents will be available to you via Objective Connect.

7 Monitoring and Evaluation:

7.1 By receiving this funding, organisations are committing to providing monitoring information to inform the management and evaluation of this programme, which the Welsh Government will carry out internally.

7.2 A Smart Survey form (to follow) will need to be completed.

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JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Safeguarding in Education
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education portfolio.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members note the content of the safeguarding in education report and provide their feedback to officers on the strategies used by the Portfolio to effectively discharge its duties.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SAFEGUARDING IN EDUCATION REPORT
1.01	<p>Safeguarding reporting arrangements and lines of accountability within the Portfolio</p> <p>The Education and Youth Portfolio has continued to embed its Safeguarding Panel to maintain a strategic overview of the Portfolio's responsibilities in relation to safeguarding.</p>

	<p>The panel meets each half term, chaired by the Chief Education Officer. It includes manager representatives from School Improvement, Inclusion and Progression, Youth Justice and Children’s Services.</p> <p>Key areas of focus for the panel this year have included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Response to the Everyone’s Invited website and the subsequent review by Estyn <i>We don’t tell our teachers - Experiences of peer-on-peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales</i> • Contribution to the national Safeguarding in Education Group working group on reviewing the Managing Allegations against Professionals guidance for schools • Training and support for schools in managing and preventing harmful sexual behaviours • Training and support for Designated Safeguarding Persons in schools • National Safeguarding Week - 5th – 19th November 2021 “Together we can keep people safe” • Wales Cod Ymarfer Diogelu /Code of Safeguarding Practice
1.02	<p>Monitoring of Compliance and Review</p> <p>The updated ‘Keeping Learners Safe’ guidance from Welsh Government contains a safeguarding audit tool to support schools to review their safeguarding arrangements. The audit tool is intended for schools to identify strengths and weaknesses in their safeguarding arrangements and to ensure they are exercising their legal safeguarding obligations in line with the ‘Keeping Learners Safe’ statutory guidance.</p> <p>As a local authority we have requested all schools complete the audit tool and submit this for review. The review of all submissions is currently taking place with key themes to be prioritised over the next academic year and individual feedback / support as required.</p> <p>We have also requested the Safeguarding Children Annual Report which schools complete for monitoring and includes review of DBS checks, staff training and policies.</p>
1.03	<p>Professional Development</p> <p>During the academic year (2020-2021) 262 staff accessed Levels 2 and 3 safeguarding training from 15 courses. When including safeguarding in the curriculum (specifically the Getting on Together GOT training) this increases by 160, totalling 422 staff from 17 courses.</p> <p>During this year (2021 -2022) 299 staff have accessed Levels 2 and 3 safeguarding training from 17 courses. When including Ask and Act training, Governor training, Prevent and Getting on Together this increases by 231, totalling 530 staff from 30 courses. This year we also arranged an online meet and greet with Social Services colleagues for safeguarding persons in schools to have an opportunity to learn more about key staff and their roles.</p>

	<p>Combined over the last two years 952 staff have accessed training which has been adapted for online delivery. For the level 2 and 3 courses they do not exceed 3 hours – which includes a break and opportunities to participate in various discussions through the use of break out rooms. The number of participants per course is limited to 20 to ensure the quality of the delivery and maximise opportunities for engagement.</p> <p>Schools are provided with up to date materials to enable the delivery of level 1 basic awareness training by the Designated Safeguarding Person in each school (providing they have been trained at level 3) to deliver to the whole school staff. The Safeguarding training for staff in Flintshire schools has been updated to reflect the new Wales Safeguarding Procedures and the revised ‘Keeping Learners Safe’ guidance.</p> <p>In terms of ensuring the content of all training has a Flintshire perspective; Flintshire policies and procedures are referenced as a matter of course, include accurate and up to date data from Children’s Services to provide local context, and address any key learning from the North Wales Safeguarding Children’s Board reviews.</p>
1.04	<p>Estyn</p> <p>In December 2021 Estyn published a report following a review of Peer on Peer sexual harassment in secondary schools in Wales. Sexual harassment occurs when a person engages in unwanted conduct of a sexual nature that has the purpose or effect of: violating someone’s dignity; or creating an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for them.</p> <p>Estyn included a number of recommendations to be considered by schools, local authorities and Welsh Government. In response to this as a Council we have developed an action plan and we are prioritising this area of work which includes Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) in the new Curriculum for Wales.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Safeguarding is a core responsibility of everybody who works for the Council. Delivering the commitments contained within this report are within existing human and financial resources.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>There are no specific risks arising from this report and subsequent actions. The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment which outlines key risks related to the delivery of education services and method statements which describe how these risks are managed. These are regularly reported to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview Scrutiny Committee.</p> <p>There will continue to be ongoing monitoring of the portfolio and schools in discharging of statutory safeguarding duties.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	None required for this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no supporting documents for this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Keeping Learners Safe (2021) Audit Tool</p> <p>Cymraeg: https://llyw.cymru/cadw-dysgwyr-yn-ddiogel English: https://gov.wales/keeping-learners-safe</p>
6.02	<p>Estyn 'We don't tell our teachers' Experiences of peer on peer sexual harassment among secondary school pupils in Wales (Dec 2021)</p> <p>Cymraeg: https://www.estyn.llyw.cymru/system/files/2021-12/Profiadau%20o%20aflonyddu%20rhywiol%20rhwng%20cyfoedion%20ymhlith%20disgyblion%20ysgolion%20uwchradd%20yng%20Nghymru%20-%20Adnoddau%20atodol.pdf</p> <p>English: https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-12/Experiences%20of%20peer-on-peer%20sexual%20harassment%20among%20secondary%20school%20pupils%20in%20Wales%20-%20Supporting%20resources.pdf</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Vicky Barlow, Senior Manager for School Improvement Telephone: 01352 704019 E-mail: vicky.barlow@flintshire.gov.uk</p> <p>Contact Officer: Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor Telephone: 01352 704054 E-mail: claire.h.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Safeguarding - safeguarding means preventing and protecting children and adults at risk from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.

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JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE & SOCIAL & HEALTHCARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Placement Commissioning Strategy (Children)
Cabinet Member	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On 23rd May 2022, Albert Heaney CBE, Chief Social Care Officer for Wales, wrote to all local authorities to outline the Welsh Government's commitment to eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children. The stated aim is to transition to a not-for-profit system of care in the sector in Wales by transforming the market through the expansion of provision via public sector, charitable or not-for-profit organisations.

Local authorities were tasked with reviewing their Placement Commissioning Strategies (PCS) for the relevant service area for the 2022-2025 period to enable modelling and forecasting of future requirements by Welsh Government to inform the transition to a not-for-profit system. The deadline for submission of the local authority's Placement Commissioning Strategy to Welsh Government is 30th June 2022.

The purpose of the strategy review is to consider the future profile of residential and foster care services and plans for achieving this through development and evolution of services and assessment of workforce capacity and capability of the workforce. The strategy review is also to incorporate future financial modelling required to deliver services in order to support bids for financial support from a dedicated Welsh Government £30M fund which aims to support the transition to a not-for-profit system of care within the sector.

A subsequent review of the local authority's Placement Commissioning Strategy has been undertaken and details a programme to rebalance the children's care market within Flintshire in accordance with the stated aims of Welsh Government to eliminate profit. This programme will necessitate significant investment in key service areas such as residential services, fostering provision and also investment in those children deemed to be on the 'edge of care'.

Flintshire has one of the lowest rates of looked after children amongst local authorities within Wales. However, the relatively high population and geographical proximity to densely populated areas that experience higher than average levels of social deprivation, are contributory factors to Flintshire having the highest number of looked after children in residential care of all local authorities in North Wales.

The local authority has been proactive in commencing an ambitious programme for development of in-house residential children’s services. The strategy outlines objectives towards further expansion in this area with plans for a further two in-house residential services. However, the plans for the additional prospective developments are conditional to receiving additional funding as part of the £30M allocation from Welsh Government.

The further developments would significantly reduce the reliance on the independent sector for residential provision. If the additional funding is not granted by Welsh Government to fund the potential developments, it is unlikely that the local authority will be able to source the requisite capital and revenue funding required to fulfil the plans for future residential provision as outlined in the strategy document.

Due to the timescale for submission of the strategy as indicated by Welsh Government, a meeting of the Social Services Programme Board was convened on 15th June 2022 where the draft report was presented.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	The report seeks approval for the future commissioning intentions as detailed in the Placement Commissioning Strategy to be submitted to Welsh Government.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE PLACEMENT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY
1.01	The Welsh Government have made a commitment to the ‘Eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children’ Programme for Government and highlighted this a priority for delivery during the current Senedd term.
1.02	On 23rd May 2022, Albert Heaney CBE, Chief Social Care Officer for Wales, wrote to all local authorities to outline the Welsh Government’s commitment to eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children.
1.03	The correspondence from Albert Heaney CBE made reference to a £30M Welsh Government fund available to local authorities over a 3 year period to assist with transforming children’s care provision into the not for profit system of care as aspired to by Welsh Government.
1.04	Welsh Government are working with the Children’s Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C’s) to collate data submitted from Welsh local

	authorities relating to existing foster care and residential care placement requirements to inform an overview of current market sufficiency.
1.05	In addition to mapping existing residential and foster care provision across Wales, Welsh Government have stated the need to undertake demand modelling and forecasting for future service requirements which will inform the transition to the not-for-profit system of children's care services.
1.06	To facilitate this process, each local authority in Wales has been requested to review their existing Placement Commissioning Strategies with specific focus on projection of future needs analysis and the requisite models, care and services required to satisfy anticipated demand.
1.07	It was stated that strategies should consider the future shape of required residential and foster care provision and plans to achieve and deliver the services needed. Financial considerations for future service developments and associated costs are also required to be included in the strategy to assist with bids from the £30M fund allocated to the transformational programme.
1.08	Therefore, the local authority has undertaken a review of the Placement Commissioning Strategy in accordance with the instruction from Welsh Government. The strategy has been updated to reflect both the current situation and outline the local authorities programme to satisfy future demand for services with an emphasis on rebalancing service provision according to the not-for-profit ethos as advocated by Welsh Government.
1.09	<p>Eliminating profit within the children's care market will require significant investment in key service areas such as residential services, fostering provision and also investment in those children deemed to be on the 'edge of care'. Analysis has identified that Flintshire has the highest rate of looked after children in residential care in North Wales.</p> <p>In order to meet the anticipated demand for residential placements the current data suggests that we need to develop in-house residential care for twenty children for the period covered by this strategy.</p>
1.10	<p>The local authority has already commenced a programme of developing in-house residential children's care homes as part of its Care Closer to Home programme. During 2022/2023 the local authority will be opening four registered services in Flintshire each with its own individual offer and focus.</p> <p>Subject to the availability of additional funding via the £30M Welsh Government fund, there are plans to develop a further two registered in-house residential services, subject to business case approval.</p>
1.11	The Placement Commissioning Strategy outlines the future commissioning intention regarding the additional residential provision referred to in 1.10 and provides indicative figures as to the projected capital and revenue costs associated with each development.

1.12	The strategy also outlines the commitment towards employing a dedicated Responsible Individual (RI) for the portfolio of local authority operated children's services.
1.13	There is currently no capital nor revenue funding identified within the local authority budget or via grant funding sources such as the Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) to achieve the aim of developing the additional two proposed residential services. Consequently, realising these developments as stated within the timescale of the strategy is conditional to receiving additional grant funding from Welsh Government via the £30M grant.
1.14	<p>The risk of not obtaining additional funding as part of the bid via the submission of the Placement Commissioning Strategy is that the local authority is unable to realise its ambitious target for expanding the number of in-house residential placements.</p> <p>Accordingly, the pace at which the local authority can proceed in transitioning from out of county residential placements to locally based not-for-profit care, will be to some extent constrained by the availability and access to the additional Welsh Government funding.</p>
1.15	<p>The draft strategy was presented at a specially convened meeting of the Social Services Programme Board on 15th June, 2022. This meeting was scheduled in order for the draft strategy to be presented to the board to comply with the deadline of submission for the strategy of 30th June, 2022 as requested by Welsh Government.</p> <p>The draft strategy received approval by the board.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	To realise the ambition to develop two further residential registered services as stated in the strategy, capital funding would be required for the 2023/24 financial year and revenue funding for the 2024/25 financial year and beyond.
2.02	It is anticipated that subject to business case approval, indicatively each prospective development would require approximately £0.8-1.0 M in initial capital funding and additionally, continued revenue funding of approximately £0.345m per annum when the services become operational.
2.03	It is also anticipated that the local authority would require investment to employ a specific Responsible Individual for Children's services in order to comply with requirements under The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016. This post will need to be recruited to and funded in the immediate term to support the stated ambition for service transformations as outlined in the Placement Commissioning Strategy.
2.04	There is a current revenue funding commitment in the local authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) of £300K per annum for the next three years towards the operational costs of one in-house residential service currently in development.

	<p>The funding request as outlined in the strategy would request revenue funding of £350K per annum for each year of the programme, with £50K allocated towards funding a dedicated Children’s Responsible Individual role.</p> <p>If funding was awarded accordingly from the £30M grant then this may alleviate some pressure from the allocated budget in the local authority Medium Term Financial Strategy.</p>
2.05	<p>Commitments for the £30M grant from Welsh Government have been made up to and including the 2024/25 financial year. The financial situation regarding the grant beyond this period is not currently clear. It is likely that significant continued funding from Welsh Government will be required beyond the current timescale in order for local authorities to deliver aspirational and transformative programmes.</p>
2.06	<p>As stated above, the prospective residential developments outlined as part of the commissioning strategy will necessitate continuing revenue costs which could be mitigated in the short to medium term if the local authority funding bid was successful as stated.</p> <p>If continued dedicated grant funding beyond the 2024/25 financial year was made available from Welsh Government, this may partially or completely mitigate the increased revenue costs associated with the newly developed internal residential provision.</p>
2.07	<p>Furthermore, as the ratio of local authority operated residential provision increases in relation to external placements, it would be expected that the subsequent reduction in expenditure on external placements would offset some of the revenue costs of the expanded portfolio of in-house residential provision.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>There is a risk that inability to source additional funding via the £30M Welsh Government grant will adversely affect the capability of the local authority to transform residential service provision to a locally based not-for-profit care model on a sufficient scale according to local needs analysis.</p>
3.02	<p>Development of regulated local provision to enable more looked after children to live closer to home is likely to result in better outcomes for children in receipt of care. Financial constraints on the development of local residential provision as outlined in the strategy will affect the feasibility of this and necessitate continued use of out-of-county provision at a higher volume than would otherwise be necessary.</p>
3.03	<p>The prospective development of additional in-house residential provision will require significant workforce recruitment and staff development. It is acknowledged that recruitment within the social care sector is challenging</p>

	and an innovative approach towards both recruitment and retention will be necessary in a competitive employment market.										
3.04	<p>Although it is acknowledged that this is a strategic report presenting a revised strategy which details future commissioning intentions, a full Integrated Impact Assessment has not been completed as part of this report.</p> <p>Given the timescales as directed by Welsh Government for submission of individual local authorities' Placement Commissioning Strategies, it would not have been possible to complete a fully, signed off Integrated Impact Assessment to accompany this report in time for submission.</p> <p>The strategy is nonetheless a live document and it is anticipated that an Integrated Impact Assessment could be completed as part of any subsequent review or update to the Placement Commissioning Strategy.</p> <p>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td>Positive impact – The strategy outlines the local authority's plans to transition to the not-for-profit' system of care as detailed by Welsh Government in the longer-term whilst ensuring that strategies for commissioning provision in the short to medium term are in situ.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td>Positive impact - Through enabling more children to live closer to home and achieve positive outcomes regarding health and well-being. Opportunity to develop local provision and markets to best meet the commissioning needs of the local authority.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Integration</td> <td>Positive impact – Implementation of the strategy will enable more children to live closer to home and configure service provision within the sector in alignment with the not-for-profit vision as stated by Welsh Government.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Collaboration</td> <td>Positive impact - Collaboration with local providers who are committed to the not-for-profit ethos to develop partnership working within the sector and to deliver positive outcomes.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Involvement</td> <td>Positive impact – Increased development of regulated local provision will facilitate greater oversight of commissioned services and allow for effective stakeholder involvement.</td> </tr> </table>	Long-term	Positive impact – The strategy outlines the local authority's plans to transition to the not-for-profit' system of care as detailed by Welsh Government in the longer-term whilst ensuring that strategies for commissioning provision in the short to medium term are in situ.	Prevention	Positive impact - Through enabling more children to live closer to home and achieve positive outcomes regarding health and well-being. Opportunity to develop local provision and markets to best meet the commissioning needs of the local authority.	Integration	Positive impact – Implementation of the strategy will enable more children to live closer to home and configure service provision within the sector in alignment with the not-for-profit vision as stated by Welsh Government.	Collaboration	Positive impact - Collaboration with local providers who are committed to the not-for-profit ethos to develop partnership working within the sector and to deliver positive outcomes.	Involvement	Positive impact – Increased development of regulated local provision will facilitate greater oversight of commissioned services and allow for effective stakeholder involvement.
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Well-being Goals Impact	
Prosperous Wales	Positive impact on local economy through development of locally based service provision.
Resilient Wales	Neutral impact.
Healthier Wales	Positive impact through enabling more children to live closer to home and achieve positive outcomes regarding health and well-being.
More equal Wales	Positive impact through improving educational opportunities and reducing adverse childhood experiences
Cohesive Wales	Positive impact through enabling more children to be active and connected to their local communities.
Vibrant Wales	Neutral impact.
Globally responsible Wales	Positive impact through development of new local service provision which could contribute to reduced carbon footprint in the supply chain in accordance with the goals of the local authority Climate Change Strategy 2022.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	There has been engagement from officers in the Social Services Planning and Development Team with associated professionals within the Social Services and the Education and Youth directorates to inform the needs analysis and ambitions for the Placement Commissioning Strategy.
4.02	The North Wales Population Needs Assessment (April 2022) collated stakeholder feedback relating to children's services and service providers.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	<p>Appendix 1 – Copy of the letter dated 23rd May, 2022 from Albert Heaney CBE, Chief Social Care Officer for Wales. English</p> <p>Appendix 2 - Copy of the letter dated 23rd May, 2022 from Albert Heaney CBE, Chief Social Care Officer for Wales. Welsh.</p> <p>Appendix 3 - Placement Commissioning Strategy</p>

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Please see below a link to the North Wales Population Needs Assessment (published April 2022).</p> <p>https://www.northwalescollaborative.wales/wp-content/uploads/2022/04/Population-Needs-Assessment-April-2022-Final-2.1.pdf</p>

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Craig Macleod, Senior Manager: Children and Workforce Telephone: 01352 701313 E-mail: craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>Children’s Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C’s): a pan-Wales team that support local authority Children’s Social Services departments to commission placements for looked after children. All Welsh local authorities are members of the Children’s Commissioning Consortium Cymru.</p> <p>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) : A strategy that provides a financial framework within which financial stability can be achieved and sustained in the medium term to deliver the Council's key strategic outcomes, priorities and sustainable services.</p> <p>Placement Commissioning Strategy: The Institute of Public Care define a Placement Commissioning Strategy as ‘a formal statement of plans for securing, specifying and monitoring services to meet people’s needs at a strategic level.</p> <p>Regional Integrated Fund: The Health & Social Care Regional Integration Fund is a five year fund from April 2022-March 2027. The fund is intended to enable integration of health and social care services.</p> <p>Responsible Individual (RI): The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 requires providers to designate a Responsible Individual (RI) for each place at, from or in relation to which a regulated service is provided as part of the registration process.</p> <p>The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA): The Act became law on 18th January 2016 and provides the statutory framework for the regulation and inspection of social care in Wales.</p>



23rd May 2022

Dear colleagues,

Eliminating Profit from Care

Welsh Government's vision for services for looked after children and care leavers is an important part of the Government's wider plan for Children and Young People. The Plan, published on St David's Day, clearly sets out what the Government will do to make Wales a wonderful place for children and young people to grow up.

I am sure you will be familiar with the eight Programme for Government commitments in place to improve the lives of care experienced children and young people and families on the edge of care. Taken together, these commitments will help transform the way care is provided for looked after children in Wales. The Programme for Government, which incorporates the Co-operation Agreement with Plaid Cymru can be found here -

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/programme-for-government-update-december-2021.pdf>

Whilst we have the duration of this Senedd Term to deliver these Programme for Government commitments (up to April 2026), there is much work to do to. Considerable activity is already underway to take forward our commitment to eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children. Welsh Ministers are clear with their views that profit should not be made from caring for vulnerable children and their families.

Our aim is to ensure that public money invested in accommodation for care experienced children does not lead to profit, but instead any surpluses are reinvested into children's services to deliver better outcomes, service improvement and further professional development. This means that the care of looked after children in Wales will be provided by public sector, charitable or not for profit organisations.

You will already have been involved in discussions about our shared approach to delivering this priority and some colleagues will be members of the Programme Board or associated work streams overseeing its progress. I would like to take this opportunity to express my gratitude for the active and helpful engagement so far.

To help inform our transitional planning towards a transformed not for profit system of care in Wales, we are working with 4Cs to gather existing local authority provided



data, drawn from your Quarterly Baseline Data Returns compiled by Data Cymru for 4Cs, about existing foster care and residential care placement requirements. The Sufficiency Module of the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) was part funded by Welsh Government in 2020 to enable full monitoring of local authority placement capacity, supply and demand, to inform a more accurate view of overall sufficiency. Utilising this data return will avoid the requirement for duplicate requests for information from you. We will of course share the data gathered and its analysis with you. It is imperative there is a full return for financial end of year 21/22. If your authority has not submitted its return please ensure it is done by end of May.

As well as mapping the current profile of residential and foster care provision across Wales, we are also at the stage where we need to undertake modelling and forecasting of future placement requirements, to inform our transition to a not-for-profit system which can meet the needs of each child in care.

To do this, we would like each local authority to review their existing Placement Commissioning Strategies. Particular focus should be given to projecting future demand to your plans to upscale existing provision and the type of models of care required. The plan should consider:

- the future shape of residential and foster care provision which will best meet the needs of your looked after children population.
- how you plan to deliver this (developing own provision, expanding current not for profit provision, buy-out of independent provision)
- future financial modelling to deliver including bids for financial support from our 30m fund.
- development of foster care services in line with Foster Wales' ways of working.
- workforce capacity and capability requirements to support future profile.

There will be a number of considerations you may want to explore and include in your plan, including whether there are existing local not for profit providers who would want the local authority to take over ownership of their organisations. Please can you also set out milestones and timescales to deliver against your plans for development and/or expansion. Placement Commissioning Strategies (PCS) should be regularly updated and considered a live document. The PCS template introduced by 4Cs in 2018 is the preferred template and is attached to this letter. We will seek updates on the plan on a six monthly basis.

The information you provide will be used by the Programme Board to enable members to work through the journey needed to transition to a not-for-profit system.

Albert Heaney CBE
Prif Swyddog Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru
Chief Social Care Officer for Wales
Iechyd a Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol
Health and Social Services



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

It will also determine how the £10m fund available each year for the next 3 years can be used to its maximum potential.

I would be grateful if each local authority could complete and return your Placement Commissioning Strategies to the Programme Team by 30 June. If you have any queries or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact the Programme Team by e-mailing PlantSynDerbynGofal@llyw.cymru

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a series of loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Albert Heaney CBE
Chief Social Care Officer for Wales

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23 Mai 2022

Annwyl Gyfeillion,

Dileu Elw o Ofal

Mae gweledigaeth Llywodraeth Cymru ar gyfer gwasanaethau i blant sy'n derbyn gofal a'r rhai sy'n gadael gofal yn rhan bwysig o gynllun ehangach y Llywodraeth ar gyfer Plant a Phobl Ifanc. Mae'r Cynllun, a gyhoeddwyd ar Ddydd Gŵyl Dewi, yn nodi'n glir yr hyn y bydd y Llywodraeth yn ei wneud i wneud Cymru'n lle gwych i blant a phobl ifanc dyfu i fyny.

Rwy'n siŵr y byddwch yn gyfarwydd ag wyth ymrwymiad y Rhaglen Lywodraethu sydd ar waith i wella bywydau plant a phobl ifanc sydd â phrofiad o ofal a theuluoedd sydd ar ffiniau gofal. Gyda'i gilydd, bydd yr ymrwymïadau hyn yn helpu i drawsnewid y ffordd y darperir gofal i blant sy'n derbyn gofal yng Nghymru. Mae'r Rhaglen Lywodraethu, sy'n ymgorffori'r Cytundeb Cydweithredu â Phlaid Cymru i'w gweld yma -

<https://llyw.cymru/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/rhaglen-lywodraethu-diweddariad-rhagfyr-2021.pdf>

Er bod gennym Dymor y Senedd hon ar ei hyd i gyflawni'r ymrwymïadau hyn yn y Rhaglen Lywodraethu (hyd at fis Ebrill 2026), mae llawer o waith i'w wneud. Mae cryn weithgarwch eisoes ar y gweill i fwrw ymlaen â'n hymrwymiad i ddileu elw preifat o ofal plant sy'n derbyn gofal. Mae Gweinidogion Cymru yn glir yn eu barn na ddylid gwneud elw o ofalu am blant sy'n agored i niwed a'u teuluoedd.

Ein nod yw sicrhau nad yw arian cyhoeddus a fuddsoddir mewn llety ar gyfer plant â phrofiad o ofal yn arwain at elw, ond yn hytrach bod unrhyw arian dros ben yn cael ei ail-fuddsoddi mewn gwasanaethau i blant er mwyn sicrhau gwell canlyniadau, gwella gwasanaethau a sicrhau datblygiad proffesiynol pellach. Mae hyn yn golygu y bydd gofal plant sy'n derbyn gofal yng Nghymru yn cael ei ddarparu gan sefydliadau sector cyhoeddus, sefydliadau elusennol neu sefydliadau nid-er-elw.

Mae Llywodraeth Cymru'n ymwybodol o'r pwysau sylweddol sy'n wynebu gwasanaethau plant yng Nghymru, ac fe hoffwn fanteisio ar y cyfle hwn i gydnabod yr her honno a'ch ymrwymiad i arwain gwasanaethau yn ystod y cyfnod heriol hwn.

Diben cyffredinol ysgrifennu atoch yw eich cynnwys wrth inni weithio tuag at ddull o gydweithio yn fanwl gydag awdurdodau lleol. Rydym yn datblygu'r dull hwn drwy weithio gyda chi i sefydlu llinell sylfaen ar gyfer cynnydd tuag at sicrhau system nid-

er-elw mewn awdurdodau. Wrth wneud hynny, byddwn yn gallu canfod y lefel o gefnogaeth a newid sy'n angenrheidiol i gyflawni cynlluniau'r Llywodraeth.

Byddwch eisoes wedi bod yn rhan o drafodaethau am ein dull cyffredin o gyflawni'r flaenoriaeth hon a bydd rhai cydweithwyr yn aelodau o Fwrdd y Rhaglen neu ffrydiau gwaith cysylltiedig sy'n goruchwyllo ei gynnydd. Hoffwn fanteisio ar y cyfle hwn i fynegi fy niolchgarwch am y cyfranogiad gweithredol a defnyddiol hyd yn hyn.

Er mwyn helpu i lywio ein gwaith cynllunio ar gyfer pontio i system ofal nid-er-elw, wedi'i thrawsnewid yng Nghymru, byddwn yn gweithio gyda Chonsortium Comisiynu Plant Cymru (y 4C), gyda chydsyniad y 4C, i gasglu'r data cyffredol a ddarperir gan awdurdodau lleol. Daw'r data o'ch Ffurflenni Data Sylfaenol Chwarterol a luniwyd gan Data Cymru ar gyfer 4C, ynglŷn â gofynion presennol lleoliadau gofal maeth a gofal preswyl. Cafodd Modiwl Digonolrwydd yr Adnodd Cymorth Comisiynu ar gyfer Plant (CCSR) ei ariannu'n rhannol gan Lywodraeth Cymru yn 2020 er mwyn gallu monitro capasiti, cyflenwad a galw lleoliadau awdurdodau lleol yn llawn, i sicrhau darlun mwy cywir o ddigonolrwydd cyffredinol. Bydd defnyddio'r ffurflen ddata hon yn osgoi'r gofyniad am geisiadau dyblyg am wybodaeth gennych. Wrth gwrs, byddwn yn rhannu'r data a gasglwyd a'u dadansoddiad gyda chi. Mae'n hanfodol bod ffurflen ddata lawn ar gael ar gyfer diwedd blwyddyn ariannol 21/22. A wnewch chi helpu drwy gyflwyno eich ffurflen erbyn diwedd mis Mai.

Yn ogystal â mapio proffil presennol y ddarpariaeth gofal preswyl a gofal maeth ar draws Cymru, rydym hefyd wedi cyrraedd y cam lle mae angen i ni ymgymryd â gwaith modelu a rhagweld gofynion lleoli yn y dyfodol, er mwyn llywio'r broses o drosglwyddo i system nid-er-elw a all ddiwallu anghenion pob plentyn mewn gofal.

Er mwyn gwneud hyn, hoffem i bob awdurdod lleol adolygu ei Strategaethau Comisiynu Lleoliadau presennol. Er ein bod yn cydnabod y bydd gwahaniaethau yn y materion sy'n effeithio ar awdurdodau, a lefel eu parodrwydd, rydym yn gofyn ichi ganolbwyntio'n benodol ar eich bwriad o ran rhagamcanu'r galw yn y dyfodol ac unrhyw gynlluniau i uwchraddio'r ddarpariaeth bresennol ynghyd â'r math o fodolau gofal sydd eu hangen. Wrth ymateb, dylech ystyried:

- ffurf darpariaeth gofal preswyl a gofal maeth yn y dyfodol a fydd yn diwallu anghenion eich poblogaeth plant sy'n derbyn gofal orau.
- sut rydych yn bwriadu cyflawni hyn (datblygu eich darpariaeth eich hun/ehangu'r ddarpariaeth bresennol nid-er-elw)
- modelu ariannol yn y dyfodol er mwyn cyflawni, gan gynnwys ceisiadau am gymorth ariannol o'n cronfa 30m.
- datblygu gwasanaethau gofal maeth yn unol â ffyrdd Maethu Cymru o weithio.
- gofynion capasiti a gallu'r gweithlu i gefnogi proffil yn y dyfodol.

Bydd nifer o bethau y byddwch efallai'n dymuno eu harchwilio a'u cynnwys yn eich cynllun, gan gynnwys a oes darparwyr nid-er-elw lleol a fyddai'n dymuno i'r awdurdod lleol gymryd perchnogaeth o'u sefydliadau. A fyddechystal hefyd â nodi cerrig milltir ac amserlenni i'w cyflawni yn erbyn eich cynlluniau i ddatblygu a/neu i ehangu. Dylai Strategaethau Comisiynu Lleoliadau (PCS) gael eu diweddarau'n rheolaidd a'u hystyried yn ddogfen fyw.

Bydd Llywodraeth Cymru'n gweithio gyda Chymdeithas Cyfarwyddwyr Gwasanaethau Cymdeithasol Cymru, AWHOCS a Maethu Cymru i sefydlu'r dull gorau o ddiweddarau'r darlun hwn a datrys unrhyw rwystrau i gynnydd, gan ystyried yr amcan cyffredinol a'r graddfeydd amser.

Bydd yr wybodaeth a roddwch yn cael ei defnyddio gan Fwrdd y Rhaglen i alluogi aelodau i ddilyn y trywydd angenrheidiol i bontio i system nid-er-elw. Bydd hefyd yn pennu sut y gellir defnyddio'r gronfa £10m sydd ar gael bob blwyddyn am y 3 blynedd nesaf i'w llawn botensial.

Byddwn yn ddiolchgar pe gallai pob awdurdod lleol ymateb erbyn 30 Mehefin. Os oes gennych unrhyw gwestiynau neu bryderon, mae croeso i chi gysylltu â Thîm y Rhaglen drwy e-bostio PlantSynDerbynGofal@llyw.cymru.

Yn gywir

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'A Heaney', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Albert Heaney CBE
Prif Swyddog Gofal Cymdeithasol Cymru

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Care Closer to Home Placement Commissioning Strategy

Care Closer to Home Flintshire County Council's Placement Commissioning Strategy

From 2022 to 2025
(Version_6)

23/6/2022



Consortiwm Comisiynu
Cymru ar gyfer Plant
Childrens' Commissioning
Consortium Cymru
Cydwethio Er Gwell • All Together Better

Section 1: The Background & Context

- Executive Summary
- Introduction
- Social Care and Policy Context

Section 2: The Data, Facts & Feedback

- Looked After Children Data and Trends
- Placements Profile
- Current Placement Provision
- Outcomes of Stakeholders Consultation

Section 3: The Analysis, Gaps & Options

- Projection of our Future Needs
- Financial Analysis
- Gap Analysis
- Options for Future Provision

Section 4: The Decisions, Planning & Strategy

- Commissioning Intentions
- Action Plans for Implementation

This is the initial Strategy outlining our strategic ambition. The Strategy has been written within a tight time frame and will be a live document subject to further work in consultation with the 4C's, North Wales Regional Commissioning Board and local review.

SECTION 1

1. Executive Summary

This strategy details Flintshire County Council’s intentions to deliver safe, high quality, supportive placements that support children and young people to develop the skills and resilience to lead fulfilled lives.

The strategy is set out in 4 sections. The following table provides a summary of the main themes within each section:

	Executive Summary
Section 1 The Background and Context	Our ambition is to ensure every child has a safe, stable and loving home. Our main aim is to support families to safely care for their own children. However, we recognise that family and friends may not always be appropriate carers. This Strategy: i) sets out the actions we will take over the next 3 years to enable more children to live closer to home and ii) outlines the resources that we need to deliver this ambitious programme.
Section 2 The Data, Facts & Feedback	As of March 2022: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are 248 children looked after in Flintshire • There are 38 children placed with independent foster carers • There are 2 children placed with 3rd sector foster carers • There are 34 children placed in independent residential care • There are 7 children in supported accommodation • Flintshire's comparative rate of children looked after is below the Wales average figure • The majority of children in care are aged between 5-15 • 83% live with their parents or foster carers or kinship carers • 60% of looked after children live in placements in Flintshire • 23% live outside Flintshire but in Wales • Over the previous 3 years, an average of 94 children were placed into foster care. With 27%, 34% and 20% placed with external fostering providers • National benchmark for external foster placement utilisation is 23%
Section 3 The Analysis, Gaps & Options	Foster care <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in foster care provision include support for older children, sibling groups, and parent and child placements • Our data forecasting identifies that we need to recruit 59 foster carers over the next 3 years within a highly competitive market with finite foster carers • Realistically demand will need to be met through in house expansion and new innovative partnerships Residential care

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gaps in local residential care include placements for teenagers who often have complex needs, underlying trauma, and can show behaviours of concern • Placement options for children 16+ are extremely limited and can necessitate bespoke arrangements that operate outside of RISCA registration • We have some excellent Providers, with specialist skills and resources, and clear values and principles that place children at the heart of their work • There are significant workforce recruitment and retention pressures 						
<p>Section 4 The Decisions, Planning & Strategy</p>	<p>Flintshire’s strategic commitments are to:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="448 674 1374 1823"> <tr> <td data-bbox="448 674 639 1010">Expand</td> <td data-bbox="639 674 1374 1010"> <p>Targeted Intensive Family Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ further investing in Family Group Conferencing ➤ commissioning parent advocacy ➤ working with Health and Education to provide targeted support for children and families with neuro diversity <p>Maethu Flintshire / Foster Flintshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ recruiting more foster carers ➤ creating an additional Mockingbird Hub </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="448 1010 639 1585">Build</td> <td data-bbox="639 1010 1374 1585"> <p>In house residential care including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ an assessment and support home with MST therapy ➤ 4 bedroom Homes providing permanent homes ➤ a crisis flat ➤ small group Homes supporting 1 or 2 children ➤ provision for unaccompanied asylum seeking children ➤ independent supported living for 16/17 year olds <p>Our workforce capacity and skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ social work capacity to assess and support more foster carers ➤ recruiting a Children’s RI, Registered Managers, Deputy Managers and Therapists ➤ recruiting and developing residential care staff ➤ providing training on DBT and PBS </td> </tr> <tr> <td data-bbox="448 1585 639 1823">Embrace</td> <td data-bbox="639 1585 1374 1823"> <p>Work with high quality Providers who deliver positive outcomes and are committed to the values and principles of ‘not for profit’. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a partnership approach to specialist, therapeutic fostering - working with local quality providers who have specialist expertise and resources </td> </tr> </table>	Expand	<p>Targeted Intensive Family Support:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ further investing in Family Group Conferencing ➤ commissioning parent advocacy ➤ working with Health and Education to provide targeted support for children and families with neuro diversity <p>Maethu Flintshire / Foster Flintshire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ recruiting more foster carers ➤ creating an additional Mockingbird Hub 	Build	<p>In house residential care including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ an assessment and support home with MST therapy ➤ 4 bedroom Homes providing permanent homes ➤ a crisis flat ➤ small group Homes supporting 1 or 2 children ➤ provision for unaccompanied asylum seeking children ➤ independent supported living for 16/17 year olds <p>Our workforce capacity and skills including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ social work capacity to assess and support more foster carers ➤ recruiting a Children’s RI, Registered Managers, Deputy Managers and Therapists ➤ recruiting and developing residential care staff ➤ providing training on DBT and PBS 	Embrace	<p>Work with high quality Providers who deliver positive outcomes and are committed to the values and principles of ‘not for profit’. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - developing a partnership approach to specialist, therapeutic fostering - working with local quality providers who have specialist expertise and resources
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Eliminating Profit from Care

This Strategy has been produced within the context of Welsh Government's commitment to *'eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children during the next Senedd term.'* This commitment is about rebalancing the market so that the duties on local authorities in relation to looked after children are not contracted out to for-profit companies and remain with public sector or not-for-profit providers.

The intention of this commitment is to remove all private profit from the care of children in relation to children's care homes, foster care, supported accommodation for young people up to the age of 25 and specialist care at home for children including disabled children. An important element of this work is a strong focus on ensuring children are cared for and supported closer to their communities.

Delivering this Strategy

There are currently 38 children placed with independent foster carers and an additional 2 children placed with 3rd sector foster carers. There are also 39 looked after children supported in residential care. Rebalancing the children's care market within Flintshire in accordance with the stated aims of Welsh Government to eliminate profit will necessitate significant investment in support across from children on the 'edge of care', foster care and residential care.

Our analysis is that to rebalance the market over the next 3 years we would need to recruit 59 foster carers and develop in-house residential care for 20 children. We are realistic about the challenge and the interrelationship with working in partnership with Providers to develop a shared approach.

Our Ambition: Foster Care

Flintshire is proud to be part of the local authority Maethu Cymru: Foster Wales family. As part of the national approach a Flintshire Recruitment and Retention strategy has been developed. The strategy outlines our approach to ensure the sufficiency of in-house foster carers to meet the needs of children looked after in Flintshire County Council. It also outlines the actions undertaken and those planned to ensure foster carer retention. The Recruitment and Retention strategy complements and enables the delivery of this wider Placement Commissioning Strategy.

Our Ambition: Residential Care

Flintshire County Council has commenced an ambitious programme of developing in house Residential Children's Care Homes as part of its Care Closer to Home programme. During 2022/2023 we will be opening 4 registered provisions in Flintshire each with its own individual offer and focus. Where appropriate we are working on a sub-regional level with 2 of

our local provisions forming a partnership with Wrexham and our Health Board. These are being funded through the new RIF funding programme. These provisions are Tŷ Nyth and a crisis flat.

Tŷ Nyth: Assessment and Support Centre & Crisis Flat

Tŷ Nyth will provide short term, accommodation for 8-16 weeks with an intensive MST Therapeutic team on site to support safe family/carer reunification. In addition we are developing a separate provision on the Tŷ Nyth site to provide regulated short term placements in emergencies

We have sought Regional Integrated Fund (RIF) revenue funding to support this development.

Park Avenue and Bromfield park (temporary names)

We have 2 Homes currently under development for Flintshire children – Park Avenue and Bromfield Road. A combination of grant funding has supported the capital development costs associated with these provisions (ICF and Safe Accommodation Grant). However, there are significant revenue costs associated with developing the infrastructure for these provisions as we recruit, and develop staff, prepare our policies and procedures for CIW registration and then commence a careful process of placement matching. This process requires financial ‘front loading’ as the service builds up to run at its optimum and reach a position where we can reduce our reliance on the independent sector, and out of county/ out of Wales placements and begin to realign placement costs to fund local authority based provision. We have used the framework for costing developed by 4C’s to inform the financial forecasting for Bromfield Park which amounts to £345k.

Supporting unaccompanied asylum seeking children

We are about to embark on the refurbishment of a 3 bedroom property to provide long term independent supported living accommodation for UASC. Given the level of work that is required it is likely that this provision will open in 2023/24.

Ambition for 2023- 2025

If additional funding was available our plans for residential care could be extended to develop a further 2 registered provisions. We have identified 2 further properties that have the potential for refurbishment and registration as residential Care Homes for children. One could provide support as a general residential care home and the other have a focus on supporting 16-17 year olds who need support with independent living. We have found

particular challenges with supporting this latter group of children and are increasingly reliant on bespoke arrangements that are operating outside of RISCA registration.

We have employed an architect to undertake a feasibility study with costings for these properties to inform a business case for consideration. It is clear that to take the developments forward capital funding would be required for the 2023/24 financial year and revenue funding for the 2024/25 financial year and beyond. It is anticipated that subject to business case approval, indicatively each prospective development would require approximately £0.8-1.0 M in initial capital funding and additionally continued revenue funding of approximately £0.345m per annum when the services become operational.

Working with local providers

If funding was provided the developments would give us a total of 17 placements for our young people. This would not enable us to completely remove our reliance on the independent sector. Our intention would be to work with high quality local providers in Flintshire to develop partnerships that support the principles of not for profit, with surpluses being re-invested into caring for children recognising that this will be a journey, delivered in phases, to reach a position where care services are locally based, locally designed and locally accountable.

Workforce infrastructure

It is also clear that we would require investment to employ a specific Children's RI to become RISCA compliant. This post will need to be recruited and funded with immediacy to help drive this strategic programme.

Financial ask

Year	Capital	Revenue	Total
2022/23	£50k	£350k	£400k
2023/24	£1.8m	£350k	£2.150m
2024/25		£350k	£350k
Total	£1.850	£1.050m	£2.900m

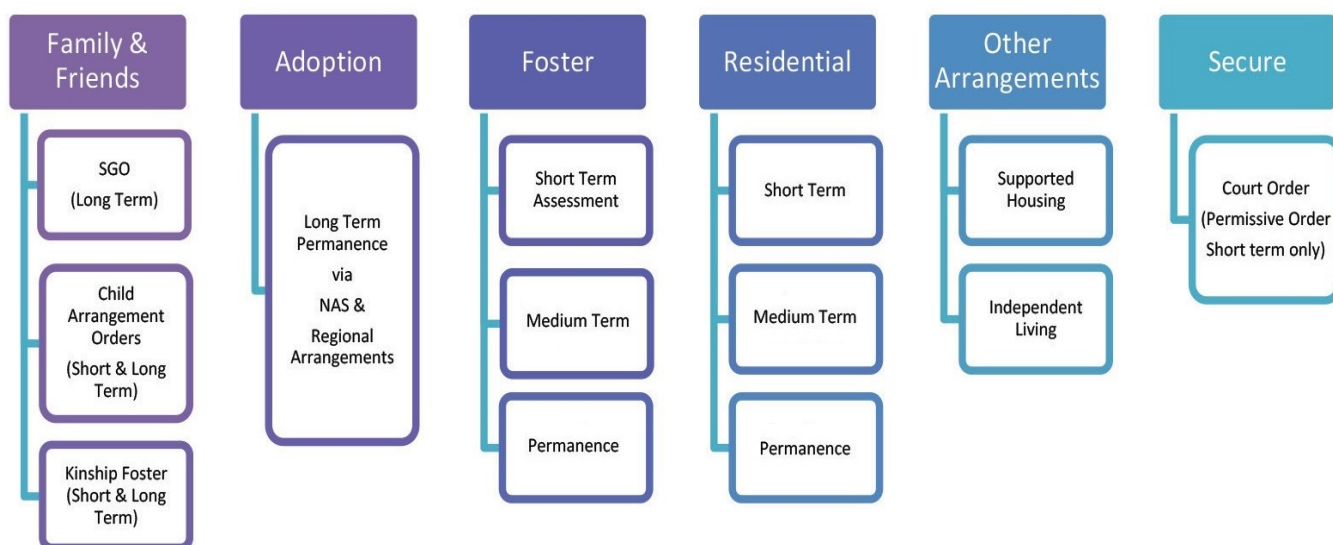
2 Introduction

Looked After Children are those children and young people aged between 0 to 18 years who cannot safely remain with their family and are cared for by the Local Authority. Children are accommodated by the Local Authority either through parental agreement or as a result of court proceedings because they are at significant risk of being harmed. A significant proportion of children coming into care have a history of neglect or abuse. Some may have experienced the death of a parent or have parents who are unable to care for them because of illness or disabilities.

The majority of children and young people looked after by Flintshire County Council are placed in foster care. However, there is a growing proportion of young people who need residential care, usually due to their more complex needs.

Our main aim is to support families to care for their own children. This is what the majority of families want and where most children will best achieve their potential. This document is therefore aimed at those children who will only thrive where intervention is needed and placements need to be arranged in the best interests of the child.

For the purpose of this strategy, placement types are represented as follows:



2.1 Purpose of the Strategy

Our ambition is to ensure every child has a safe, stable and loving home. Our main aim is to support families to safely care for their own children. However, we recognise that family and friends may not always be appropriate carers. This Strategy: i) sets out the actions we will take over the next 3 years to enable more children to live closer to home and ii) outlines the resources that we need to deliver this ambitious programme.

This strategy:

- **Shapes** our internal services to support children locally and to maximise the benefits of public sector provision in terms of quality and value for money;
- **Commits** to collaborative working with public sector partners across the Regional footprint where this offers identifiable benefits;
- **Requires** us to increase placement choice, supplemental to our sufficiency duty to enable good matching;
- **Defines** our relationship to be based on the co-production of outcome focused services, acknowledging that there are a range of different methods for strategic commissioning with multiple partners who may be co-operatives, charities or commercial partners who can work with us to deliver models where surpluses are re-invested into caring for children

The six Local Authority partners in North Wales are signed up to the 'Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs)' National Frameworks for Foster Care and for C&YP Residential Care services.

Representatives from each of the six Local Authority partners participate in the evaluation of potential providers when the 4Cs opens each of the National Frameworks and also in the 4Cs Annual Quality Performance Assessment (AQPA) review of providers on the frameworks. This ensures that the commissioning requirements of the Local Authority partners are addressed when the 4Cs opens each framework, and that through the AQPA the Local Authority partners are actively involved in working with providers to ensure that the type and quality of support meets the needs of LAC&YP.

Representatives from each Local Authority partner meet regularly with the 4Cs to ensure that there is a shared understanding of local need and that any identified gaps in services are understood / addressed.

The 4Cs worked with Local Authority partners to develop the 'Children and Young People's Residential Care and Fostering North Wales Market Position Statement (April 2021 to April 2023) ('the MPS')' which has been published. The purpose of the MPS is to provide an update to providers explaining the current demand and projected future need for foster care and C&YP residential care services in North Wales.

The North Wales Partnership Children's Services Group (which consists of the six Local Authority Heads of Children's Services and strategic leads from Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)) has regional oversight and responsibility for the MPS. The Group is committed to working with providers to ensure that there is sufficient provision locally (of acceptable quality) to meet the Local Authority partners sufficiency duty.

2.2 Priorities and Desired Outcomes

Flintshire County Council is committed to deliver safe, high quality, supportive placements that support children and young people to develop the skills and resilience to lead fulfilled lives.

Flintshire will seek to support children to remain with their parents, or connected persons, where it is safe and appropriate to do so.

Appendix 1 sets out the factors that will be considered when making placements. Where placements are commissioned we will seek to support locally based provision wherever possible, and where this is consistent with the needs, circumstances and wishes of the child/young person. Where local based provision is not available we will seek to provide support in North Wales and within third sector and not-for-profit provision before then considering the rest of Wales and England.

A consistent message from many respondents who took part in the consultation for the '**North Wales Population Needs Assessment**' (Published in April 2022) was that there is a significant gap in children's mental health services, waiting lists are too long and families are struggling.

Specific recommendations for improvements were:

- Better access to Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and the neurodevelopmental team for young people. (Please note these are two separate teams).
- Integrating mental health services into schools, especially counselling for primary school children and raised awareness of trauma amongst staff.
- Increasing the number of Looked-after Children nurses.
- Joint working between mental health services and other children's services to streamline care.
- Increasing psychological support for children, especially those in care and less reliance on medication as an intervention.
- More counsellors, especially male counsellors and counsellors speaking Welsh, Polish and other languages.
- One stop shops to find out about and access all services in a local area.
- Making the transition from child to adult services more user-friendly for young people and tailored to the individual's developmental needs.

The work to date on developing the '**North Wales Market Stability Report**' has identified the following:

The number of children receiving care and support has increased

In 2020, there were almost 2,900 children receiving care and support across North Wales. This is 2,300 children for each 100,000 children in the population, which is slightly lower than the rate for Wales as whole of 2,550 children in need for each 100,000 children in the population. The numbers vary across North Wales and over time with no clear trend.

In 2018-19, there were 575 children on the child protection register in North Wales. Although the numbers vary year to year for each local authority, overall for North Wales, the level has remained similar, with a small decrease of 3% (15 children). Due to the small numbers involved it is not possible to identify clear trends as, for example, a dramatic change from one year to the next may be due to one family moving to or from an area.

The number of looked after children is not expected to continue to increase

Although the overall figures for all looked after children have shown a steady increase year-on-year to date this is not expected to continue in the future (Regional Partnership Board, 2019).

Children who are care experienced were more vulnerable to the pandemic

The Rapid Review of the Population Needs Assessment (Regional Partnership Board, 2020) highlighted the impact of the pandemic on care experienced children which included isolation and loneliness and disruptions in access to services. In North Wales, there was an initial dip in child protection referrals but then the rate of referrals returned to expected levels. An increased level of monitoring visits took place to households where there were children on the child protection register – weekly visits instead of the 10-day timescale.

There is an increase in newly accommodated looked after children and young people

In 2021 there were 1,470 local children and young people looked-after by North Wales local authorities which is similar to the national picture across the whole of Wales. The number of children looked after in North Wales has increased by 350 during the time frame between 2017 and 2021. North Wales has a lower number of children looked after per 100,000 population than the rest of Wales, however there are significant variations across the region, from 800 in Flintshire to 1,300 in Wrexham. It is important to note that the number is currently fluctuating rapidly with a significant increase in newly accommodated young people.

Market overview

Despite a shared commitment to prevention and early intervention, there will always be a small proportion of looked after children who need residential placements. Depending on care needs this may be in a:

- Residential Care Homes with paid care staff
- Secure Accommodation Unit
- Residential Family Unit

The updated Market Position Statement (Regional Partnership Board, 2019) provided a breakdown of residential care provision in North Wales. As at 31st March 2020, there were 70 North Wales children living in a care home. The total number of children living in a children's home increased by 133% in North Wales

between 2016 (30 children) and 2020 (70 children).

There is a shortage of local residential providers

In August 2020, ADSS Cymru published a report which examined the case for rebalancing social care provision in Children's Services (ADSS Cymru, 2020). The report identified a significant imbalance of power in the children's residential care market, which is affecting placements and choice, the ability to make the best match to a child's needs, the workload, and the outcomes for children. Without rebalancing, there will be a continued reliance on private providers with, in some cases, high cost, and questionable value for money, greater instability for children and poor outcomes. The aim of any rebalancing must be to develop stable, resilient markets, which offer options and choice, quality care, fewer placement breakdowns, and good outcomes for children.

An increasing demand for residential placements and a lack of supply in local residential providers has resulted in a 'providers market'. Providers are able to be more selective of the young people they accept, which may result in those with higher levels of complex needs and behavioural challenges being more difficult to place. This may be due to the skill / expertise of the provider, a concern about how behaviour might impact other residents and the local community, and worries that all of this might impact upon the outcomes of the service.

Alongside the financial pressure, there is also a pressure on staff time. In the event of a bed becoming available, a number of local services may be seeking to secure it, resulting in competition.

This high demand puts pressure on local authority finances, with providers able to dictate the cost of the provision. There is a risk that expenditure on out of county placements increases as placement costs increase in a demand led market.

North Wales is currently reliant on the independent sector for children's residential care provision. The Children's Transformation Programme and Integrated Care Funding has been used to increase in house provision and fund preventative activity. Local authorities continue to explore opportunities to facilitate a different approach to help reduce the reliance on out of county placements which lead to unsustainable financial pressures for social services and education.

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

In 2019 for over half of children placed in residential care were receiving care primarily due to emotional and behavioural needs and two thirds of those children were aged between 13 to 16 years old (Regional Partnership Board, 2019).

There is a significant shortage of specialist placements for young people with significant emotional and behavioural needs in North Wales. Children are often placed in England, away from their families. There is limited provision in England. Social workers struggle to place children with severe needs as providers tend to reserve places to try to place a child with less severe needs.

Some children may have received their education through the Welsh language and therefore have difficulty coping in an English medium school and needing tutor or assistant to provide additional support.

Young people in crisis often attend Accident and Emergency and stay in hospital settings in an emergency situation.

There is a shortage of emergency accommodation

Social services across the UK are facing increased pressures to find placements in emergencies. Locally, we do have situations where no placement can be sourced for a child. This necessitates the development of a holding position to provide accommodation and support until a placement can be found. These situations may arise from difficulties in placing young people following the breakdown of relationships at home, transfer of children where the police have used their powers of protection to remove children and a lack of secure beds for young people with high level needs and welfare risks.

It is important to emphasise that these arrangements are used as a last resort in emergency situations, due to exceptional circumstances and for a short period until a regulated provision can be sourced. Safeguards around unregulated placements include the need for senior manager approval, notification to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) as our regulator, a care and support plan, completion of social work visits, involvement of Independent Reviewing Officers and supervision of social workers to look at arrangements/ move on plans.

The arrangements that local authorities have to put in place in emergencies can amount to unregulated placements. Under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 it is an offence for a person to provide a regulated service without being registered in respect of that service.

Local market overview

The Market Position Statement 2021 appraised the market and set out what is happening, residential services needed for children in the region and aspirations for future providers.

- The number of children who live in a children's home has increased, some of these children are able to live in a foster placement but there are currently not enough foster carers with the right skills to support them.
- Some of our children who live in a children's home live outside of local authority boundary despite sufficient in-area capacity.

What we don't need:

- We do not encourage expansion in North Wales by independent providers of residential care for children whose services are not developed to meet the needs of our children.
- We do not want providers to operate children's homes without a clear model of care or deliver standard provision only.

What we want:

- We want to work with new and existing providers and support them to deliver models of care that will meet the needs of our children.
- We want to work with new and existing providers and encourage them to develop their businesses in a way that, in addition to improving outcomes for our children, also provide a wider social value to our communities.
- We want providers who are able to safely care for our children with multiple high needs and are able to provide alternative accommodation to secure welfare provision.
- We want providers who will work in partnership with us during periods of transition including stepping down to live with a foster carer or reunification with their family.
- Welsh culture is very important to us as a region and we want more providers who are able to deliver their services in Welsh.

Current and projected trends

- Challenges in accessing secure welfare beds and local alternatives that provide crisis intervention and diversion from secure accommodation.
- Challenges in sourcing appropriate local placements for children and young people with complex needs.
- Need for additional and appropriate short term care arrangements and facilities for children. This also includes children with additional needs and on occasions their siblings.
- Children aged 16+ often have complex needs and placement options are limited, a strategic approach is needed in supporting the accommodation and support needs of young people ages 16-18 and for care leavers.

Impact of commissioning practices on the market

All Wales Frameworks are used to commission individual placements across a range of placement types. These frameworks deliver strategic level partnerships with providers in fostering and residential services. The frameworks are used where either the Regions Sufficiency Duty necessitates external commissioning or where best quality, outcome delivery and value for money is achieved through external commissioning rather than internal service delivery. The All Wales Frameworks are managed by the 4C's.

The vehicle used for e-tendering external fostering and residential placements is the Children's Commissioning Support Resources (CCSR) which offers transparent and outcomes focused placement commissioning for both Framework and Non-Framework regulated placements and allows compliance with the relevant procurement guidance and regulation that underpins commissioning.

Provision of service in the Welsh language

Children who are placed out of country due to lack of specialist placements do not have the option to receive care services in Welsh. This is a particular issue in Gwynedd.

2.3 Methodology

This strategy is being refreshed in light of Welsh Government's commitment to eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children.

The First Minister and the Deputy Minister for Social Services are clear that the 'Eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children' Programme for Government commitment is a top priority for delivery. This commitment itself builds on the long held view of Ministers that private profit be removed from the care of looked after children and aligns with calls made by the Children's Commissioner for Wales and Voices from Care.

Further, children themselves have expressed upset at being looked after by profit making organisations, that they feel 'bought and sold'.

"Eliminating profit making from the care of looked after children is one of the highest priorities for this Government. We believe that public care should mean that children are cared for by local authorities or other not for profit providers where social values and the best interests of and outcomes for children are the overriding motives".

[Deputy Minister for Social Services](#)

The provision of public/not-for-profit foster, Kinship and Special Guardianship placements are inextricably linked to the delivery of this commitment. The wider Programme for Government commitments place an emphasis on increasing the focus on keeping families together. Where children cannot remain with birth parents, we want to increase the use of Kinship and Special Guardianship arrangements where it is possible and in the best interests of the child to do so.

Our strategic direction is to rebalance provision in line with this commitment. This work is underpinned by intelligence gathered for the development of key documents that are in development:

The North Wales Social Care and Well-being Services Improvement Collaborative, together with the involvement of all six North Wales Local Authorities and BCUHB has published the second regional Population Needs Assessment (PNA) and is working with Local Authority and BCUHB partners to publish a regional Market Stability Report (MSR).

The PNA and MSR will be the foundation for the future commissioning of services for C&YP across the regions Health and Social Care Sector ensuring that C&YPs needs are met sufficiently.

The PNA and MSR will be continually reviewed in order to ensure that partners have a shared view on need and sufficiency on a regional basis.

Work undertaken to formulate the MSR has identified the particular need to increase the availability of emergency and longer term accommodation for

C&YP with complex needs including mental health, learning disability and emotional behavioural needs.

Other relevant reference sources include:

- Market Position Statement (MPS) for Children and young people's residential care and fostering and secure accommodation.
- Foster Wales Flintshire Recruitment & Retention Strategy 1st April 2022 – 31st March 2025

3 Social Care & Policy Content

3.1 Relevant National Legislation and Guidance

Flintshire County Council will ensure that there is sufficient accommodation for all types of children who are looked after under Section 79 of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (the Act).

The Local Authority has a duty to ensure the placement is made within the local authority's own area (section 81(9) of the Act), unless it is not reasonably practical to do so or there are overriding reasons for placing a child out of area, the primary overriding reason being safeguarding.

In keeping with the duty and aim of promoting the upbringing of a child by their family, there is a clear emphasis in the Act that, unless it is not consistent with the child's well-being, arrangements must be made for the child who needs accommodation to live with a parent or a person with parental responsibility or residence/child arrangement order. Where this is not possible, preference should be given to placement with a relative, friend or other person connected to the child or young person.

If neither of these is possible, a range of sufficient alternative provision should be available within the Local Authority, including foster carers and children's homes, supported lodgings and secure accommodation.

It is this 'sufficient alternative accommodation' that is the focus of this Placement & Commissioning Strategy.

Under the Future Generations Act (Wales) 2015, Flintshire County Council has a duty to take into account the well-being of individuals when creating sustainability plans. The well-being goals of the act will inform how sufficient alternative accommodation will be sourced, taking into account its effect on the wellbeing of the individual as well as its wider impact on sustainability in Wales.

For individuals with additional learning needs, The Local Authority must adhere to the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018, which creates a duty to consider how barriers to learning will be overcome as part of the placement brokerage process, ensuring that the learner's views, wishes and feelings are at the heart of the process.

As a Welsh Local Authority, we must also comply with the Welsh Language Standards Regulations 2017, and will take into account individuals preferred language for communication and correspondence when seeking placements.

Welsh Government have set a clear vision for services for looked after children and care leavers. As part of this vision eight 'Programme for Government' commitments have been developed to improve the lives of care experienced children and young people and families on the edge of care. Taken together, these commitments will help transform the way care is provided for looked after children in Wales.

Other sources of relevant legislation and guidance include:

- The Children's Commissioner for Wales 'No Wrong Door' report;
- Part 1 Scheme for Children and Young People under the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010;
- 'Five Ways to Wellbeing';
- ADSS Cymru report which examined the case for rebalancing social care provision in Children's Services (ADSS Cymru, 2020).

Central to the Vision is Welsh Government's 'Programme for Government' (Removing profit from care) which details their commitment to eliminate private profit from the care of looked after children. Welsh Ministers are clear that profit should not be made from caring for vulnerable children and their families. The aim is to ensure that public money invested in accommodation for care experienced children does not lead to profit, but instead any surpluses are reinvested into children's services to deliver better outcomes, service improvement and further professional development. This means that the care of looked after children in Wales will be provided by public sector, charitable or not for profit organisations.

To support the journey needed to transition to a not-for-profit system Welsh Government have announced a £30m funding package over the next 3 years - £10m each year.

3.2 National Context

- The Children's Commissioner for Wales 'No Wrong Door' report;
- Part 1 Scheme for Children and Young People under the Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010;
- 'Five Ways to Wellbeing';
- Welsh Government 'Programme for Government' (Removing profit from care);
- ADSS Cymru report which examined the case for rebalancing social care provision in Children's Services (ADSS Cymru, 2020).

The Children's Commissioner for Wales 'No Wrong Door' report has been a driver for commissioning external consultancy support to assist the Partnership Children's Services Group in formulating a strategy to develop improved working and ease of access to Local Authority, BCUHB and CAMHS services. The initial phase of the commissioned support was focused on developing the strategy for this, and will be followed by the implementation of the strategy phase in 2022 / 2023.

The Emotional Health Wellbeing and Resilience workstream (part of the C&YPs Transformation Programme in North Wales) funded by the Welsh Government Transformation Fund was established with the purpose of implementing service

models that will enable access to support that builds emotional resilience in children, young people and their parents / carers and addresses the root causes known to contribute to emotional distress and risk of family / placement breakdown which, in the worst case scenario, leads to children and young people becoming looked after. The aim of this workstream is to reduce the escalation of need and risk, improve personal outcomes and build capacity for all C&YP to access information, advice and assistance in a timely manner.

Identifying need at the earliest point and providing the appropriate information, advice and assistance and early help where required can delay or prevent escalating need. Therefore, the focus of the early intervention workstream is to implement a collaborative approach across North Wales partner agencies (Local Authorities; Education and Children's Services; Health; CAMHS) through the development of a meaningful integrated framework and working model with guiding principles for supporting the healthy development of emotional health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people aged 0-18 years, in support of the 'Five Ways to Wellbeing' principles.

The [Programme for Government](#) sets out the ambitious commitments Welsh Government will deliver over the next 5 years. These will tackle the challenges that are faced and will improve the lives of people across Wales.

In relation for this strategy, areas of consideration are:

- Provide additional specialist support for children with complex needs who may be on the edge of care.
- Explore radical reform of current services for children looked after and care leavers.
- Eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after.
- Fund regional residential services for children with complex needs ensuring their needs are met as close to home as possible and in Wales wherever practicable.
- Strengthen public bodies in their role as 'corporate parent'.

Across Wales there are a number of areas where significant pressures are being experienced in relation to children's services in Wales. These can be summarised as:

1) Responding to the Pandemic

Children's services across Wales met the challenge of the COVID-19 pandemic by continuing to provide services, including face-to-face work with vulnerable families, with creativity and determination; driven by a focus upon public duty and keeping children safe.

As restrictions ceased, we have seen changing complexity and increasing demand for services as the aftermath of the pandemic takes its toll. We are seeing the associated increases in poverty, domestic abuse, unemployment, isolation, family breakdown and homelessness, linked to the pandemic. These issues will continue to have an impact upon people's mental health and well-being, to the extent that

more parents and children will need services across the spectrum of need, delivered by a resilient and robust workforce.

2) Prevention and Family Support.

Working on the underlying causes that prevent children from entering the care system needs to be a national priority for all public services. With the right investment, local authorities can continue their already well-evidenced drive to improve interventions and services that support families and prevent family breakdown. These centre on well targeted, evidenced and strength based therapeutic interventions that are centred around trusted relationships.

3) Safeguarding

Safeguarding and supporting the well-being of children and families is everybody's business, and it requires a multi-agency and community response. In the year ahead, Safeguarding Board Member Agencies will re-design their multi-agency safeguarding response to the increasing number of young people who are exposed to harm by influences outside the home, such as criminal exploitation.

Responding to the needs and challenges of adolescents is one of society's more complex issues and we can conclude that the current looked after system does not always deliver best outcomes. We need to better understand what works for children in these circumstances.

4) Children in care

At present, Wales faces a crisis in the shortage of available and suitable placements for young people. The consequences present an impending perfect storm where authorities may find themselves unable to safeguard a child in the foreseeable future. The impact of this for children and their families is considerable.

This is despite the concerted efforts by local authorities to increase the supply of suitable placements. Alongside partners and stakeholders, we need to continue to overcome barriers involved in the provision of sufficient, suitable, stable, and resilient local foster homes, children's homes and supported accommodation. Alongside this, we need to continue to recruit adopters who can meet the needs of children with an adoption plan.

There has been a significant shift in the provision and ownership of residential care placements, with local authorities less likely to own and operate children's homes. It is clear the current market model is not delivering sufficiency. There is more that can be done to re-balance and re-shape the care placement market, so that there is a mixed economy of service provision and placements, which actually meet the real and present needs of children in care today.

Welsh Government's investment to allow local authorities to purchase, enhance or remodel assets in a phased way is integral to facilitating this rebalance of care.

5) Workforce

Workforce well-being is a critical factor in delivering effective social care. There is a shortage of experienced qualified social workers within children's services.

Immediate investment in this workforce is required so that, over time, capacity mirrors demand.

6) Resources

Disruption to children's education, social and family lives means that it is vital that sufficient sustainable resources are in place to ensure capacity can meet demand.

It is of critical importance that Welsh Government continues to support local authorities in their work as they seek to intervene with families earlier and prevent problems from escalating.

3.3 Key Messages: Research and Good Practice

Flintshire work closely with the principles of Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru, also known as the 4C's. This approach works to improve the way local authorities commission looked after children placement services. As well as significant cost savings, benefits include improved management information, consistent and secure collaborative tools and processes across authorities to facilitate individual placement matching, contract award and contract monitoring, collaborative risk management, and quality assurance of providers; sustained reduction in prices; and an environment of partnership with the independent sector to commission.

Flintshire are using research done into new sustainable care models that support individuals care and support needs on an ongoing basis. This will help maintain the level of provision that is available for children.

Outcome focused practice will be essential to providing appropriate placements for children and to make sure that they are supported in what matters to them. This will be bolstered by an efficient process to find the best placement at the best time.

Flintshire aims to bring together both commissioners and practitioners to create a close working understanding of the strengths, knowledge and possible barriers both may face. Creating strong partnership working with both health and education is also vital to determine how cases are progressing and ensuring individuals have holistic support for their needs. Individual Placement Agreements are used in Flintshire to clearly outline and evidence why a placement is being purchased and what agencies are responsible for delivering on that support.

Flintshire understand that in order to source good, supportive and sustainable placements we must explore all avenues of support and placement types to help make a well informed decision for the child.

Throughout the whole process Flintshire is committed to keeping the child central to the whole process and to be mindful throughout of what matters to the individual and making sure that they are appropriately informed.

In addition to the key messages given in section 2.2 above, the work to date on developing the '**North Wales Market Stability Report**' has also identified the following:

Fostering services

Population overview:

The number of children is predicted to decrease

The estimated number of children (aged 0-15) in 2020 and the projections for 2040 demonstrate the number of children in North Wales is predicted to decrease over the coming years (Welsh Government, 2020). This decrease can be seen across all of the local authorities in North Wales, with the exception of Gwynedd which is predicted to have a slight increase (1.8%). Overall the number of children in North Wales is expected to reduce by 6.1%.

The Market Position Statement update published in 2021 gave an overview of key statistics;

- The number of children who required a foster placement increased by 34% during the period April 2016 (600 children) to March 2020 (805 children).
- As at the 31st March 2020, there were 805 North Wales children living with a foster carer, 40% (325 children) were living with an independent foster carer and the majority of those children required a specialist placement in order to support their needs, which could not be supported by our in house services.
- There are currently 11 children who are living in a children's home who could be supported by specialist foster carers. There are not enough foster carers with the right skills to support the needs profiles of our children.
- During the period April 2020 to the end of February 2021, there were 34 children who required a parent and child placement and assessment.

Demand for foster care has increased

The number of children in foster care in North Wales has increased year on year since 2015 to around 945 in 2020. Wrexham had the largest increase, with the number of children doubling. Gwynedd also saw a significant increase. Numbers in the other local authorities have fluctuated.

Despite the increasing numbers in foster placements, the Market Position Statement (2019) expressed that a large increase was not expected in the future.

Local authorities have in-house foster care places and independent fostering agencies providing places. Some of the independent foster agencies are charities or co-operatives.

Predicted increased demand for foster parents

The National Foster Network calculated a need for, an estimated, 550 new foster parents across Wales every year to keep up with demand. This suggests there could be a shortage of foster placements in coming years, given the increasing demand.

Sufficiency issues for some children

The Market Position Statement (Regional Partnership Board, 2019) identified sufficiency issues with finding placements for children with particular needs including:

- Respite care
- Young offenders
- Refugees, immigrants, asylum seekers
- Young parents
- Sibling groups
- Emergency situations

The stability of the workforce is an issue, with increasing demand for placements and the number of placements projected to not meet with the forecast demand.

The Foster Wales website facilitated the joining of the 22 Local Authorities to form a national network of local fostering expertise. Its focus is to make a bigger impact on a national level, working together with foster carers, to build better futures for local children. Sharing one brand and, one voice, to strengthen recruitment and support of foster carers.

The National Fostering Framework

The National Fostering Framework (2018) finds children who live with foster

carers in their own locality more likely to thrive and children in local authority provision more likely to stay in their home authority, enabling them to maintain important links. It is vital local authorities increase local placements and reduce out of area placements.

According to the National Fostering Framework (2018), connected fostering (with family or friends) has seen increased demand. It also finds that local authority placements have better outcomes for children. The framework states that local authorities need to be able to have capacity to facilitate this or otherwise ensure that the child has opportunities to maintain connections if placed in alternative fostering.

Market stability

Regional challenges:

The Market Position Statement (2019) and 'Foster Wales' (2021) identified challenges to the stability of fostering services in North Wales and Wales as a whole listed below:

- Recruitment and retention issues
- Placements for children with particular needs including; respite care, young offenders, refugees/immigrants/asylum seekers, young parents, sibling groups and emergency situations
- It is estimated that Wales will need 550 new foster parents every year to meet demand.

Consideration of market quality

The State of the Nation report from the Fostering Agency (2021) provided insight into the quality of foster services across the whole of Wales, the key findings were:

- 44% of independent and 51% of local authority foster carers said they were not supported to maintain contact with children they had cared for. Foster carers perceived this as 'cruel', ending significant relationships for children who have experienced so much loss already.
- Some fostering services are not maintaining foster carer approval, even if they intend to continue fostering. This, and dropping financial support, are barriers to young people entering 'When I am Ready'.
- 20% independent and 12% local authority foster carers have no children in their care. It recommended better use of foster carers skills to meet the needs of children.
- 57% local authority foster carers had an agreed learning and development plan, 31% did not and 12% didn't know. 66% independent foster carers had a learning and development plan, 22% didn't and 12% didn't know
- Local authority foster approvals were more restrictive and limited than

independent approvals, it recommends local authorities assessments use broader approval statuses, robust matching procedures and placement stability processes

- Foster carers would like to build relationships with social workers and children in their care to have stability and continuity of social worker. Over the previous two years, 53% of foster carers had one supervising social worker, 29% had two, 12% had three and 6% had four or more
- Foster carers felt 'dismissed', 'ignored' and their role is not valued by the social care workforce. Lack of respect for their commitment, skills and dedication is a long-term, well reported issue in fostering
- Foster carers want allowances to cover the full cost of caring for a child and payment reflecting their value as a member of the team around the child. Sufficient payments are a must to attract new skilled, committed foster carers
- Lack of placement choice. To secure good matches for children, services would need to see a significant increase in access to local, quality placements
- Staffing levels are not sufficient to provide required support for foster families. Services would like staffing to enable best practice and improve standards
- Trauma-informed practice – concerns about access to training and additional services for those caring for traumatised children. Services would like children looked after to have priority status for services across health and education
- Support for foster carers with improved peer support services and out of hours provision. Services with this support saw improved retention and stability.

Current and projected trends

Key current trends and projections for the future of foster services:

- Increased demand for placements
- Lack of places for older children
- Lack of places for children with complex care plans / behavioural issues
- Lack of foster parents with skills to support children with complex needs
- Projected increase in demand for placements
- Predicted potential shortage of placements, supply not matching demand.

Adoption services

Population overview

Number of children looked after placed for adoption by the local authorities

in North Wales in 2020 / 2021 was 44.

North Wales Adoption Service overview

The North Wales Adoption Service provides a regional adoption service on behalf of Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey local authorities. Working regionally helps find new families more effectively, place children quicker and improve adoption support services. In April 2014 it was integrated into the National Adoption Service. The services comply with updated adoption legislation, regulations and statutory guidance in line with the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA) and with the policy and procedures of the service, within the resources allocated. There is a framework which aims to make it easier for adopters, children and young people get support when needed.

Services provided by the adoption service include:

- Preparing the child for adoption
- Family finding and matching
- Safeguarding children
- Provision of adoption support
- Recruitment, assessment and approval of adopters
- Preparing to adopt training (pre/post approval)
- Adoption support (pre/post adoption, buddy system, post adoption contact)
- Birth parent counselling
- Relinquished babies
- Services for adopted adults.

Current and predicted trends

The following issues were raised with regards to adoption services for children:

- Highest placement need is for children from the East
- Highest number of adopters are from the East
- Fewer adopters in the West and children need to be placed away from the East
- Nationally there are more children than approved adopters available
- Consideration of the number of Welsh language speakers (adopters / children)

The following issues were raised with regards to adoption services for adults:

- Adults requesting their birth records to find their birth parents was shut down during the pandemic, majority of services have resumed

- but there is a backlog
- Staffing - 43 staff, 10 are off or due to go off on maternity leave, it is difficult to recruit to fixed term posts so the ability to assess may be impacted in 2022 / 2023.

Quality reports

The Quality of Service Review from the North Wales Adoption Service (2020) highlighted the following areas to improve market stability:

- Increase the number of approved adopters
- Reduce the number of children waiting for an adoptive family
- Develop the adoption support service
- Recruitment - sessional workers and adoption panel vacancies

Care inspectorate Wales (2019) inspection identified these areas for improvement:

- Further develop quality assurance processes and assessment of the degree to which aims and objectives of the statement of purpose are met and evidence demonstrating how these support well-being outcomes for children
- The availability of the 'Active Offer', to provide services in the Welsh language
- The statement of purpose and adopters' information pack includes information about the independent review mechanism so adopters are aware of this
- Intermediary files should include a clear audit trail of work undertaken

3.4 Local Context

A developing North Wales Market Position Statement (MPS) provides information on the current demand for residential care placements/fostering placements and secure accommodation placements for looked after children and young people from across North Wales, and the ambition.

The MPS communicates the North Wales region's joint vision for the strategic commissioning of placements to the market, which is to:

Meet our Sufficiency Duty by providing the right placement choice and enable good matching based on our regional needs, through;

- Shaping our internal services which will enable us to support our regional partners;
- Working in partnership with stakeholders, and a range of public and private sector partners;

- Working in collaboration with public sector partners across the regional footprint where this offers identifiable benefits;
- co-produce outcomes focussed services, acknowledging that there are a range of different methods for strategic commissioning with multiple partners who may be co-operatives, charities or commercial partners.

This also supports Welsh Government's commitment to eradicating profit from care.

Flintshire had mapped the current service commission of high cost low volume placements for Looked After Children and is heavily reliant on independent provision in this purchase having no residential service provision within its local authority area. As a result, the Council are addressing this through the development of innovative models to build local, not for profit capacity to support positive outcomes for children and young people looked after. These are described in section 6.

However, whilst the new provision is in development, the levels and complexity of referrals at a local level remain high. It has become increasingly difficult to source suitable placements, and the Council is finding itself in a position where short term bespoke local arrangements have been necessary outside of RISCA regulation.

3.5 Existing Strategic Placement Commissioning Partnerships

The North Wales region consists of Wrexham, Gwynedd, Flintshire, Anglesey, Denbighshire and Conwy local authorities. Local authorities work in partnership with social services, health, the third and independent sectors, carers and others in order to ensure that the care provided to children is of the highest quality and provides value for money, and most importantly provides the best outcomes.

The local authority partners are full members of the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) and commission fostering, residential and independent supported living placements via the 4C's Frameworks. Where placements are not available through the Frameworks arrangements are in place to commission placements 'off framework'.

The Council are part of [Maethu Cymru/ Foster Wales](#) the national network of Local Authority fostering services across Wales. Maethu Cymru/Foster Wales is raising the profile of local authority fostering in Wales, with a view to increasing the number of foster carers and families available to the growing number of children who need them, and provide a more consistent and quality service to foster children and families alike.

Flintshire are working closely across North Wales and with Health services to develop a strategic response to the 'A Healthier Wales plan developed by Welsh Government. We are also developing proposals to enhance placement choice and stability for looked after children in the area.

Flintshire County Council works in partnership with Action for Children, who run a service called Arosfa, to deliver short breaks and respite to children and families with disabilities.

Flintshire County Council also works in partnership with Universal Assist to deliver supporting housing arrangements to Young People who are preparing to leave care. This partnership is via a Service Level Agreement.

Flintshire County Council also work alongside Wrexham County Borough Council in the development of services that will provide short term residential accommodation for four children, plus one emergency room, for children aged 11 to 18 years.

3.6 Corporate Priorities

Flintshire has a number of other strategies, groups and plans which will feed into and support the placement strategy.

These are:

- Looking after you: Flintshire Corporate Parenting Strategy and Action Plan (which includes Care Leavers)
- Flintshire County Council Plan
- Flintshire County Council Well-being Plan
- Social Services Programme Board
- Looked After Children Permanence Policy
- Public Service Board and Regional Partnership groups
- Procurement & Commissioning Strategy 2016- 2021
- Foster Carer Retention Schedule and Development Plan
- Flintshire Fostering Friendly Policy
- Flintshire being a 'foster friendly' employer.
- When I am Ready framework
- RAP (Repatriation and Prevention) – a joint venture with Action for Children, CAMHS and Flintshire County Council.
- A developing North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Services Improvement Collaborative (NWSCWSIC) Market Position Statement (MPS) for Children and young people's residential care and fostering and secure accommodation
- Fostering Recruitment and Retention Strategy

SECTION 2

4 Looked After Children Data and Trends

The primary method of establishing sound statistics to inform Flintshire's Placement Strategy is via research and data analysis.

In 2021 there were 1,470 local children and young people looked-after by North Wales local authorities. Of these, 53% were boys and 47% girls, which is similar to the national picture across the whole of Wales (*Reference: North Wales Population Needs Assessment*).

The number of children looked after by Local Authorities in North Wales has been increasing steadily over the 5 years prior to 2022, at a rate of between 5 and 8 per cent per year. At the end of March 2022 however, there were 248 children looked after in Flintshire, slightly fewer than at the end of the previous year. Between 1st April 2021 and 31st March 2022, 62 children started to be looked after, and 67 children left care. There were 191 placements made in the year, for 124 children. The majority of placement moves are planned and those coming into care in an emergency will also experience a placement move shortly after becoming looked after.

From national comparative data for March 2021, Flintshire's rate of children looked after was well below the Wales average, and the lowest in North Wales. The cohort of children and young people that are coming through are, on the whole, children with more complex needs, which is creating a challenge in finding appropriate placements with increasing demand for accommodating children, which has risen incrementally during the last decade.

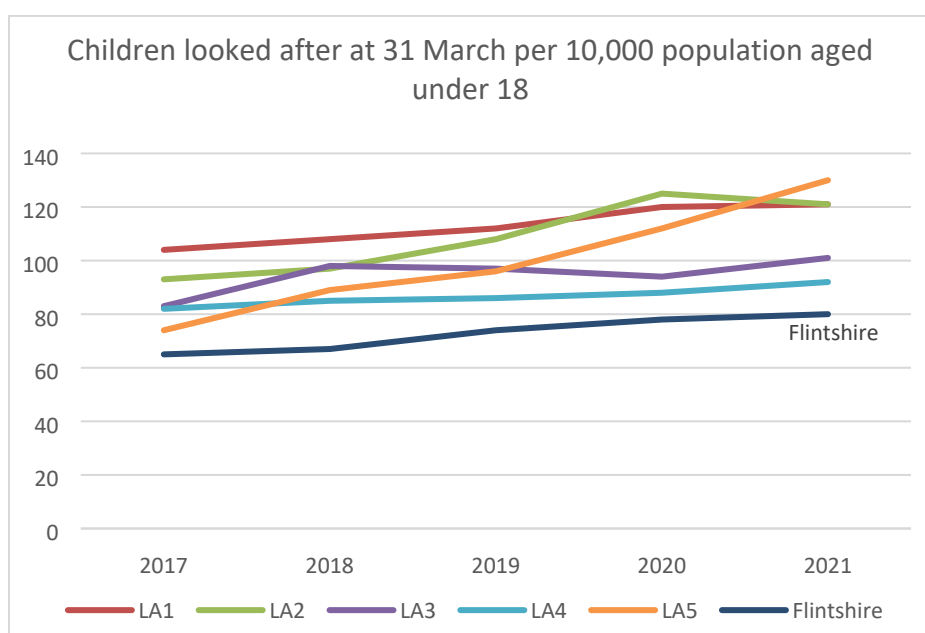
The percentage usage of residential placements hasn't altered since last year. However, we are using slightly fewer in-house foster care placements, and slightly more connected person placements and Independent Fostering Agency placements. The percentage of placements made outside Wales remains low for a Local Authority that borders England, at 16%. However, we have seen a significant increase this year in children placed within the Flintshire boundary, rather than in other Welsh authorities. We closely monitor the number of children placed out of county, and having previously identified the need to develop viable alternatives to placing children in residential placements out of county, our strategy now includes the development of in-house provision.

248 children were looked after by Flintshire on 31st March 2022, with the following profile:

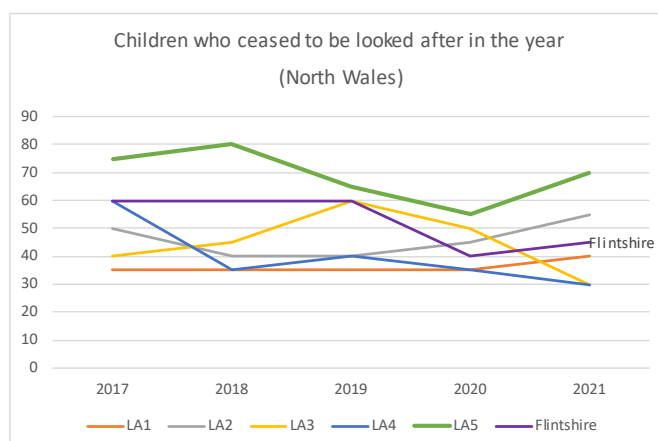
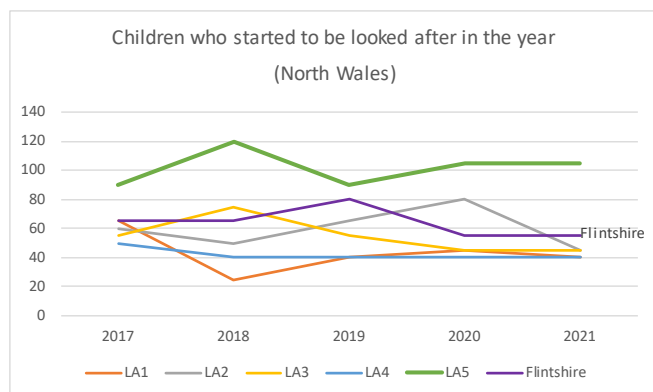
Children looked after on 31 March 2022, by legal status, age and gender

Legal Status	FEMALE						MALE					TOTAL	
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+		<1	10-15	1-4	16+	5-9		
Full Care Order		9	16	44	20	89		43	9	23	26	101	190
Interim Care Order	2	4	2	1	2	11	1	5	4		4	14	25
Placement Order Granted	1	9	4			14			7			7	21
Single Period Accom Sec 20/76				4	2	6		3		3		6	12
TOTAL	3	22	22	49	24	120	1	51	20	26	30	128	248

The chart below shows the trend over 5 years of rate of looked after children per 10,000 population by North Wales Local Authority, recorded on the census day of 31st March. Flintshire's numbers have remained comparatively low, and significantly lower than the Welsh Average, but following an upward trend. [Data is sourced from <https://statswales.gov.wales/> and numbers have been rounded to preserve anonymity]



Comparative figures for children entering care and children leaving care are presented below:



The profile of Flintshire children entering care between April 2021 and March 2022, by age, gender, legal status and reason is given below:

Children who started to be looked after in the year (April 2021 to Mar 2022), by legal status, reason, age and gender

Legal Status	FEMALE					MALE					TOTAL	
	<1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+	<1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+		
Emergency Protection Order								1	1		2	2
Family in acute stress								1	1		2	2
Full Care Order										4	4	4
Family in acute stress										4	4	4
Interim Care Order	3	4	2	1		10	1	3	2	2	8	18
Abuse or neglect	3	3	2	1		9	1	1			2	11
Family dysfunction		1				1		1		1	2	3
Absent parenting								1	2	1	4	4
Single Period Accom Sec 20/76	1	2		5	1	9	1			4	6	15
Abuse or neglect	1	2			1	4	1			1	2	6
Disability or illness										1	1	2
Family in acute stress				3		3				1	1	4
Family dysfunction				1		1				1	1	2
Absent parenting				1		1					1	1
Under Police Prot - In La Accm		3	1	5	2	11		4	3	4	12	23
Abuse or neglect		3	1	4	1	9		4	3	4	12	21
Family in acute stress				1		1					1	1
Absent parenting					1	1					1	1
Grand Total	4	9	3	11	3	30	2	7	6	11	6	32

Reasons for children leaving care in the same 12 month period were as follows:

Children who ceased to be looked after in the year (April 2021 to Mar 2022), by age and reason for ceasing

Reason for leaving care	<1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+	Total
When I Am Ready					3	3
Adopted		4	1			5
Returned home	2	11	8	17	6	44
Special Guardianship Order		2	2	1		5
Independent Living with support					6	6
Independent Living - no formal support					2	2
Transferred to Adult Services					1	1
Other reason					1	1
Grand Total	2	17	11	18	19	67

5 Placements Profile

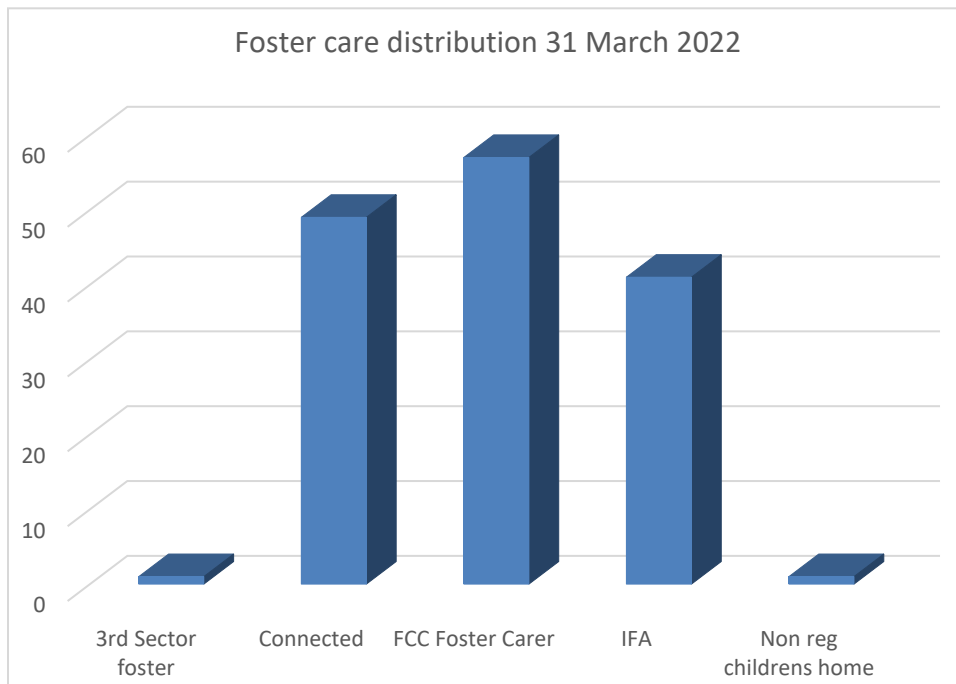
The following charts show the profile of a snapshot of children looked after on 31st March 2022, by age and placement type:

Row Labels	<1	1-4	5-9	10-15	16+	Total
In Flintshire	3	22	38	61	24	148
Children's Home				5	7	12
Connected person placement	1	4	8	14	5	32
FCC Foster Carer	1	3	9	21	7	41
Independent Fostering Agency		4	3	7	2	16
Independent living					2	2
Adoptive placement		1				1
Parent & Child 3rd sector		1				1
Placed with parent	1	9	18	14	1	43
Outside Flintshire in Wales	1	15	9	23	9	57
3rd Sector foster carer				1		1
Children's Home				6	2	8
Connected person placement		3	3	3	2	11
FCC Foster Carer	1	3	4	4	1	13
Independent Fostering Agency		6	2	9	3	20
Independent living					1	1
Adoptive placement		3				3
Outside Wales		5	5	16	17	43
Children's Home				7	4	11
Connected person placement			3	3		6
FCC Foster Carer			2	1		3
Independent Fostering Agency		3		1	1	5
Independent living					4	4
Non-registered children's home					1	1
Adoptive placement		2				2
Placed with parent				3	5	8
Residential School				1	1	2
Secure accommodation					1	1
Total	4	42	52	100	50	248

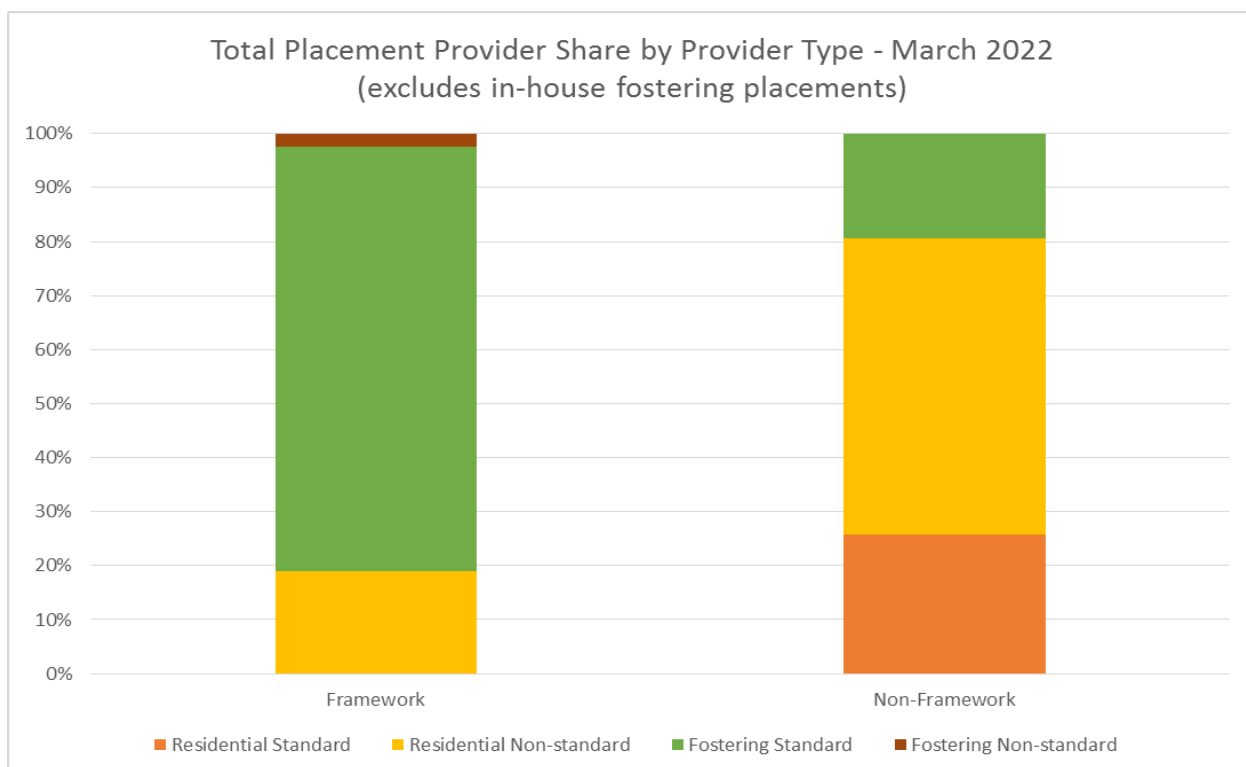
The chart above tells us that:

- 60% of looked after children live in placements in Flintshire, and another 23% live outside Flintshire but in Wales.
- The majority of children in care are aged between 5-15.
- 83% live with their parents or foster carers or kinship carers.

The following chart shows the profile of a snapshot of foster care placement distribution on 31st March 2022, by foster care placement type:



The following chart illustrates the placement provider share by provider type for framework and non-commissioned framework placements.



6 Current Placement Provision

North Wales Data on Residential and Fostering Provision

- The detail on private / commercial C&YP residential care settings in North Wales is:
 - Number of settings = 40
 - Number of beds available = 153*(Source = CCSR as @ 22nd June 2022)*
- The detail on charitable / third sector C&YP residential care settings in North Wales is:
 - Number of settings = 2
 - Number of beds available = 9*(Source = CCSR as @ 22nd June 2022)*
- The detail on Local Authority C&YP residential care settings in North Wales is:
 - Number of settings = 3
 - Number of beds available = 17*(Source = CCSR as @ 22nd June 2022)*
- The detail on private / commercial fostering capacity in North Wales is:
 - Number of settings = 207
 - Number of beds available = 472*(Source = CCSR as @ 22nd June 2022)*
- The detail on charitable / third sector fostering capacity in North Wales is:
 - Number of settings = 7
 - Number of beds available = 16*(Source = CCSR as @ 22nd June 2022)*
- The detail on Local Authority fostering capacity in North Wales is:
 - Number of settings = 453
 - Number of beds available = 776*(Source = CCSR as @ 22nd June 2022)*

Rebalancing Local Foster Care Provision

We have a pool of experienced and committed foster carers and have been able to grow our foster care numbers. Applications for fostering are typically made after a 'skills to foster' course. The reality is that we have not had the capacity to respond to the pace of placement demand. The provision of appropriate kinship placements is significantly greater than that of 5 years ago and the focus of this work, within the context of court timescales, has impacted on the overall capacity of the Fostering service. It is recognised that investment in fostering is a critical interdependent component of reducing, and managing, the demand for residential placements.

Recruitment targets need to reflect the current use and loss of our available provision, considering current placement availability, unmet need, annual terminations of approval and looked after population.

The recruitment targets identified for 2022-25 are based on current and predicted service need and aspirations, the profile of the children that we couldn't place during 2020-2021 and the Local Authority's placement sufficiency strategy. Our realistic targets are reflective of the local authority's strategic financial planning and are aligned to the child and family service improvement program.

Approval Targets

Placement type	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	Total
Short Term	8	9	10	27
11+	4	5	6	15
Children with complex needs	0	0	0	0
Sibling Groups	1	2	2	5
Parent and Child	0	1	1	2
Respite	1	1	2	4
UASC	2	2	2	6
Total	16	20	23	59

Calculation figures above reflect the total amount of approvals needed to recruit new foster carers in Flintshire. However, 2019-2022 showed an approval figure of 19 over three years. Therefore in the current circumstances, an approval of 59 new foster carers between 2022 – 2025 is outside of current capacity and will require a focus on partnership delivery within the ethos of moving towards a 'not for profit' approach .

Our Special Guardianship Support Service continues to go from strength from strength. Foster carers who take out a SGO continue to receive the support necessary from their supervising worker easing their transition.

Work continues to support a small number of looked after children through the Rehabilitation and Prevention Service (RAP). The service provides intensive therapeutic support for looked after children with support from experienced foster carers. The service is a partnership between the local authority, Health, CAMHS and Action for Children. The Service is split into two elements:

Children and young people referred to the RAP service all have severely disrupted and abusive backgrounds and their needs are among the most complex conceivable. The service provides intensive therapeutic support to the child/young person and their carers to stabilise their placement and encourage the development of healthy attachments for the individual children and develop their ability to regulate their emotions.

Practitioners also work alongside Social Workers and Education staff to develop positive plans for the future, promote positive contact with birth families and to support the child's access to and use of education. The aim of this service is to maximise the potential for positive future outcomes for this vulnerable group of children and young people who are at significant risk of developing mental health problems, drug and alcohol addictions, criminal pathways and social exclusion. Involvement in this service could continue as long as 18 months, or longer dependant on the needs of those involved.

The service deals with a huge range of referrals including behavioural management problems; anxiety and phobic issues; distress caused by parental separation; trauma from past neglect, abuse or exposure to domestic violence; children who are at risk of losing their place at home or with foster carers as a result of their challenging

behaviour. These interventions vary in length depending on the complexity of the case.

As part of the Council's commitment to enhance the Fostering service, the [Mockingbird](#) family model has been implemented. This model replicates an extended family in 'Constellations of 6-10 fostering households. Groups of Mockingbird Carers are called a Constellation. A Constellation comprises of 6 – 10 satellite Fostering Families who are supported by a Hub Home that is operated by an experienced Foster Carer and offers advice, training and peer support, planned and emergency sleepovers. It also facilitates positive relationships and visits for sibling groups who are in care, but not in the same care setting. Each constellation is supported by a Mockingbird Liaison Worker who provides support and a link between the Constellation and Fostering Service.

Therapeutic services within Mockingbird provide additionality, focusing on support for foster carers to discuss the children's behaviour directly with the therapist and receive support and develop strategies for meeting the holistic needs of the children.

Following the launch of the 1st constellation in January 2020, and the second in February 2021, a third constellation has now been established in November 2021, and supports 4 satellite families, comprising 8 looked after children, and 5 birth children.



The Fostering Network's Mockingbird programme

The 'Adaptations to Foster Carers' Homes' policy was introduced in 2020, supporting foster carers make necessary adaptations to their home to provide adequate space for children/young people. It supports; sibling placements, the needs of children with multiple disabilities, secure extra capacity for foster placements and to meet health and safety requirements which would otherwise result in a child being moved.

Funding compliments existing support and is a step forward in securing local and stable placements for children. Applications for grant funding will be considered up to £36,000, and £20,000 for relocation to a more suitable property. To access the grant, carers and social worker must first exhaust other options/resources.

Grants are also available to; existing or prospective adoptive families, family and friends/carers of children under a Special Guardianship Order and carers who are committed to their caring role for the long term, or at least until the child reaches 18.

Rebalancing Local Residential Provision

Despite the commitment to prevention and early intervention, there will always be a small proportion of looked after children who need residential placements, and Social Services want to make sure that these children and young people can remain close to home.

Teams have continued work to meet objectives in providing local residential care within Flintshire, utilising funds from the young people's Transformation Programme. This also serves to meet Welsh Government's Programme for Government ambition to eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after through establishment of Local Authority provision.

Tŷ Nyth

Tŷ Nyth in Mold is a property that has been acquired by Flintshire Council on behalf of Flintshire and Wrexham, and will provide short term residential accommodation for four children, plus one emergency room, for children aged 11 to 18 years.



Alongside the residential Care Team a specialist MST-FIT (Multi-Systemic Therapy Family Integrated Transition) Team will be on site to support young people accommodated at the service alongside their families. The Team will identify the issues which may present difficulties in order to plan a successful return home. This is the first provision of its type in Wales.

Whilst in the residential assessment centre, the residential team will work on a number of skills with the young people through an Integrated Treatment Model (ITM), including mindfulness, emotional regulation, distress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness and Social Skills

The residential team will provide day to day support, care and supervision of the young person, including but not exclusive:

- ensuring they continue to attend their school and support them with homework;
- provide and cook their meals;
- support them in any contact they may have with family / carers;
- support the young person to stay safe both physically and mentally;
- provide any support the young person may require with meeting other professionals.

The residential team will also be responsible for the day to day running of the assessment centre, including but not exclusive:

- ensuring the policies and procedures are up to date and adhered to;
- the centre is adequately staffed 24 hours a day every day of the year;
- the building is kept secure and safe at all times;
- the building is kept clean and tidy, with adequate food and other provisions.

The property will be operational by November 2022, following registration.

Park Avenue

Alongside the Tŷ Nyth site and being refurbished at the same time is a 4 bedded residential children's home for long term placements for young people from Flintshire. The property will be operational in November 2022, following registration.

Small Group Homes

Bromfield Park offers care and support including accommodation for two young people between the ages of 8 years – 18 years and 3 months who are supported by Flintshire County Council. It is recognised that the young people who live at Bromfield Park are likely to have experienced trauma which may have impacted on their ability to manage their feelings and emotions, communicate their wants and needs effectively and to form positive attachments.

Young people living here will be supported to prepare for their future which might include a foster arrangement and/or independent living arrangement. The amount of time that young people will be living at Bromfield Park will vary depending on their age, needs and individual circumstances. This will be determined in their care plans and personal plans.

Following the assessment and understanding of the young person's care and support needs; the team will ensure that the appropriate care and support is put in place and available to all young people living at Bromfield Park. We believe that by providing young people with a clear care and support plan and co-produced personal plan, that fully and clearly reflects their individual needs, it will allow them the opportunity to explore, reflect upon and manage the impact that the trauma they have experienced has had on their social, emotional and cognitive development.

Refurbishment is well underway to provide two further small registered homes to accommodate children and young people from Flintshire who need long term residential care. The build programme is scheduled to be completed by the autumn of 2022. Indicatively we are seeking to commit to 6 small group homes over the next 3 years.

Accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

A 3 bedded Council property is being refurbished as accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers. Support for residents will be provided externally by those with specialist skills and experience, sourced through the 4Cs Framework. This will be based on a Supported Living model. This property will be ready by the end of 2022, subject to RISCA registration.

Arosfa

The Arosfa Short Breaks Service, delivered by Action for Children, offers short term residential breaks at regular defined intervals which include overnight, mid-week and weekend stays for children and young people with profound disabilities. Utilising funds from the Integrated Care Fund, an unused wing at Arosfa has been refurbished, and this has increased the service capacity

In April 2021 the refurbishment work at Arosfa was completed increasing the provision to 5 beds at Arosfa. These beds bring capacity to accommodate permanent long-term residents, and provide a quality local service as an alternative to out of county placements and again, meeting priority areas by working with third sector organisations to remove the profit from care services.

Unregulated Placements

Whilst bringing enhanced local placement capacity, these developments are within the context of a national shortage of residential placements for children. We know that

across Wales there is a significant shortfall in placement sufficiency leading to unprecedented reliance on unregulated arrangements. It is important to emphasise that these arrangements are used as a last resort in emergency situations, due to exceptional circumstances and for a short period until a regulated provision can be sourced.

Locally we currently have a number of children supported in unregulated placements. We also have a sibling group of 4 children in regulated, out of county placements, who are at significant risk of losing their placements and require a bespoke provision to ensure placement stability and the delivery of positive support to their lives which currently feature behaviours of concern, vulnerability of exploitation and episodes of missing from care. The reality is that this sibling group require the immediate development of a bespoke provision/s in county.

The development of options for this sibling group forms part of a wider strategic approach to developing local provision that takes stock of the national and local context and aligns placement demand/need, sufficiency, accommodation, education, workforce, and finance/funding.

7 What Stakeholders Say

The Regional Partnership Board has established a Children & Young People Sub-Group. The Sub-Group will provide specific focus on the needs of C&YP, ensuring that their needs are understood fully and their views contribute towards setting future commissioning planning;

The 4Cs has an active Young Commissioners Group and undertakes regular consultation with C&YP with experience of being looked after. Young commissioners are involved in the selection of providers when the 4Cs tenders and in the ongoing quality monitoring of providers on the National Frameworks;

The North Wales Social Care and Well-being Services Improvement Collaborative has an 'Engagement Officer' in post. The Engagement Officers' role involves consultation with service users and their families / carers, partners and stakeholders (including commissioners and commissioned providers) to ensure that the views of individuals are heard and contribute towards commissioning of services.

Children's Social Services are proud to support the Young Voices Out Loud group, who continued to meet during the pandemic, although online. This group is made up of young people with lived experience of the care system. The group missed meeting as a group, and as restrictions have been lifted, they are now meeting face to face.

The group recently had a discussion about how young people are addressed in colleges and schools when tutors or teachers are discussing parental roles, and how it makes them feel. They have met with professionals from a number of agencies including Voices from Care and Tros Gynnal Plant Advocacy service as well as the Children Looked After Nurse and Volunteer Mentor Coordinator to offer more information on support that is available to them.

Young people from the group are also welcome to attend the Children's Services Forum, which opens up more opportunities for care experienced young people to make a difference to how services are delivered locally.

Children and Family and Safeguarding Services have identified a need to introduce a

more efficient method of consultation and engagement with our looked after children and young people consistent with how we believe that children and young people prefer to communicate.

Therefore, we are looking to procure an app-led suite of products and services that modernises the processes and systems used to gather the views of children and young people (up to 25) using social care services. The app will be used by staff, our looked after children and care leavers.

The App will promote and improve communication and understanding, will complement the more traditional methods of engagement with young people through group activities, forums and face to face meetings. Importantly, it will also provide an additional means of communication for children who are living in placements outside of Flintshire.

The North Wales Market Position Statement for children and young people's residential and fostering services (2021) provides recent feedback and discussion from stakeholders in North Wales.

The [North Wales Population Needs Assessment](#) (2022) has also gathered feedback from stakeholders of Children's services and provides an overview of services currently delivered across the region.

SECTION 3

Refer to Plan Section within the Commissioning Strategy Guidance document for good practice suggestions and actions

8 Projection of Future Needs

There are a number of identified pressure points and ways that these can be supported. They are:

Children age 10-18

Flintshire needs to develop some step down options for Children should their care and support needs decrease and be ready to explore at earlier stages a possible integration back into birth family, where it is safe to do so. Mostly, children wish to maintain strong ties with their immediate family and Flintshire must be sure to take adequate steps to make this a reality.

Connected Persons

A robust service to support connected persons is essential to be developed. Flintshire recognises that in future connected persons will require robust training and support to help them maintain a placement and to keep a child within the family network. Flintshire will also need to support and encourage Special Guardianship Order's be undertaken and that support is in place to make the SGO's a continued success.

Children at Crisis Point

Flintshire recognises that whilst in a placement, children can still come into crisis, and ensuring that there is contingency support should this be the case is crucial. The need for respite to be built into a care plan to support the maintenance of a placement and having carers that are adequately skilled in managing challenging cases and individuals. Flintshire County Council also recognize a growing trend in the number of children becoming looked after who are in their older teenage years and will take steps to meet this need but to also prevent situations escalating into crisis to begin with.

Older Children

The trend of older children coming into local authority care is notable. Flintshire must ensure that Foster Carers are adequately trained to support these older children and that links are built with housing, education, and residential providers to meet this need.

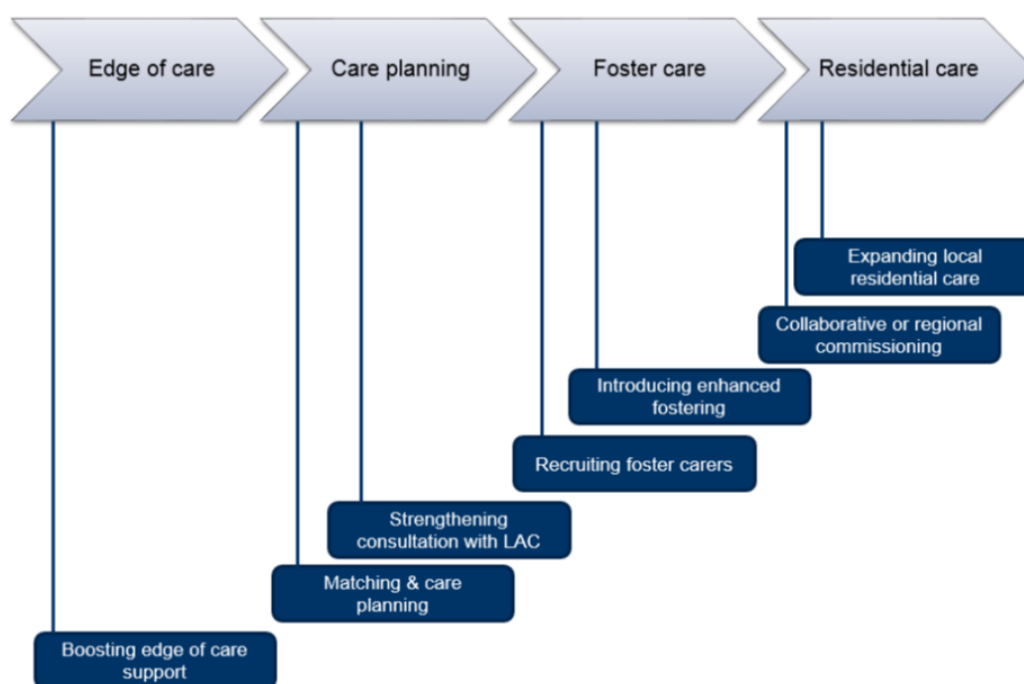
No Wrong Door

The Children's Commissioner for Wales has asked every region to adopt a 'No Wrong Door' commitment so that children and their families would not get bounced between services or get doors shut in their faces. Every Regional Partnership Board has a plan for children's provision, and has begun to make changes towards a No

The [NEST Framework](#) is a planning tool for Regional Partnership Boards that aims to ensure a 'whole system' approach for developing mental health, well-being and support services for babies, children, young people, parents, carers and their wider families across Wales. The NEST/NYTH framework includes No Wrong Door as one of its key principles. Boards have engaged positively with the new NEST / NYTH framework and all have a plan to work within this framework

9 Are Current Services Meeting the Needs?

The challenges in effectively managing demand and providing effective, appropriate support to meet the needs of children and families is clearly articulated in the 'Care Crisis Review'. The Review reflects that there is no single fix or 'silver bullet' to managing demand but there are core components that can, collectively, reduce the need for Residential Care. Research undertaken by Cordis Bright across 13 London local authorities in 2017 has summarised this continuum of support as having the following characteristics:



Edge of care

Support for families with children on the edge of care. For example Flintshire will closely scrutinise decisions about whether older young people should be taken into care and, in particular, what difference can be achieved at this relatively late stage.

Care Planning

Improving matching and care planning. For example Flintshire will look at improving care planning to anticipate and respond to possible placement breakdown and review the method of scrutiny of whether older children should be taken into care and whether it is realistic that significant improvements in protection and outcomes can be achieved through removal.

Strengthening consultation with young people. For example Flintshire will look at the area of consultation with looked after children about their placement. Focusing on ways that help identify areas for improvement for looked after children as a whole but also to provide earlier warning of any potential placement breakdown and respond proactively and pre-emptively.

Foster Care

Delivering our Maethu Flintshire: Foster Flintshire Recruitment and Retention Strategy

Residential care

Regional working Flintshire will work with North Wales local authorities to explore the options and benefits of developing a regional provision for children with complex needs.

Flintshire at present is meeting the needs of children and young people

- Flintshire to explore providing appropriate training and remuneration to Foster Carers in order to create capacity to support the needs of high risk individuals, to ensure closer proximity to supportive networks (education/peers etc.) and reduce cost of out of county placements.
- Current Service provision is aligned with Corporate Priorities to support well-being and ensure the individual is at the centre of the plan around them.
- Whilst there are examples of strong relationships with other organisations, both statutory and third sector, there is still considerable work needed to create strong relationships that can work collaboratively and effectively to meet the needs of the individual in a meaningful way. This includes cross boundary working (on both a Local Authority Scale and a National Scale)
- The Service follows closely the principles of the Social Services and well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and regularly reviews what matters to the individual who is receiving care and support to ensure that their personal outcomes are being met through the services that are delivered and the placement in which they reside.
- Performance is measured closely through regular audits of systems and panel meetings and LAC reviews. An amendment to current practice which has been received from the participation groups is to remodel LAC reviews to bring focus onto the child so that the review is happening 'for' the child and not 'to'.

10 Financial Analysis

The figures below indicate the costs for internal placement and external placement commissioning for the financial years from 2017/18 onwards.

FINANCIAL YEAR	<i>Internal Placement Costs</i>	<i>External Placement Costs - Out of County Expenditure</i>
2017-2018	2,685,241	5,135,514
2018-2019	2,702,137	5,161,096
2019-2020	2,827,923	6,881,497
2020-2021	2,843,270	8,273,704
2021-2022	2,633,642	9,393,621

The figures for placement costs illustrated above indicate the budget pressures within Children's services and highlight the significant increases in external placement costs in recent financial years. Flintshire are looking to invest and develop in-house service provision which is in accordance with the ethos of transitioning to a not-for-profit system. Although it is anticipated that this will be beneficial in terms of outcomes for individuals in receipt of services and associated stakeholders, any effect that this may have in terms of cost efficiencies and mitigating future budget pressures is difficult to accurately forecast.

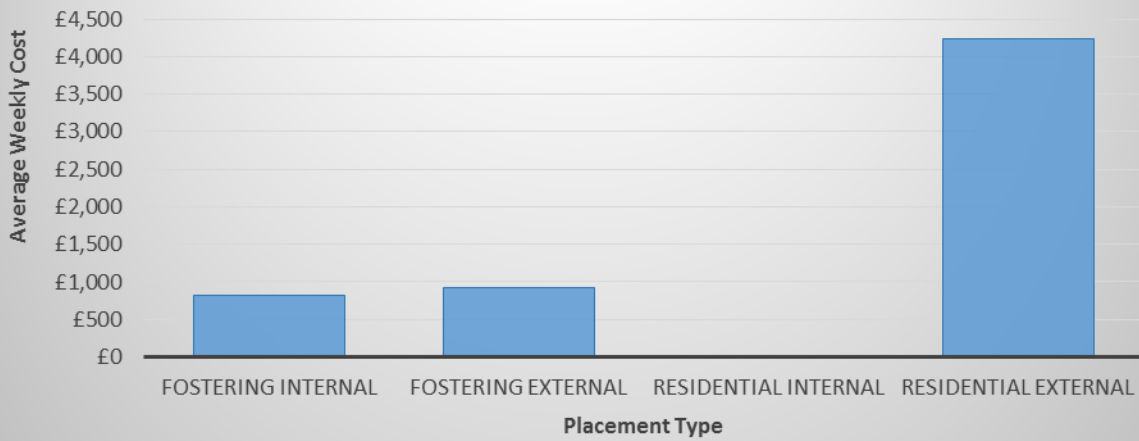
Spend for the external placement costs alone for the 2022/23 financial year is projected to be at least 6.2% higher than the figure for the 2021/22 financial year. It is acknowledged however that this forecast is projected on current known placements only and is based solely on data from Quarter 1 of the current financial year. Consequently, the rise in spend is likely to be considerably in excess of the current projected figure which creates both budget pressures and some degree of uncertainty in informing future budget planning requirements in the short term and also for the local authority's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS).

The following charts indicate the average weekly costs of placements by placement type and whether services are commissioned internally or externally and also via framework or non-framework sources.

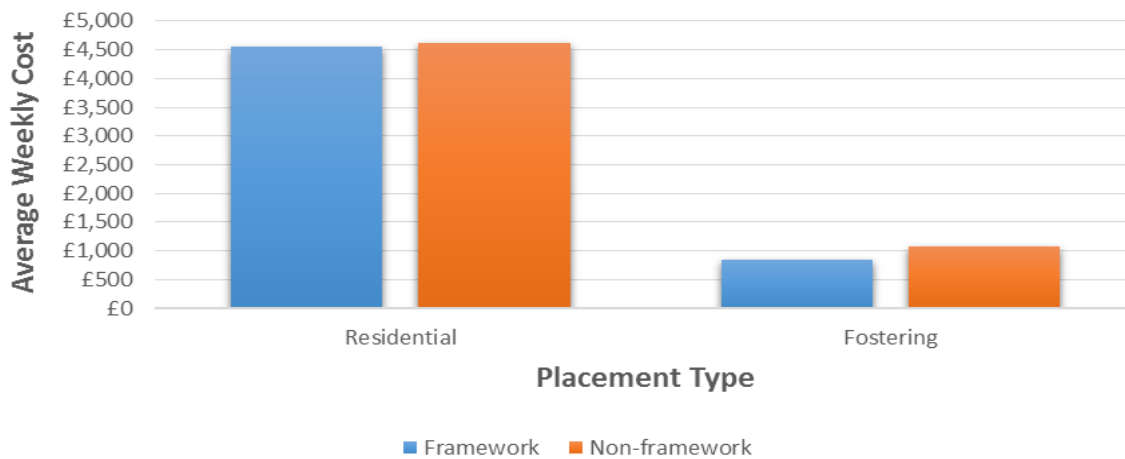
It should be noted that the data for the table for the cost of internal versus external costs relates to average costs for the 2021/22 financial year whereas the data for the framework versus non-framework costs represents a snapshot from March 2022. Data from earlier quarters of the same financial year indicate a larger disparity between framework and non-framework residential placements than that illustrated for the period in the graph below.

Data for both charts was sourced from the quarterly local authority returns for the 4C's QBDR summary data.

Average weekly cost for 21/22 financial year (snapshot date - March 2022)



Average weekly cost of placements for 21/22 financial year (Framework vs Non-Framework)



11 Gap Analysis

For the Regional Market Stability Report, the local authority identified the following market sufficiency issues:

- Need to meet the forecast demand with in-house foster carers
- Foster parents to support children in the age categories 10 to 14 and 15+
- Sourcing appropriate local placements for those with complex needs
- Meeting demand for children who need complex multi-agency care packages or have challenging risk management plans, example behaviours include anger management issues, verbal and physical aggression towards adults
- Shortages for sibling groups and children with disabilities
- Not enough skilled foster parents for children at the highest end of needs profile, those currently living in care homes
- Insufficient placements lead to children being placed in unregulated settings
- Not enough carers who speak Welsh
- North Wales has a shortage of parent and child places, especially in Wrexham and Flintshire

Flintshire along with other local authorities have experienced that a lack of supply in local residential care means that providers were often able to 'pick and choose' which children and young people they support. There is often a reluctance to take children and young people with complex needs and behavioural challenges. This may be due to a number of reasons including the lack of skill/expertise, a concern about how behaviour might impact other residents and the local community, and worries that all of this might impact on their inspection judgement.

Alongside this, the capacity of the workforce presents a risk. The challenges with social care recruitment are well versed and reflected in recent efforts to recruit to our developing in-house provision. The approach is to recruit based on aptitude, values, and potential, as opposed to direct experience. This does create risks which are likely to compound as we extend our provision at a time when neighbouring authorities will start to expedite their own plans to expand in-house provision and the associated workforce expansion. There will be an increasingly competitive market. Demand for staff for children's residential services, especially Residential Managers will be in high demand, with local authorities paying different rates.

In order to operate the in-house provision as outlined in this document, 33 residential staff are required. Alongside the time taken to recruit, additional time is needed to develop these new staff and support them through a wealth of training to enable us to develop a quality service. Whilst incurring this additional expense, the local authority will still be funding the current cohort of placements, resulting in budget pressures.

The Council are also mindful of the risk that the new resources will have on the current sector, in that there may be movement between private and local authority provision. There is a need to work collectively and collaboratively to ensure businesses remain viable businesses, and placements are still made with local providers to prevent destabilisation

Given the Council's ambitious plans, investment will need to be made in building Responsible Individual capacity. Flintshire is in a current period of expansion in other areas of social care, including in-house residential care for older people and Extra

Care. With these new services coming online, additional capacity will need to be considered to meet the need of the growing children's residential provision alongside this.

The Council are in the early stages of exploring residential educational provision for children with physical and learning disabilities. This will provide an offer local to home, which is currently not available. Learning has been taken from across North Wales to develop a business case to take this forward. Alongside this, there is scope to explore additional options for young people with Learning Disabilities post-16 through existing partnerships with third sector organisations. The accommodation needs to this cohort will also need consideration of whether there is a local educational option to out of county residential college.

There are further educational considerations. We need to ensure that as more children and young people with complex needs will be accommodated closer to home, that there is appropriate educational provision in place to meet their needs. The need to review the range and capacity of specialist educational provision across the authority has been identified by the Education & Youth Portfolio and as such, has been included as an ongoing priority area within the Council Improvement Plan. To inform the requirements, a review and feasibility study were commissioned to provide information regarding the level and areas of need for specialist provision and potential options to address these.

The review identified the following:

- A shortfall in provision for pupils with behavioural, emotional and social difficulties (BESD)
- A shortfall in specialist provision for pupils with Autism
- A need for additional capacity within the existing specialist schools to meet the level of demand
- A specialist Resourced Base provision for a small number of pupils with moderate learning difficulties.
- A shortfall in residential provision for pupils with additional learning needs

In response to the review, the Council has invested £6m in the development of a purpose built facility for pupils with BESD. Plas Derwen pupil referral unit (PRU) opened in September 2021 providing a specialist setting for a greater number of Flintshire pupils. Flintshire is one of only two councils nationally to have made a significant investment in their PRU facilities in recent years, offering an improved learning environment for some of our most vulnerable pupils.

A feasibility study has been completed to outline the potential options for the Council to address the other identified shortfalls in provision. A range of options have been identified and these proposals will now be considered as part of the Council's strategic development of its educational provision.





SECTION 4

Refer to Plan and Deliver Section within the Commissioning Strategy Guidance document for good practice suggestions and actions

13 Commissioning Intentions

Mockingbird

Following the successful development of 3 Mockingbird constellations, a further (4th) provision will be developed.

Training for Foster carers

There is need to commission and develop robust packages of support for Foster Carers who are caring for children with complex needs. Adequate training and support for carers is paramount to Flintshire so that we can provide appropriate, loving and supportive care to those children who have the most complex needs in an environment most similar to a family home.

Residential Provision

Having care facilities and placements delivered by registered providers both locally and in the region of North Wales is a strong intention for Flintshire going forward. If additional funding is available then there is a clear commitment to extend the development of Small Group Homes over the next 3 years.

Work is also developing on a provision to support Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC) as the authority has been allocated 10 children through the initial phases of the National Transfer Scheme (NTS) that will require support as looked after children. This number is likely to increase as part of national allocations through the Home Office.

Edge of Care

Flintshire want to invest in children who are deemed to be on the edge of care. This support will ensure that children do not necessarily become looked after due to inadequate support that may prevent care and support needs escalating to a point beyond the immediate family's ability to maintain the child. This will also ensure that Flintshire will be aware that those who do become looked after will come into care with more intensive and complex needs that we can support accordingly. This edge of care support will also look at commissioning short periods of care on a temporary basis where necessary so that appropriate work can be done to facilitate ongoing family reunification.

RI Capacity

With these new services being developed, additional capacity will be needed to meet the need of the growing children's residential provision alongside development in adult's services.

Advocacy

Development and focus on advocacy for parents as part of the national service development.

The voice of children and young people

The Council are to commission an App to support feedback from children and young people in receipt of services

	Outcome Desired	Action	Performance Measure	How will we do this	Who will do this	Timescales
1	Keep more Children living locally.	Increase the proportion of foster care provision within Flintshire County Council.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of foster carers residing within the Local Authority area. • % of CLA in foster placements within the Local Authority. • Target reduction in the number of foster placements provided out of area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and improve foster care recruitment strategy • Explore opportunities for regional commissioning for specialist areas 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Manager • NFF Regional Lead 	TBD
2	Develop Registered Provision locally.	Develop robust provision for looked after children within Flintshire.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • National Commissioning guidance. • Increase in capacity for local placements. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Expand the 'Mockingbird' model in Flintshire. • Develop small group homes scheme. • Develop Assessment Centre • Develop provision for unaccompanied Asylum Seekers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collaborations and Business Relations Officer. • Fostering Manager • Senior Manager, Children's Services. 	TBD

3	Providers are able to 'Meet the commissioner' and develop close links with Flintshire.	Create strong relationships with a wide and varied range of residential/specialist foster placement providers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of providers Flintshire are aware of and can engage with. • Number of events run by Flintshire to facilitate engagement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Run events for providers to meet with Flintshire Commissioners. • Review existing partnerships with providers. • Ensure Flintshire has a robust market position statement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering and Permanence Teams • Collaborations and Business Relations Officer. 	TBD
4	Support other North Wales Local Authorities.	Work across a regional footprint to pool resources and work closely with other authorities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce Collaborative work streams with other LA's 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a regional work programme • Engage in National Fostering Framework principles 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • NFF Regional Lead 	TBD
5	Out of county placements.	Implement Out of County Placements in an effective way.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in number of out of county placements • Out of county placements are stable. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete detailed market research where possible before commissioning and Out of County Placement. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Out of County Panels (Education/Health/Social Services) • Collaborations and Business Relations Officer. 	TBD
6	Children able to live safely with immediate families.	Decrease need for number of placements outside of the family unit.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in number of children living with immediate families, with LA support. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work closely with families and children to develop safety plans. • Include RAP where necessary • Implement short term placement plans. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering and permanence Teams 	TBD

7	Children on the Edge of Care are supported.	Children potentially becoming looked after receive timely and effective support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Decrease in number of children becoming looked after • Assessments noting that children are at risk of becoming looked after early on. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Effective training for staff and support workers. • Targeted intervention and working closely with what matters to the child. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children Services Frontline Staff • Fostering Teams 	TBD
8	Flintshire have a wide and varied range of support available/	Develop innovative approaches to delivering support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in bespoke packages of care for looked after children. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement Positive behavioural support training and approaches 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fostering Teams • Foster Carers/ Residential Providers. 	TBD
9	Care Leavers are safe.	Care Leavers have access to appropriate accommodation.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children report being better equipped for adult life. • Care leavers able to access safe and affordable housing. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extend housing support to 16-years-old, taking an early intervention approach. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children's Services Senior Manager • Housing Managers • Supported Living Staff 	TBD
10	Looked after children have a voice in the delivery of their care and placement choice.	Engage with individuals Use co-productive approach throughout.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better lines of communication between children and decision makers. • Children are central to the process throughout. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaged looked after children through a variety of forums and methods • Bring looked after children to professional meetings where appropriate. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participation Officer. • Social Work staff. 	TBD

Appendix 1

The following factors are always considered by Flintshire County Council when making placements;

- Is the placement in the best interests of the child?
- Can the placement meet the needs of the child as set out in their care and support plan, and subsequent pathway plan?
- Does the placement support continuity in the child's education or training?
- Is the provision not for profit / Third Sector?
- Does the placement enable the child to live together with any siblings who are also being looked after by the local authority?
- That the placement will support positive contact arrangements with family and known support network;
- That arrangements are made to spend time with friends and maintain sporting, social and leisure pursuits.
- If a child is placed outside of immediate family members, is the placement within a reasonable proximity to immediate family, with safety considered at all times.

It is also vital that Flintshire County Council consider;

- The views, wishes and feelings of the child (in accordance with the child's age and understanding);
- The views, wishes and feelings of parents or other person with parental responsibility (as appropriate);
- The child's religious persuasion, racial origin, cultural and linguistic background
- The child's sexuality and gender identity;
- Does the child have any additional needs or sensory impairment, including any emotional, behavioural and mental health needs?

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JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report updates Councillors about the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 which makes provision for a new statutory framework for supporting children and young people with additional learning needs (ALN). This replaces existing legislation surrounding special educational needs (SEN) and the assessment of children and young people with learning difficulties and/or disabilities (LDD) in post-16 education and training. The report references the activity undertaken by the Local Authority and schools in response to the Act to date.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- | | |
|----|--|
| 1. | That Committee receives and considers the report on the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018. |
|----|--|

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE ADDITIONAL LEARNING NEEDS AND EDUCATION TRIBUNAL (WALES) ACT 2018
1.01	<p>Following a commitment from the Welsh Government to review the legislation and guidance covering children and young people with special educational needs (SEN), the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act received Royal Assent in 2018. The anticipated implementation date of the reforms as a result of the Act known as ALNET, was initially September 2020 but was later amended to September 2021. Further adjustments regarding the full implementation of ALNET were put in place in response to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic and a phased process of implementation is now in process. To ensure children continue to receive the support they need during the implementation period, the ALN system will operate in parallel to the SEN system which will gradually be phased out. Until a child moves to the ALN system the SEN legislation remains in force, which means schools, pupil referral units and local authorities must continue to deliver the special education provision set out in SEN plans or statements.</p> <p>It is anticipated that local authorities (LAs) will be operating the 2 systems in parallel for a period of 3 years, after which the ALN system will be fully operational and will apply to all children and young people between the ages of 0 and 25.</p>
1.02	<p>From September 2021, the ALN system became live for any children up to and including Year 10 who were thought to have ALN but who had not previously been identified as having SEN. From January 2022, the ALN system commenced for children up to and including Year 10, who were already recognised as having SEN and identified as being either early years action/early years action plus or school action/school action plus. As part of a phased implementation approach, children in the following year groups of Nursery Years 1 or 2 and Years 1, 3, 5, 7 and 10 were referred to as the mandated year groups and identified as the first children to move onto the ALN system. For these individuals, a consideration will be made as to whether or not they have ALN which calls for additional learning provision (ALP) as defined by ALNET and whether an individual Development Plan (IDP) should be issued.</p> <p>For a number of children currently identified as having SEN, the consideration process will determine that the child does not have ALN as their needs can be met within the universal resources of the school, i.e. that they don't require additional learning provision (ALP) which is defined as:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) "Additional learning provision" for a person aged three or over means educational or training provision that is additional to, or different from, that made generally for others of the same age in - <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) mainstream maintained schools in Wales,

	<p>b) mainstream institutions in the further education sector in Wales, or</p> <p>c) places in Wales at which nursery education is provided.</p> <p>2) “Additional learning provision” for a child aged under three means educational provision of any kind.</p> <p>3) In subsection (1), “nursery education” means education suitable for a child who has attained the age of three but is under compulsory school age.</p> <p>The Additional Learning Needs Code for Wales 2021 which accompanies the Act was published in March 2021 and imposes requirements on the governing bodies of maintained schools in Wales, governing bodies of further education institutions in Wales, local authorities in Wales, Local Health Boards and NHS trusts. It provides an operational guide for the relevant bodies which has been used to identify and define the ALN procedures in Flintshire. A series of panel meetings have been established to ensure that children and young people are discussed in a timely manner to meet the Code’s timescales and that the appropriate agencies are involved in the process, e.g. Education Psychology Service. Significant support has been provided to schools to ensure that they also have a thorough understanding of their roles and responsibilities and a toolkit has been developed which is due for publication in September 2022. School representatives have been an integral part of the authority’s Steering Groups to ensure that the views of schools have been integrated into the processes that have been developed.</p>
	<p>The Early Years Additional Learning Needs Lead Officer (ALNLO) is a statutory role under ALNET and the officer in Flintshire has been in post in a part-time capacity since January 2021, becoming full time in April 2021. Significant work has been undertaken with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) within the Betsi Cadwallader University Health Board and other health colleagues to determine appropriate processes across Education and Health to ensure that the local authority is made aware of any pre-school children with ALN. These processes have been reviewed and revised accordingly since their implementation in September 2021 to ensure both agencies are meeting their statutory duties and that the correct children have been identified.</p>
	<p>The Eclipse IT system was purchased and developed to ensure schools and the LA had a robust tool to administer the new ALN system. It is being utilised across four of the North Wales authorities and is a very comprehensive system which supports all users to comply with their statutory duties. The system went live in January 2022 and training and support for users is ongoing.</p>
	<p>The Welsh Government issued further guidance on the 16th June 2022 with regards to the movement of the remaining children with SEN, i.e. those in the non-mandated years and those with Statements of SEN. Officers are currently considering this information along with the implications for both schools and the authority, and an Additional Learning</p>

	Needs Coordinator (ALNCo) forum has been scheduled before the end of term for the implications to be considered.
	In response to the reforms, a review the financial model used to fund primary schools for ALN was undertaken. Following a period of consultation with headteachers, consensus was achieved regarding a funding model and this has been applied for the current financial year and will be kept under review for the remaining years of the implementation process.
	ALNET also identifies revised duties and responsibilities in relation to Post 16 education. Notably, young people have the right to determine whether they wish for the ALN system to be implemented for them (assuming they have the capacity to do so). Careers Wales currently produce a Learning & Skills Plan which outlines an individual's needs and the type of educational provision they require post 16. From September 2022, they will no longer have that remit and LAs will be required to undertake their own assessment of needs and identify suitable provision. For some individuals, this will be available through the local further education institute (FEI) but for others, a more specialist provision will be required. Under the SEN legislation, a Statement of SEN is ceased where a young person attends an FEI. Under ALNET, where an IDP has been issued, this could continue to be required for the duration of the young person's course. FEIs can make requests to the LA where they feel a young person's needs cannot be met through the ALP available and the LA will also become responsible for commissioning and funding more specialist placements for those individuals who require it. Again the Welsh Government guidance with regards to processes for Post 16 learners has only just been published and officers are working to gain a full understanding of the requirements and implications. This information does not include any detail regarding the delegation model by which funding will be allocated to LAs and there is some concern that there will be insufficient funding available on an ongoing basis to support the level of provision required. A task and finish group has been established between Education and Social Services to ensure a collaborative approach to the identification and commissioning of post 16 education for Flintshire young people.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Implementation of the new Act comes with a number of resource implications which have been highlighted and addressed as part of Flintshire's Mid-Term Financial Planning (MTFS) process resulting in the allocation of additional funding to the Inclusion & Progression Service. Welsh Government originally maintained that the reforms were cost neutral and this assertion was challenged repeatedly by many authorities including Flintshire. In response, WG has changed its position and a number of grants have now been allocated to LAs and directly to schools to support

	the implementation, some of which have been confirmed for 3 years (up to 2024-25).
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3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None undertaken as a result of this report.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The risks associated with ALNET are included within the Education & Youth Portfolio Risk Register which are monitored on a regular basis.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>ALN Factsheet: how will the Act affect local authorities? The Additional Learning Needs Code</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jeanette Rock Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression Telephone: 01352 704017 E-mail: Jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Additional Learning Needs (ALN): The Act replaces the current terms ‘special educational needs’ (SEN) and ‘learning difficulties and/or disabilities’ (LDD) with the one term ALN where ALN is defined as:</p> <p>(1) A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision.</p> <p>(2) A child of compulsory school age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she—</p> <p>(a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or</p>

(b) has a disability for the purposes of the [Equality Act 2010](#) which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.

(3) A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is, or would be if no additional learning provision were made, likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age.

(4) A person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been used at home.

Statement of Special Educational Need: A Statement is a document which sets out a child's SEN and any additional help that the child should receive. The aim of the Statement is to make sure that the child gets the right support to enable them to make progress in school.

Individual Development Plan: An Individual Development Plan (IDP) is a plan created and agreed by those people most closely involved with supporting a child or young person with ALN including parents/carers, which outlines the support and provision that should be made for the individual.

Education Tribunal: An independent process that deals with appeals against local authority decisions about a child or young person and their education and also discrimination claims of unfair treatment in schools related to a disability.

Code: WG guidance outlining the statutory requirements in relation to systems and provision for ALN.



JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Looked After Children in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report provides Members with an overview of the support provided for looked-after children during the academic year 2020/2021.

The Covid-19 pandemic has impacted on the ability to report meaningful outcome data in the report.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	For Members to actively engage as Cooperate Parents for looked after children, promoting awareness and challenging provision within Flintshire educational settings.
2.	For Members to actively encourage all educational staff to promote the educational welfare of looked after children within Flintshire establishments at a 'whole school level'.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE PROVISION FOR FLINTSHIRE LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN															
1.01	<p>The definition of looked-after children (children in care) is found in the Children Act 1989. A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.</p>															
	<p>The lead responsibility for the educational support of looked after children within the Education & Youth Portfolio sits within the Inclusion & Progression Service which has oversight of children meeting the definition above and also previously looked after children as per the definition below:</p> <p><i>A previously looked after child is one who is no longer looked after in England and Wales because s/he is the subject of an adoption, special guardianship or child arrangements order which includes arrangements relating to with whom the child is to live, or when the child is to live with any person, or has been adopted from 'state care' outside England and Wales.</i></p>															
1.02	<p>The number of children who are looked after fluctuates month on month but stood at 258 (0-18 year olds) in October 2021, with 178 being of statutory school age. This compares with 259 (0-18 year olds) in October 2020 when 165 were of statutory school age.</p> <p>The following shows the breakdown of numbers across key stages, providing a comparison with the previous year.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="347 1267 1386 1458"> <thead> <tr> <th>Key Stage</th> <th>2021-22</th> <th>2020-21</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Foundation Phase</td> <td>35</td> <td>29</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 2</td> <td>45</td> <td>54</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 3</td> <td>54</td> <td>44</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Key Stage 4</td> <td>44</td> <td>38</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>A significant number of the cohort have special education needs with 21% (36 individuals) having been issued with a Statement of Special Educational Need (SEN). This is significantly higher than the level across the general population where the expectation would be for approximately 3% of children to have a Statement.</p> <p>The Additional Learning Needs and Educational Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET) came into force in September 2021 and will replace the SEN legislation over time. ALNET includes additional responsibilities and duties for local authorities in response to the children they look after and uses the following definition of additional learning needs (ALN):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. A person has additional learning needs if he or she has a learning difficulty or disability (whether the learning difficulty or disability arises from a medical condition or otherwise) which calls for additional learning provision. 	Key Stage	2021-22	2020-21	Foundation Phase	35	29	Key Stage 2	45	54	Key Stage 3	54	44	Key Stage 4	44	38
Key Stage	2021-22	2020-21														
Foundation Phase	35	29														
Key Stage 2	45	54														
Key Stage 3	54	44														
Key Stage 4	44	38														

2. A child of compulsory school age or person over that age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she:
 - a) has a significantly greater difficulty in learning than the majority of others of the same age, or
 - b) has a disability for the purposes of the Equality Act 2010 which prevents or hinders him or her from making use of facilities for education or training of a kind generally provided for others of the same age in mainstream maintained schools or mainstream institutions in the further education sector.
3. A child under compulsory school age has a learning difficulty or disability if he or she is, or would be if no additional learning provision were made, likely to be within subsection (2) when of compulsory school age.
4. A person does not have a learning difficulty or disability solely because the language (or form of language) in which he or she is or will be taught is different from a language (or form of language) which is or has been used at home

The legislation calls for children who are identified as having ALN to have a document drawn up called an Individual Development Plan (IDP) to outline their needs and the additional learning provision (ALP) required to support them to access their education. This document will replace Statements of SEN going forward. For children who are looked after and living in Wales, the local authority responsible for the child is now responsible for making decisions about whether the child has ALN. Where it is agreed that the child has ALN, the LA is responsible for the development and the maintaining of an IDP for the individual. This differs from the process for children who are not looked after where these responsibilities may lie with a school.

We are in a period of conversion between the SEN and ALN systems and children have been allocated to mandated years for the purposes of conversion. For children who have not previously been identified as having SEN but are now demonstrating a level of need, the ALNET process has been followed since September 2021. For those with SEN already identified, conversion to the new system commences in line with the Welsh Government timescales. Within the current cohort of children who are looked after, 2 have been considered where they had no prior SEN, 1 of which to date has been allocated an IDP, the other is still in consideration. Of the 60 identified with SEN, 19 are within the mandated years for conversion and 4 of these have been issued with an IDP. All of the 19 children would have been either at School Action or School Action Plus as the conversion process for children with Statements commences in September 2022. Where a decision has been taken that no IDP is required, it will have been determined that the child's needs could be met through the school's universal provision and that ALP was not required.

To support the Council to meet its responsibilities under ALNET, an additional officer has been appointed to the ALN Team with specific responsibilities for children who are looked after to ensure that we are compliant with the regulations. Regular monitoring is underway to ensure that we are aware of the changing needs of this cohort and

	strong operational links are in place between Education and Social Services to support this.
1.03	<p>The Covid pandemic continued to impact significantly on schools in 2020-21 with schools having to continue to move to periods of remote learning, with restrictions regarding pupil movement remaining in place. Children who were looked after at the time, continued to be supported to ensure they had access to the necessary technology, advice and guidance to access their learning. Additional support was also offered to carers to support engagement.</p> <p>The majority of Flintshire children who are looked after attend Flintshire mainstream primary or secondary schools with 48% of primary schools and 91% of secondary schools having pupils who are looked after on roll. Some children access their education in mainstream schools in other authorities, whilst a small percentage require more specialist provision accessing this via the LAs specialist schools, pupil referral unit or highly specialist independent providers. The Council's procedures with regards to access to specialist placements where required, continued to function during 2020-21 to ensure provision was identified and made available to those who needed it.</p>
1.04	<p>The fact that the cohort of children who are looked after is small and one that fluctuates regularly, impacts on the ability to provide meaningful comparative data. Data collection has been further interrupted in response to Covid-19 and as a result, data that would ordinarily have been produced has not been available. Attendance data taken for the cohort in October 2021 indicated an average attendance of 88% as compared with 87% in October 2020. Attendance rates are down generally across schools as a result of the increased level of illness in response to the pandemic.</p> <p>Year 11 pupils were subject to Centre Assessed Grades during 2020-21. Destination data for the 16 pupils indicate that 5 enrolled for a college course, 3 enrolled for sixth form provision, 2 continued into specialist provision, 1 joined the armed forces and 5 were NEET, i.e. not engaged in education, employment or training. Where an individual was identified as NEET, engagement has continued to try and engage the young person with a desirable outcome and ensure access to appropriate support services.</p>
1.05	<p>Training and awareness raising has continued during the pandemic. Training and support has been offered to school-based staff with regards to Trauma Informed Practice, Attachment Theory and Boxall Profiling amongst others. Education officer contact details were also shared with foster carers and also included on the Fostering Facebook page to facilitate access to support during this challenging time. Education staff have also regularly attended meetings with a range of Social Services teams to ensure a shared understanding of strategies and developments in each sector.</p>
1.06	<p>Funding continues to be available to support children who are looked after via the Pupil Development Grant (PDG). This is allocated from</p>

	<p>Welsh Government (WG) to GwE, the regional school improvement service to support improved outcomes for learners. The allocation for Flintshire children who are looked after for the financial year 2021/22 was £188,500 and is based on actual number of pupils. As with last year, the terms and conditions around this grant require schools to collaborate and develop a cluster approach to intervention with £151,200 of the grant being allocated to this function. A further £23k was designated to support pupils' education outside of Wales and £14,300 was provided to the LA to provide local interventions.</p> <p>The following are examples of how the cluster funding has been utilised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of sessions by Emotionally literate Support Assistants (ELSAs) • Individual counselling sessions • Teaching assistant to support effective transition between primary and secondary school • Trauma Informed Training • Lego therapy • Unearthing boxes • Forest School intervention • Family Liaison worker <p>The funding allocated to the Council for local interventions has been used to support the purchase of a data tool to further inform areas of need to facilitate targeted intervention. Funding has also been allocated to provide training on the Positive Power of Play, Adoption UK membership for schools, training on the use of Unearthing Boxes and a Garden Project.</p> <p>A Steering Group has been established with representation from schools and Social Services to ensure that the decision made with regards to training and interventions resonate with the needs of both staff and pupils. Meetings for school coordinators with responsibility for children who are looked after have also taken place to ensure full awareness regarding the funding available and also discussions with regards to effective practice and intervention.</p>
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Additional funding has been allocated to the ALN Team budget to support the appointment of the ALN Learning Adviser with responsibility for children who are looked after as referenced above. This role is essential in supporting the Council to meet its statutory duties in response to ALNET.
2.02	The Welsh Government is reviewing strategies to improve the outcomes for children who are looked after following the publication of the report 'An integrated approach to improving educational outcomes for looked after children in Wales' by Sir Alisdair Macdonald. The report recommends a Welsh Virtual School model in which each authority would appoint a Virtual School Headteacher with responsibility for the Virtual School of all children who are looked after. Alongside the headteacher, there is an expectation

	of additional staff to support the Virtual Head to discharge their responsibilities. LAs were offered the opportunity to bid for additional funding to start trialling this model. Flintshire presented a case for this but unfortunately was unsuccessful in this round of funding. Additional funding to support such a system in the future may be a requirement for the LA.
2.03	As outlined above, a number of children who are looked after require specialist provision which is often only available through the specialist independent sector. The increasingly complex needs exhibited by some individuals and the increasing costs of provision does impact on the Out of County budget. Both the Education and Social Services Portfolios are continuing to explore and develop ways to reduce the expenditure in this area including the expansion of in house provision and alternative forms of intervention, e.g. the investment in the building of a new pupil referral unit, Plas Derwen.
2.04	The PDG is the main source of additional funding to support children who are looked after. Officers continue to work closely with schools to promote and support the submission of cluster bids to ensure the funding is accessed and goes to those who need it most.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None required.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	Risk monitoring is a regular feature of Portfolio Senior Management meetings to ensure senior officers are sighted in relation to these.
4.02	Expenditure on specialist non-maintained 'Out of County' provision constitutes an ongoing financial risk to the both the Education & Youth and Social Services Portfolios. This is monitored on a monthly basis and the findings reported to relevant members of the Council's Senior Leadership Team.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Contact Officer: Jeanette Rock, Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression Telephone: 01352 704017 E-mail: jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>Pupil Development Grant – Welsh Government funding to improve outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and Looked After Children (LAC). It is intended to overcome the additional barriers that prevent learners from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving their full potential.</p> <p>GwE: Regional school improvement service.</p> <p>Out of County provision: Specialist education/residential provision which is not maintained by Flintshire County Council. This could include mainstream provision maintained by an alternative authority or specialist independent provision.</p> <p>Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Act (Wales) 2018: New Welsh legislative system relating to the support given to children and young people aged 0 to 25 who have additional learning needs and are receiving education and/or training.</p>

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JOINT EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE AND SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 30 th June 2022
Report Subject	Period Dignity Update
Cabinet Member	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report has been developed to provide Members with an overview of the current national position regarding period dignity and how grant funding has benefitted Flintshire schools and communities in 2021-22.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	That members receive the report on period dignity and be assured that the grant funding has been appropriately spent and has helped to meet the needs of those targeted by this Welsh Government initiative.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	PERIOD DIGNITY UPDATE
1.01	<p>Period dignity is about:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Respect - removing any stigma and shame around periods. • Education - helping people understand that periods are normal and healthy. • Equality - making sure everyone has what they need to manage their periods and no-one faces period poverty. <p>No-one should be disadvantaged because they have periods. Everyone should have access to period products, as and when they need them - although unfortunately this is not always the case.</p>

1.02	<p>Context</p> <p>In 2018, research by Plan International brought to light the impact of period poverty on girls in the UK. In December 2021 the Bevan Foundation revealed that more than a third (39%) of Welsh households do not have enough money to buy anything beyond everyday essentials. By 2022 people in Wales are now facing a cost-of-living crisis fuelled by soaring energy bills and other inflationary pressures. Period products are often the first item to be left off the list when choosing between paying for food, rent, bills or period products.</p>
1.03	<p>Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan</p> <p>Welsh Government has outlined its approach to ensuring period dignity in Wales in the Period Dignity Strategic Action Plan, which was open for consultation October 2021 - January 2022.</p> <p>Welsh Government want to end the stigma and shame associated with periods. The action plan:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • sets out a vision for period dignity and the eradication of period poverty • considers what period dignity means across a person’s life time • looks at periods and health, the environment, the workplace and sport and culture. <p>The timeframe for the Plan will apply over the next 5 years and it is expected to be published in full this year.</p>
1.04	<p>Period Dignity Grant</p> <p>Welsh Government have been committed to addressing period poverty for a number of years, and since 2018, have allocated over £9 million to ensure there are products available in every school and college in Wales and across communities for those on low incomes.</p> <p>The criteria for the 2021-22 funding was for period products to be made available to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • all learners in all schools, free of charge and accessible in the most practical and dignified way possible • those who menstruate, from low income households, free of charge and accessible in the most practical and dignified way possible <p>A minimum of 50% of the total amount spent on period products must be used to purchase eco-friendly period products (i.e. re-usable products and/or plastic free) to allow maximum choice for users. Welsh Government intend to increase this to 90%-100% of all products bought under the period dignity grant to be plastic-free, made with reduced plastic or reusable by 2026.</p>

1.05	<p>Flintshire Period Dignity Grant 2021-22</p> <p>In Flintshire for 2021-22 all primary and secondary schools were provided with a proportion of grant funding to purchase period products to ensure they had a consistent supply available which was accessible by any learner who needs them. Funding was allocated in the Autumn term 2021 to 66 primary schools 13 secondary schools – including special schools and PRU.</p> <p>Funding was calculated based on the number of females in each school. The total grant percentage was weighted 70% to secondary schools and 30% primary schools using PLASC Sept 21 data. Guidelines for purchasing products and companies shared and schools maintain records of all orders made.</p> <p>Ongoing partnership working with Flintshire Foodbanks enabled a proportion of the funding to be allocated to ensure the 9 Foodbanks were fully stocked with free period products to assist those most in need.</p> <p>Further funding was also allocated to the Integrated Youth Service in order to supply youth clubs which were reopening after the COVID-19 restrictions were relaxed.</p>
1.06	<p>Flintshire Hey Girls</p> <p>Alongside the above offer to schools and communities in Flintshire, Hey Girls were commissioned to deliver period products direct to homes of girls and young women aged 8-18 years providing they attended a school in Flintshire (including those who are electively home educated).</p> <p>This approach was piloted January – March 2022 in order to establish if there was an appetite among young people to access products in this way. Either the young people themselves, or the parents on their behalf, would choose the products for delivery from environmentally friendly options on a dedicated Hey Girls web page. These included reusable and disposable products. All learners were checked centrally in Education to confirm they were on roll before their orders were processed and a 3 month supply was delivered with discrete packaging.</p> <p>The Hey Girls online ordering was promoted via the Council’s website and through social media. All schools were given appropriate information to share with their learners and families about this campaign, which in turn would reach those in underserved communities.</p> <p>2057 orders were received within the 3 month period with the most orders from learners in Years 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10. 2057 orders equated to the following products delivered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● 6159 daytime pads ● 3705 overnight pads ● 1289 panty liners ● 2400 regular applicator tampons ● 411 Pack of 5 x reusable pads ● 118 small menstrual cup and cleaning pot

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 23 large menstrual cup and cleaning pot • 3596 period pants <p>The benefit of this approach meant young people could select products of their choice and receive these discreetly. There was no large stocks of products occupying storage spaces in schools not being utilised. The closure of schools and community settings during the COVID-19 pandemic brought challenges in ensuring period products reached those in need which is why this creative approach was supported by Flintshire secondary head teachers.</p> <p>Period pants in particular have been very popular - this is a product that all schools would not have routinely stocked from their own funding allocation. Largely positive evaluation findings from the online survey responses have been received.</p>
1.07	<p>Education</p> <p>The 2021-22 period dignity grant funding was the first from Welsh Government that allowed flexibility to fund training for schools alongside the purchasing of period products.</p> <p>Education is crucial in achieving the government’s aim for period dignity. The Relationships and Sexuality Education (RSE) Code and statutory guidance includes the teaching of menstrual well-being at developmentally appropriate phases. It will provide learners with the knowledge and confidence to seek support and to deal with the physical and emotional changes that occur throughout their lives.</p> <p>The RSE Code will apply from September 2022 for schools delivering Curriculum for Wales. All secondary schools in Flintshire will introduce the new curriculum from September 2023. In preparing schools to meet the requirements of the RSE code 14 training workshops were coordinated with a subject specialist for primary and secondary RSE Leads:</p> <p>9 x primary workshops and 5 x secondary workshops held during January to March 2021 with 171 attendances across the 14 workshops. It was recommended that the same staff member would attend 3 workshop dates for primary schools and from the secondary schools, the same member of staff would attend all 5. Based on the representation from schools approx. 2/3 primary schools attended and 3/4 secondary schools.</p> <p>Verbal feedback and group discussions have established there is a need for more resources and information about reusable products and as such, we have purchased with other funding available to the portfolio, the Hey Girls Teacher Training Bumper Kit which includes samples of all the different products (which were available for online ordering) including a menstrual cup, reusable day pad, reusable panty lines, and period pants in addition to a pack of period education cards for every school to support delivery going forward and promote the conversation about reusable products.</p>

	There is a clear need for further training in order to build on the initial workshops delivered to reach more staff and to build confidence in this area.
1.08	2022-23 Period Dignity Grant The Welsh Government have confirmed Flintshire's grant allocation in writing on 15 th June 2022 and planning is now underway.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None identified.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	The grant funding must be claimed in full by 30 April 2023 otherwise any unclaimed part of the Funding will cease to be available to the authority.
4.02	Funding must meet the criteria and reporting requirements as stipulated by Welsh Government.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	There are no appendices to this report.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	Welsh Government Period Dignity strategic Action Plan (closed consultation) https://gov.wales/period-dignity-strategic-action-plan
6.02	The Curriculum for Wales – Relationships and Sexuality Education Code https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2022-01/curriculum-for-wales-relationships-sexuality-education-code.pdf

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Claire Sinnott, Learning Advisor – Health, Wellbeing & Safeguarding Telephone: 01352 704054 E-mail: Claire.sinnott@flintshire.gov.uk

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	RSE – Relationships and Sexuality Education.