

# Public Document Pack

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Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: Cllr Teresa Carberry (Chair)

Councillors: Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Gladys Healey, Gina Maddison,  
Dave Mackie, Ryan McKeown, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece,  
David Richardson, Jason Shallcross and Arnold Woolley

**Co-opted Members:**

Lynn Bartlett and Wendy White

25 November 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**NOTICE OF HYBRID MEETING**  
**EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**THURSDAY, 1ST DECEMBER, 2022 at 2.00 PM**

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum  
Democratic Services Manager

Please note: Attendance at this meeting is either in person in the Council Chamber, Flintshire County Council, County Hall, Mold, Flintshire or on a virtual basis.

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 **APOLOGIES**

**Purpose:** To receive any apologies.

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

**Purpose:** To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

### 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 5 - 22)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 10 and 20 October, 2022.

### 4 **FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING** (Pages 23 - 34)

Report of Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator

**Purpose:** To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.

### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 - TO CONSIDER THE EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 15 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure until such time as those consultations/negotiations have been concluded.

### 5 **MTFS & BUDGET SETTING 2023-24 (STAGE 2)** (Pages 35 - 52)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

**Purpose:** That the Committee reviews and comments on the cost pressures and overall budget strategy, and advises on any areas of cost efficiency it would like to see explored further.

### **THE MEETING WILL CONTINUE IN PUBLIC SESSION FOLLOWING CONSIDERATION OF AGENDA ITEM 5**

**6 ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION (Pages 53 - 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 the Committee with an update on the levels of pupils being Electively Home Educated and the Council's oversight of this group of learners.

**7 INTEGRATED YOUTH PROVISION – DELIVERY PLAN UPDATE (Pages 59 - 118)**

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 to the Committee on the Integrated Youth Provision Delivery Plan

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

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## **EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**10 OCTOBER 2022**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Monday 10 October 2022.

### **PRESENT: Councillor Teresa Carberry (Chair)**

Councillors: Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Gladys Healey, Gina Maddison, Dave Mackie, Ryan McKeown, Andrew Parkhurst, David Richardson and Arnold Woolley.

**APOLOGIES:** Lynn Bartlett, Jeanette Rock and Mrs Wendy White

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Councillors: Mel Buckley (for Councillor Carolyn Preece) and Rob Davies (for Councillor Jason Shallcross)

### **CONTRIBUTORS:**

Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure, Chief Officer (Education & Youth)  
Senior Manager for School Improvement and Martyn Froggett and David Edwards and Phil McTague (GwE) (for minute number 23)  
Strategic Finance Manager – Schools (for minute number 25)  
Senior Manager (Business Change & Support)

### **IN ATTENDANCE:**

Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

## **20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

There were no declarations of interest.

## **21. MINUTES**

The minutes of the joint meeting with the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee held on the 30 June were received.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst referred to page 14 and asked if the Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) had spoken to colleagues in the Educational Psychology Services regarding children with Special Educational Needs. As the Senior Manager (Inclusion and Progression) was unable to attend this meeting the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) agreed to speak with her and report back to Councillor Parkhurst following the meeting.

The minutes of the meetings held on the 14 July and 29 July 2022 were both received.

The three sets of minutes were moved as a correct record by Councillor Bill Crease and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 30 June, 14 July and 29 July 2022 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chair.

**22. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme which had been amended following the last meeting and incorporated suggestions made by members of the Committee. Referring to the Action Tracking Report the Facilitator confirmed that all actions were now completed. There was one ongoing item from Adviser for Health, Well-being and Safeguarding who had confirmed she was chasing responses and would circulate these once received.

In response to a question from Councillor Bill Crease on how the internet access of staff at schools was managed and monitored, the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) confirmed that all schools had acceptable use policies, which staff had to sign, and that the internet and firewall were monitored at County Hall. A report on social media and internet safety was brought to Committee annually and was included on the Forward Work Programme. She agreed to speak with the Adviser for Health, Well-being and Safeguarding and provide a response for Councillor Crease following the meeting.

The recommendations, as outlined within the report, were moved by Councillor Bill Crease and seconded by Councillor Paul Cunningham.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**23. REGIONAL SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS AND IMPROVEMENT SERVICE (GWE) ANNUAL REPORT 2021-2022**

The Chair thanked GwE for the support they had provided during the Pandemic to school leaders and for their continuing support to Flintshire schools with the roll out of the Curriculum for Wales (CfW).

Mr Martyn Froggett (Supporting Improvement Adviser) explained a presentation had been prepared which was in addition to the reports attached to the agenda. He introduced Phil McTague (Secondary Core Lead) and David Edwards (Primary Core Lead) who would also be assisting with the presentation which focussed on work currently undertaken in schools, information on Welsh Government (WG) policies and pandemic recovery support for schools.

The Primary Core Lead gave a presentation which covered the following areas: -

- The three main priorities for GwE:-
  - Implementing Curriculum for Wales
  - Ensuring robust self-evaluation processes
  - Estyn Inspections
- Primary – Curriculum for Wales
  - identified the unique factors of their school and how these contribute to the four purposes
  - reviewed their vision, values and behaviours to support the curriculum
  - been mindful of the key considerations e.g. statutory and mandatory elements
  - reviewed curriculum design models
  - considered the role of progression and pedagogy in their curriculum
  - begun to design, plan, trial and evaluate new topics.
- Primary – Self-evaluation & quality assurance
- Primary – Estyn Inspections

The Secondary Core Lead continued with the presentation which covered the following areas: -

- Secondary – Support for Curriculum for Wales
  - All Flintshire schools have made extensive use of the regional support programme
  - Engagement in regional /local planning groups is good.
  - Schools have taken up the offer of specific for bespoke input from the GwE team on teaching and learning
  - There is increasing collaborative work through clusters and through alliances
  - ‘Six Steps’ reports (focussing on the Education Minister’s requirements of progress toward CfW) were undertaken with all schools in the summer term following discussions between schools and their SIAs

- Secondary – self-evaluation & quality assurance
- Preparation for inspection in secondary schools under the new Estyn Framework

In response to a question from Councillor Andrew Parkhurst on the robustness and objective measurement of Estyn Inspections, Mr Martyn Froggett (Supporting Improvement Adviser) said previously with Estyn focussing on exam results the work that pupils had achieved in the classroom had taken second place. Now Estyn's base of evidence was the books the pupils were currently working from and the lessons that they were having which were moderated and he explained how this would work in schools. GwE were supporting schools but said that it would take some time for the shared understanding of progression to be established.

Mr Phil McTague (Secondary Core Lead) explained that it was the in-school variant which was more significant, and he explained what GwE were focussing on. He provided information on the question level analysis which would enable training strategies to be provided to bring about improvements. The data for the in-school variants, the question level analysis and classroom observations would drive progression and standards. He felt that this ensured a more research informed accountability in schools rather than comparing one school to another as regards progress especially as data is one element of a school's performance.

Councillor Dave Mackie outlined his view on the role of Members at Scrutiny Committees and the need to ask questions relating to reports presented to the Committee. He raised concern that the presentation provided did not relate to the report but focussed on priorities for the future. He raised a number of questions on the data provided in the report and questioned the need for additional explanations to the data.

In response the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) said that a significant amount of documentation had been appended to the report which reflected on the work of the School Improvement Service over the last 12 months. The presentation was provided to reassure members of the current position of the service in the new academic year and the focus moving forward building on the priorities for improvement reflected in the reports. Evaluation had been undertaken at GwE level, Local Authority level, through Management Board and the Joint Committee to identify the direction of the service going forward. GwE was a joint service commissioned with all six local authorities in Wales and she understood Councillor Mackie's comments around value for money and said that combined with the next report on Self Evaluation Members should be assured that the Council was getting value for money. The progress and strong performance within schools was being seen in the standards achieved and was an indication of the extensive support provided by GwE through the school improvement advisers to schools and head teachers and the significant level of engagement with the professional learning provided by GwE to Flintshire schools.



The Chief Officer agreed to feedback Councillor Mackie's comments regarding comparison data to Management Board but added the service had to change its model as the situation in schools had changed with statutory education suspended. Inspections ceased with WG making several changes with the focus on safety and well being of staff and pupils. During the last year the focus had been on education but within the constraints of the Pandemic and she outlined the implications. The reports tried to outline the core purposes and situations in schools, but the focus was now getting back to the school improvement function, quality self-evaluation and the quality of teaching learners in the classroom. Flintshire schools were responding well to those quality interventions which ensured learners achieved their best possible outcomes. Where there were concerns, she outlined the detailed mechanisms in place to provide extra interventions to ensure they were effective.

Councillor Mackie replied that the role of Members was to be a critical friend and provide challenge. He felt that the critical element was that GwE had not provided the objectives they were looking for, the path they would take to achieve those objectives and obtain the improvement identified. He felt that this information should be provided in order for Members to undertake appropriate scrutiny.

Councillor Bill Crease said that moving away from exam centric performance evaluation to pupil centric performance appealed greatly to him but had its own challenges to evaluate progress. He agreed with the comments made by Councillor Mackie and said that being able to evaluate and attempt valuable scrutiny of the reports was difficult and said that the data needed to be more focused.

The Chair said that she saw GwE as a supportive critical friend with high expectations for our schools. She understood that the Curriculum for Wales considered partnership working between schools, WG, GwE and interested service providers. She also understood that WG were working to provide resources to support this Curriculum and valued the presentation. The report provided information on the work which had preceded but the presentation outlined what would be happening moving forward. GwE provided valuable support to schools and that the end point of a child's education was not going to be measured on their exam results and that there were so many other things within schools which had to be observed.

The Senior Manager for School Improvement reported that the landscape was changing from focused accountability to looking at the whole provision of education and that her role was to scrutinise GwE and that the objectives within the report were for the whole system alongside the other 5 Local Authorities and to drive standards nationally across Wales. The detailed operational activity was on a school-to-school basis, and she welcomed the support of GwE to enable the research for each individual school to ensure inconsistencies were tackled, standards were raised, and best practice was shared across all areas. Talking to learners, looking at evidence, skills progression and well being would raise standards across Wales for all learners. The core vision, purpose, accountability framework, support for children with additional learning needs would drive this forward.

The Chief Officer acknowledged that there had been a significant workload for Members due to the number and scale of the reports as GwE were keen to share the

level of work and transformation following the pandemic together with information on the implementation of the new Curriculum. She provided information on the Management Board and GwE Joint Committee saying these reports had been presented to these committees. The feedback on the reports as regards size, scale and focus would be taken back.

The Facilitator confirmed that she had made note of the questions made by Councillor Mackie and would be taking those up as actions following the meeting.

Councillor Mackie referred to the Chief Officer's comments and said if more focussed reports could be included in the recommendations and if more information was required then this could be dealt with as a workshop which would enable officers to brief members.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee accept the Annual Report from GwE, whilst noting the positive impact of the regional service in supporting Flintshire schools throughout the pandemic, maintaining the focus on effective and successful schools and supporting schools in their preparations for the implementation of the new Curriculum for Wales.

**24. SELF-EVALUATION REPORT EDUCATION SERVICES 2021-22**

In presenting the report the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) provided an overview of the April 2021 to March 2022 Self Evaluation. She stated that with the suspension of Estyn inspections, the portfolio's previous two evaluation reports had not followed the Local Government Education Services (LGES) Inspection framework. The portfolio had now reverted to that structure as Inspections had resumed, the Authority's last inspection took place in 2019, and Estyn were proposing to complete this cycle by the summer of 2024. Information was provided on the focus of self-evaluation which identified strengths, areas to improve and how these improvements were made. The Estyn area framework together with the four recommendations made were included in the report and the portfolio continued to make progress against these recommendations despite the challenges of the pandemic. The recommendations were also embedded in the priorities of the Council Plan and the portfolio's business plan.

In response to a question from Councillor Dave Mackie on data information, the Chief Officer clarified that because of the decision made by the Welsh Government (WG) it was not possible to provide data on individual schools. She referred to section 1.01 of the report which reflected the current situation in schools and said all secondary schools had support plans in place to focus on the priorities that each school had identified. At 1.03 of the report information was provided on attendance and exclusions, which had been discussed at the last meeting.

In response to further comments around data, the Chief Officer explained that the working environment had changed, and she was unable to provide tables of data on examination results and the models for pupil assessment had changed making it difficult to compare data. She felt a workshop for Members would be beneficial to enable more information to be provided. The Local Quality Board had these in-depth discussions and at the next meeting the school performance monitoring processes would be discussed, and members would be able to join these discussions with the only external validation being the current Estyn inspection reports. This evaluation was a summary of the portfolio's performance over that year

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst referred to section 1.05 of the report which stated the role was to rigorously challenge schools and provide targeted support and said maybe it would be clearer for the Committee if an explanation was provided on how that was undertaken. In response, the Chief Officer said that this would tie in with a report from the School Performance Monitoring Group which would provide information on the escalation process. At those meetings the current situation of every school was discussed in detail with emerging issues or concerns highlighted and a plan put in place from either the Authority or GwE to support that school.

The Senior Manager for School Improvement confirmed that there was a clear support process and escalation process in place in schools. A report was brought to Committee last year on how this was being looked at regionally and those processes had been in place through the School Performance Monitoring Group for several years. She outlined how the 360 support plans and support for governance, finance or HR processes were provided to schools. She reported on her fortnightly meetings with the GwE Core Lead for Primary and Secondary as well as other meetings with colleagues from the Authority and GwE. This provided an overview of themes for individual schools or several schools to be established to enable specific professional development to be provided.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Bill Crease and seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkhurst.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the outcome of the Education Portfolio's annual self-evaluation report on the quality of education services for the period 2021-2022.

## **25. SCHOOL RESERVES YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2022**

In presenting the annual report the Strategic Finance Manager (Schools) provided detailed information on the overall level of reserves held by Flintshire schools which had been impacted by the pandemic. She explained that the report had been shared with Head Teachers, the School Budget Forum and the Governance and Audit Committee.

The Strategic Finance Manager provided detailed information on the school reserves across the three sectors, highlighted the reserves for individual schools and the trends over the last 5 years. She referred to 2020 when there were worryingly

low levels of school reserves and said the increases over the past 2 years had been welcomed. This coincided with significant increased funding to schools by WG over the last 2 years and this was outlined at section 1.03 of the report with every school having specific reasons for the level of their school balances and individual plan in place for the future. There had to be a balance to ensure that the funding was spent on the education of the current pupils, and that excess amounts of funding were not being held back without clear reasons, so the school did not fall into deficit. She provided information on the Council's role in monitoring school reserves and explained that each school had been requested to complete a reserves declaration form and a Medium-Term Plan had been requested for the next 3 years outlining what schools were planning.

In response to a suggestion from Councillor Dave Mackie around ensuring tables were presented in the same format throughout reports, the Strategic Finance Manager agreed to ensure this was amended for future reports.

In response to a question from Councillor Mackie on actual reserves being distorted by grant funding, the Strategic Finance Manager said that last year the value of the grants was taken away from the reserves, however last year was different to this year as one of the biggest grants was for revenue repair and maintenance in schools which did not arrive until the last few days in March giving schools no opportunity to spend that money. Schools would have dealt with them in different ways some spending it straight away whilst others were using grants to fund work over the summer with this still in their balances. She said presenting it this way highlighted the increased level that schools had received and the potential impact on the level of school reserves.

In response to a question on increasing council tax to assist with deficit budgets in secondary schools, the Strategic Finance Manager confirmed that there was an additional amount of funding put into the secondary school's budget in 2020/2021 because of the Estyn recommendation 4 addressing secondary school deficits more effectively. This was outside of the secondary funding formula and targeted specifically towards deficit reduction. It had been effective but there had been a lot of grant funding provided so they had worked together to improve the financial position at those schools. She then provided information on meetings held with schools in line with the Protocol for Schools in Financial Deficit and support provided for schools who were not able to obtain a balanced budget and maintain a balanced curriculum.

Councillor Mackie said this was a difficult situation for schools and asked if the Strategic Finance Manager had seen any specific reasons for schools to understand why small secondary schools were struggling. In response, the Strategic Finance Manager felt there were two factors, but every school was different. Smaller schools were limited with the leadership and economy of scale especially if the community they served had deprived areas with families in poverty. She was undertaking research on this as regards to funding and how poverty affected educational attainment. She would be discussing this at the Secondary Heads meetings to see how these areas could be targeted in the formula more than what was there at present.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Gladys Healey and seconded by Councillor Dave Mackie.

**RESOLVED:**

That the level of school reserves as at the 31 March 2022 be noted.

**26. UNIVERSAL PRIMARY FREE SCHOOL MEALS (UPFSM)**

The report was introduced by the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) and contained an update on the roll out of the Universal Primary Free School Meal Programme (UPFSM) in Flintshire. This was a commitment made by Welsh Government (WG) with the authority opting for a phased approach. There had been significant challenges with NEWydd and schools which had been acknowledged by the Minister for Education and Welsh Language who had written to all Local Authorities expressing his thanks for their hard work. She provided information on the Working Group which had enabled the rollout to commence in September 2022 to Reception aged children with infant children in years 1 and 2 receiving their meals from April 2023 with all primary aged children receiving this by 2024. She stressed that those families who were entitled to Free School Meals must continue to apply for those benefits as so much funding goes into schools based on that entitlement to a free school meal. She was concerned that once this was universal that parents would be under the impression that they did not need to claim but this was so important and could have an adverse effect on the funding which went into schools.

Councillor Dave Mackie had concerns around the extra staff members that would be required and wondered if this should be included on the Forward Work Programme as he had been told there were issues around staffing to support free school meals. In response the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) confirmed that this was an area of concern saying NEWydd had had significant challenges recruiting. The portfolio and schools did what they could to support NEWydd and she was not aware of any school not being able to deliver this meal offer. This was a national issue with vacancies for catering, classroom assistants, specialist schools' staff and this was being monitored as the rollout continued.

Councillor Gladys Healey firstly thanked Welsh Government (WG) for doing this especially in the current climate. She said as a Governor we were able to write to parents to remind them to claim for their free school meals. The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) added that there had been a media campaign via social media and the website and asking schools to keep this message on their websites and newsletters.

The first recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkhurst.

The second recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

The third recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Mel Buckley and seconded by Gina Maddison.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the committee note the progress made to date on implementation of UPFSM;
- (b) That the committee note the resource implications and risks identified in relation to UPFSM; and
- (c) That the committee support the UPFSM Policy and local implementation.

**27. COUNCIL PLAN 2022-23 TIMELINE REVIEW**

The Chair reported that for the Education & Youth portfolio there were 32 core business items on the timeline with estimated completion dates together with 7 project items with start dates and estimated completion dates.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) commented that when the Council Plan was presented to Committee there was concern that several of the actions had an end of year reporting date of the 31 March 2023. The Senior Management Team had reviewed these dates and some of the actions had been given earlier completion dates. She confirmed that updates on these would be given during the usual performance reporting cycle.

Councillor Dave Mackie asked if the date had passed did that mean that the action had been completed. The Chief Officer confirmed that this was correct.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Bill Crease and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee agree the Council Plan Part 1 reviewed and updated timelines for completion, as shown at Appendix 1 of the report.

**28. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 12.24 pm)

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**Chair**

**EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**  
**20 OCTOBER 2022**

Minutes of the hybrid meeting of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held on Thursday 20 October 2022.

**PRESENT: Councillor Teresa Carberry (Chair)**

Councillors: Bill Crease, Paul Cunningham, Dave Mackie, Ryan McKeown, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece, David Richardson, Jason Shallcross and Arnold Woolley.

**CO-OPTEEs:** Mrs Wendy White

**APOLOGIES:** Councillors Gladys Healey, Gina Maddison and Mrs Lynne Bartlett

**SUBSTITUTIONS:** Councillors: Tina Claydon (for Councillor Gladys Healey) and Linda Thomas (for Councillor Gina Maddison)

**CONTRIBUTORS:**

Councillor Ian Roberts, Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure, Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Education & Youth), Play Development Officer and Senior Manager Integrated Youth Provision (for minute number 31) Senior Manager for School Improvement (for minute numbers 32 and 33) Learning Advisor for Post 16 and Adult Community Learning (for minute numbers 32)

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator, Democratic Services Manager and Democratic Services Officer

**29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)**

There were no declarations of interest.

**30. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING**

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the current Forward Work Programme which had been updated to include the additional item on School Parking. This followed a request from the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and Members of that Committee would be invited to join the meeting for that item. There were no further changes to the Forward Work Programme.

Referring to the Action Tracking Report the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator confirmed that all actions from the last meeting were included. She clarified that the action relating to the information requested by Councillor Crease was now

completed. The only ongoing action was the response to questions by Councillor Dave Mackie.

Following the last meeting a workshop had been arranged with GwE Officers for Monday 5 December at 2.00 pm and an email confirmation for Members would be sent to Committee Members following the meeting.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst thanked the Chief Officer (Education & Youth) for her response to his request on the attainment gap of looked after children. He was pleased that a review of the educational performance of looked after children was being presented to Committee later this year.

The recommendations, as outlined within the report, were moved by Councillor Carolyn Preece and seconded by Councillor Andrew Parkhurst.

**RESOLVED:**

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

**31. FLINTSHIRE COUNTY SUMMER PLAYScheme 2022**

In presenting the report the Senior Manager - Integrated Youth Provision said the successful Summer Playschemes had been running since 1996. He provided information on the 57 playschemes which included criteria for site locations, with the involvement of 30 Town & Community Councils and the 2 targeted Welsh language sites. A bi-lingual approach was being developed with all play workers receiving Welsh language training. Over the summer there were approaching 4,000 registrations, with 15,500 attending the 2 hours sessions with the data captured digitally for each session. This had enabled parents to enrol their children prior to attending ensuring the smooth running of the sessions with information in relation to the children already uploaded. He then outlined the on-line Health & Safety Risk Assessments and revenue received from Town & Community Councils, the Play Works Grant and the Summer of Fun Grant to support the schemes. The situation was still unclear regarding the funding for the Summer of Fun and Winter of Well Being. The Senior Manager also referred to the consultation undertaken with the young people and their families which was fed back to progress that provision and he outlined how the play provision could be developed.

The Senior Manager then reflected on the work undertaken by Janet Roberts over the last 26 years. Janet was retiring and he personally wanted to thank her for all her support. She left the service in a positive place with 90 young people employed over the summer with some retained to join the Youth Service.



Councillor Dave Mackie firstly said that he was sad that Janet was leaving and reflected on the discussions he had had with her at Committee over many years. He referred to workshops he had attended with Janet saying it was her enthusiasm which came across and said it had been a delight to be a part of her journey.

Referring to the report, Councillor Mackie said he would have liked to have seen the objectives and information on what they were trying to achieve during the preparation of the playschemes included with the outcomes highlighted in the report. He felt that this would enable the Committee to understand the direction the service was going and ask questions. In response, the Senior Manager - Integrated Youth Provision took Councillor Mackie's points on board saying that in January the service would be implementing a new system which would enable the mapping of provision against the play sufficiency assessment and other local data. He outlined how this data would highlight the reasons why schemes were placed in certain communities, the decision-making framework and where sustainable provision was determined.

In response to a question raised by Councillor Carolyn Preece, the Chief Officer agreed to take the comments on the letters to Town & Community Councils back to potentially getting the notifications out sooner and to also demonstrate how much their contribution made to the scheme. Referring to the Summer of Fun point she confirmed the Council would continue to press Welsh Government (WG) for further funding because of young peoples' emotional and physical well being

The Chief Officer was delighted that Janet Roberts (Play Development Officer) was present today to enable her to thank her for her years of service at Flintshire County Council. Her dedication to all things play had been Janet's drive and ambition and instrumental in making the playscheme programme such a success. The report provided information on the range of opportunities provided for children and young people through the playschemes. The Play Development Officer thanked Councillor Mackie and the Senior Manager for their comments. She said this work was so important and she thanked members for their support. She thanked her Chief Officer and Line Managers over the last 26 years who had been so supportive. She said that it had been her passion and privilege to work with the children of the county. The programme provided little moments of well being for children and young people and with schemes such as the buddy scheme, support for Ukrainian children and looked after children providing that 2 hour of play which in some cases had been the safest place for those children.

The Chair referred to the report where the terms "children with disabilities" and "vulnerable" were used and she said that the preferred terms now used were disabled children and at-risk children. She referred to the support provided to Ukrainian children and asked if support was also provided to Syrian and Afghan families. The Chief Officer confirmed that it was provided.

The Chair then spoke to Janet saying that although they had not met, she had heard so much about the work she had undertaken and said that on behalf of the Committee she would like to give a small gift as a token of their thanks.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Carolyn Preece and seconded by Councillor Ryan McKeown

## **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee acknowledge the effective partnership with local Town and Community Councils to deliver the universal playscheme offers for all children aged 5-12 years across the county during the summer and 5-17 years for the Flintshire Buddy scheme providing for children with disabilities;
- (b) That the Committee acknowledge the contribution from Welsh Government (WG) for summer play scheme via the Holiday Playworks grant and urge WG to continue to make this funding available; and
- (c) That the Committee note the ongoing developments within the service to strengthen the relationships with partner organisations to ensure that the most at-risk children in Flintshire were identified and provided with play opportunity in the summer.

## **32. ESTYN INSPECTION OF ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING (ACL) WITHIN THE NORTH EAST WALES ADULT COMMUNITY LEARNING PARTNERSHIP**

The Chair congratulated the Adult Community Learning Team for achieving the positive Estyn Inspection Report. She was pleased to see that two case studies had been requested by Estyn as they had observed best practice and would wish to share this. She was also satisfied that the areas for improvement mentioned in the report had already been previously acknowledged by the Adult Community Learning Partnership highlighting their robust self-evaluation.

The Senior Manager for School Improvement thanked the Chair for her comments. She provided a brief outline of the ambitious partnership working with Wrexham which had enabled the North-East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership to scale up the provision and opportunities for adult learners. Much of this work had been undertaken during the pandemic with the Partnership growing during this time, especially the level of engagement with Partners. An outline of the progress since this period and discussions held with Estyn around the vision for the Partnership was given and the increased funding providing that momentum to ensure that this continued for many years to come. Referring to the report from Estyn and the request for two case studies which endorsed the vision and direction of the Partnership especially with recommendations 1 to 3 already identified in the Partnership's Quality Improvement plan (QIP) which was shared with Estyn during the Inspection. Regarding recommendation 4 the social media campaign provided during 2020/21 highlighted how opportunities for engagement were provided to learners during this time and she provided information on how learners can find out about and enrol on courses as well as plans for further engagement moving forward.

The Adviser for Post 16 and Adult Community Learning said the Partnership was delighted with the outcome of the report especially coming at the end of the first year. It had provided reassurance to the team around the processes such as the self-evaluation report and quality improvement plan. This had also helped identify

the next steps to improve the opportunities and outcomes of all adult learners in Flintshire.

Councillor Dave Mackie congratulated the team on the inspection report and the work undertaken within a year.

In response to several comments raised by Councillor Dave Mackie, the Senior Manager for School Improvement said these were the same questions raised at the Management Board, Curriculum and Quality meetings and sat within the Quality Improvement Plan for the Board. She hoped that future reports to Committee would provide information on the outcomes and achievements as the Partnership develops. The national data collection on attendance, completion rates and attainment rates had been paused during Covid, but she said that work was ongoing to ensure that the next collection of data was presented. A future report to Committee would highlight how those recommendations had been developed into actions and outcomes. She provided information on the mapping of provision, online presence, together with the buildings used and said that this information was fed into the Council's corporate plan and portfolio business plan. She then provided an update on family learning which had been embraced by schools.

The Adviser for Post 16 and Adult Community Learning provided an overview of the launch of the Family Learning Programme last year and the meetings held with Officers, Heads Federation, Deputy Heads of primary schools to promote Adult Community Learning. This had been successful with 14 primary schools and 2 high schools involved on different projects and she explained what topics they were covering. She provided information on the Wellies in the Wood programme working with 200 parents focusing on reading, communication and working outdoors.

Councillor Carolyn Preece commented that this was excellent, especially with Estyn asking for two best practice case studies to promote this programme across Wales. As the Estyn narrative and framework had changed, she wondered if a training session would be useful for Members to understand what Estyn looked at and the type of wording that they now used in their reports.

Councillor Bill Crease reported on his time working in adult education and understood the positive impacts that projects like this could make. Referring to the recommendations he said Scrutiny should be able to construct a series of measurable objectives from the four recommendations which the Committee could regularly review and measure progress.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) thanked Councillors Mackie and Crease for their helpful comments and the reassurance provided by the Senior Manager for School Improvement as regards to the next steps in taking the recommendations forward. The detailed action plans would be delivered through the Partnership and presented back to Committee for members to have that overview and scrutinise progress against those recommendations. She thanked the Senior Manager – School Improvement and the Adviser for Post 16 and Adult Community Learning and the team involved in the Partnership for their work which had resulted in a fantastic offer for residents in Flintshire and Wrexham.

Councillor Mackie referred to the overview provided by the Adviser for Post 16 and Adult Community Learning and said the need had clearly been identified and the department had looked at how to set up the process to support that need.

The Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure added his congratulations to everyone involved saying it was a tremendous achievement and the accolades from Estyn were deserved.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Bill Crease and seconded by Councillor Jason Shallcross.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee note the findings of the Estyn Inspection and were assured by the positive outcomes for adult community learning provision in Flintshire.

**33. LEARNING FROM THE SCHOOL PERFORMANCE MONITORING GROUP**

In presenting the report the Senior Manager for School Improvement outlined the work of the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG) which included the support provided and challenges faced by schools which were underperforming. She provided information on the constant changes within schools regarding school improvement whether locally or nationally with every school on their own improvement journey to better focus on the outcomes of their young people. All schools had support plans and mechanisms to assist with the delivery of their improvement priorities. Sometimes a more focused support was required, and she reported on the Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service for North Wales (GwE) meetings which looked at the progress of individual schools and she outlined how schools would be approached. If a school required that extra support, then this would be escalated and then to the Quality Board for the Local Authority and GwE and a decision could then be made to escalate to the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG). This was a positive productive process which enabled rapid improvement. We would not want any school to fall under this process but with the challenges that schools faced it was inevitable that this would happen. During the pandemic this was paused, and the postponement of Estyn visits delayed some schools from coming out of SPMG. The key points were the next steps agreed to help schools improve and she explained the different framework for accountability.

Councillor Dave Mackie spoke as a previous panel member and explained with the support of the Chief Officer he had continued to learn. He said this process worked and created the right environment and right outcomes for schools to get back on track.

Councillor Carolyn Preece agreed said that she had attended many inspections where schools had been put into special measures. It was very clear when she re-visited the school with Estyn that it did work. She referred to the second recommendation and asked if her name could be put forward.

Mrs Wendy White referred to the faith schools within Flintshire and commended the Senior Manager and Chief Officer (Education & Youth) for the support provided and said Flintshire had the most positive way of working with the Catholic Diocese.

The Chief Officer confirmed that this was a well-established successful process which provided support and challenge to schools delivering that intervention prior to an Estyn Inspection. She referred to the Estyn inspection in 2011 which recommended that members sit on this panel to gain a better understanding of the situation in schools with officers appreciating the perspective of Members on that Panel. Members who were school governors had experience of their own school but having that objective view to enable to ask questions of schools and to challenge officers to ensure the right support was provided. Because of the regular meetings the progress of the support plans could be monitored and the impact on improvements could be highlighted. She suggested any member who was interested in being on the panel should email herself, the Senior Manager for School Improvement or the Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator. A workshop would then be arranged with those members to provide extra detail.

The first recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Paul Cunningham and seconded by Councillor Bill Crease.

The second recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Andrew Parkhurst and seconded by Councillor Paul Cunningham

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the Committee note the work undertaken by the School Performance Monitoring Group and the transition from national categorisation of schools to the new school improvement framework; and
- (b) That the Committee confirm the following Members who would be available to represent the Committee at meetings of the School Performance Monitoring Group:-
  - Councillors: Bill Crease, Andrew Parkhurst, Carolyn Preece and Arnold Woolley

#### **34. COUNCIL PLAN 2023-28**

In presenting the Council Plan Report for 2023-28 the Chief Executive referred to the Local Government & Elections Wales Act 2021 and said that there was no longer a statutory requirement to prepare a Council Plan. The Plan set out the basis upon which the Council was meeting the performance requirements with robust plans setting out the journey to meeting those requirements. He referred Members to section 1.02 of the report, and he explained how the review had been carried out. He then referred Members to section 1.04 of the report and to the Appendix which outlined the proposed priorities which would be reviewed by the Committee on a regular basis.

Councillor Andrew Parkhurst referred to definitions under Education and Skills and could not see anything specific relating to equality of outcome especially for disadvantaged children and those going through the care system.

The Chief Officer (Education & Youth) referred to the first item on Education and Achievement and said she could not guarantee equality of outcome for every learner. Every learner would come with different backgrounds, experiences and cognitive abilities which would impact on their subsequent educational achievement. It was the council and school's role to provide an equality of opportunity to give all learners the opportunity to engage with the curriculum offer and with the broader extra curriculum offer on emotional health and wellbeing.

Councillor Parkhurst accepted it was outside the Council's ability to achieve that but did not see the desire or objective in there and was concerned that it would not receive the attention that it needed. The Chief Officer explained that this was a high-level objective and that within the Council Plan would be a series of specific targets for the portfolio to work to. She reassured Councillor Parkhurst that those targets were reflective of all learners within Flintshire and looked specifically at inequality and the impact that that had on education. She would take this back to ensure this was referenced in a way that was manageable and achievable.

The Chair thought that Flintshire was seen as providing opportunities for raising self-esteem, wellbeing and improving the education for a very diverse range of people. She thanked all of those who were making this possible, building confidence, providing safe spaces and preparing many to enhance their skills to take up more gainful employment and indeed improve their life and social skills. The impact of this work was finding its way into the wider community also and there was a definite recognition that working partnerships enhanced the offer. The Chair agreed with the suggestion made by Councillor Preece that an Estyn workshop would be of benefit to the Committee and suggested that this was put on the forward work programme.

The recommendation, as outlined within the report, was moved by Councillor Carolyn Preece and seconded by Councillor David Richardson.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Committee support the proposed Priorities, Sub-priorities and Well-being objectives of the Council Plan 2023-28, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report.

**35. MEMBERS OF THE PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

There were no members of the press in attendance.

(The meeting started at 2.00 p.m. and ended at 3.27 pm)

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**Chair**



## EDUCATION YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
<b>Report Author</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

The Committee is asked to consider, and amend where necessary, the Forward Work Programme for the Education Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

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

### RECOMMENDATION

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

## **REPORT DETAILS**

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

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	None as a result of this report.

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



<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	None as a result of this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Draft Forward Work Programme  Appendix 2 – Action Tracking for the Education Youth & Culture OSC.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Minutes of previous meetings of the Committee as identified in Appendix 2.  <b>Contact Officer:</b> Ceri Shotton Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702305 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk">ceri.shotton@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

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

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**CURRENT FWP**

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer
<p><b>Thursday 2<sup>nd</sup> February, 2023</b></p> <p><b>2.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Music Service Theatr Clwyd</b></p> <p><b>School Parking</b></p> <p><b>Council Plan 2022-23 Mid-Year Performance Reporting</b></p>	<p>To provide the Committee with information on the Music Service, including numbers of learners.</p> <p>To provide information on the traffic regulation process and enforcement provision (referred by the Environment &amp; Economy OSC)</p> <p>To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.</p>	<p>Information Sharing</p> <p>Information Sharing</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth)</p> <p>Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) and Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth)</p> <p>Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth)</p>
<p><b>Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 2023</b></p> <p><b>2.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Anti-racist Wales Action Plan</b></p>	<p>To outline how the Council is meeting the requirements of the Welsh Government Anti-racist Wales Action Plan in line with the development of the new Curriculum for Wales.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth)</p>
<p><b>Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May, 2023</b></p> <p><b>2.00pm</b></p>	<p><b>Tackling Inequality</b></p>	<p>To outline how the Council supporting early childhood education and care, primary and secondary education and all forms of post-16 education, training and lifelong learning to ensure an equitable education system for all.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth)</p>

	<p><b>Supporting Service Children in Education</b></p> <p><b>Attendance &amp; Exclusions</b></p>	<p>To provide an update report to outline the priority actions of schools following the audit.</p> <p>To provide Members with an overview of school attendance and exclusions and the role of the Portfolio’s support services in this area.</p>	<p>Information Sharing</p> <p>Information Sharing</p>	<p>Senior Manager – School Improvement</p> <p>Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth)</p>
<p><b>Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> June, 2023</b></p> <p><b>Joint meeting with S&amp;HC</b></p> <p><b>ASC - 2.00pm</b></p> <p>Page 28</p>	<p><b>Safeguarding in Education including Internet Safety and Social Media</b></p> <p><b>Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018</b></p> <p><b>Looked After Children in Flintshire</b></p>	<p>To provide an update on the discharge of statutory safeguarding duties in schools and the Education portfolio. To include information on Relationship and Sexual Education and how this was contributing to reducing harm.</p> <p>To outline the approach to the identification and commissioning of post 16 education for Flintshire young people.</p> <p>To provide an update on the provision for Looked After Children. And to provide an update on the challenges, positive working and how young people were supported through the pilot to provide funding directly to looked after children leaving care.</p>	<p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p> <p>Assurance Monitoring</p>	<p>Chief Officer (Education &amp; Youth) and Healthy Schools Practitioner</p> <p>Senior Manager – Inclusion &amp; Progression</p> <p>Senior Manager – Inclusion &amp; Progression</p>

	<b>Supporting Refugees in Schools</b>	To provide information and an overview of support service provided to support refugees in schools.	Information Sharing	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Thursday 13<sup>th</sup> July, 2023</b>  <b>2.00pm</b>	<b>Annual Report from Regional School Improvement Service, GwE</b>	To receive an update on the support provided by the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, GWE and its impact on schools	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Education & Youth) and Managing Director of GwE
	<b>Estyn Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) within the North East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership</b>	To present the detailed action plan and next steps.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
	<b>Council Plan 2022-23 Year-End Performance</b>	To review the levels of progress in the achievement of activities and performance levels identified in the Council Plan.	Assurance Monitoring	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)

Item	Purpose of information report	Month
Health & Safety in Schools	Information report on accidents during the academic year and the actions taken to support schools in achieving healthy and safe environment.	December
Parking Outside Schools	To provide information from the Highways Team on legislation around parking outside schools and the mechanism in place for joint working with the Police and Schools.	-
Policies for dealing with bullying in schools	To provide information on School Policies for dealing with instances of bullying.	-

**Items to be scheduled**

- Healthy Schools report - to include overview of Healthy Schools Programme, Challenges of Pandemic, Design to Smile and public health risk of Vape use by pupils – **As agreed during the July, 2022 meeting.**
- School Meals Service - to include overview of structural changes since moving across to NEWYDD, central production model, plans for universal roll out of Free School Meals and use of processed food in school meals - **As agreed during the July, 2022 meeting.**
- Update to be requested from IT on issues with PSPA, National infrastructure challenges in Flintshire - **As agreed during the July, 2022 meeting.**
- Recycling School Uniforms – **Referred to the Committee from the Environment & Economy OSC.**

**REGULAR ITEMS**

Month	Item	Purpose of Report	Responsible / Contact Officer
February/ March	School Modernisation	To update Members on the progress made with School Modernisation.	Senior Manager School Planning & Provision
May	Attendance & Exclusions	To provide Members with an overview of school attendance and exclusions and the role of the Portfolio's support services in this area.	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
September	Self-evaluation on education services & learner outcomes	To update Members on overall service performance including Learner Outcomes.	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
June	Additional Learning Needs	To update members on the implementation of national ALN reforms in schools and the role of the Portfolio's support services in this area.	Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression
July	Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE)	To receive an update on progress with the development of the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, to include a presentation from the Chief Officer of GwE.	Chief Officer (Education & Youth) & GwE Senior Officers
September	School Balances	To provide the Committee with details of the closing balances held by Flintshire schools at the end of the financial year.	Finance Manager
Annually	Learning from the School Performance Monitoring Group (SPMG) -	To receive the annual report on progress and learning from the SPMG.	Senior Manager – School Improvement;
Annually	Social Media & Internet Safety - now part of Safeguarding Report to the Joint Scrutiny Committee	To receive an annual report assurance/monitoring.	Healthy Schools Practitioner

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**ACTION TRACKING FOR THE EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

Meeting Date	Agenda item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
20.10.2022	4. Flintshire County Summer Playscheme 2022	Cllr Carolyn Preece suggested that the letter to Town and Community Council's be sent out earlier than December and also that greater emphasis was made within the letter on how important the funding was from Town and Community Councils to continue to deliver the playscheme offer. Claire Homard said that Cllr Preece's comments would be taken on board and that they would look to see if the letters could be sent out earlier. The letters could also demonstrate the contribution that Town and Community Council's make.	Matt Hayes	Letters have been sent out earlier to Town and Community Council and have demonstrated the contribution that Town and Community Council's make. Responses are being received.	Completed.
20.10.2022	5. Estyn Inspection of Adult Community Learning (ACL) within the North East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership	Cllr Carolyn Preece suggested that an internal training session be arranged for Members of the Committee in order to provide information on Estyn Inspections and to explain the terminology used in Estyn reports. The Chair welcomed this suggestion and asked that it be added to the FWP.	Ceri Shotton / Vicky Barlow	Session arranged for 10am on Wednesday 18 <sup>th</sup> January, 2023 with Vicky Barlow and Dawn Spence.  An e-mail to confirm the date sent to Members of the Committee on 18.11.2022.	Completed.
20.10.2022	5. Estyn Inspection of Adult Community	In response to comments and questions from Cllr Dave Mackie around objectives arising from the	Vicky Barlow / Ceri Shotton	Item added to the FWP for the meeting on 13 <sup>th</sup> July, 2023. This would align with	Completed.

	Learning (ACL) within the North East Wales Adult Community Learning Partnership	Estyn Inspection, Vicky Barlow assured the Committee that a detailed action plan and next steps would be reported to the Committee and included on the FWP for a future meeting.		the SER and QIP timescales for the partnership.	
20.10.2022	6. Learning from the School Performance Monitoring Group	Claire Homard advised that an informal workshop would be arranged for new Members who wished to attend meetings of the School Performance Monitoring Group prior to their first meeting.	Vicky Barlow	<p>Session arranged for 10am on Friday 16<sup>th</sup> December, 2022. The following Members have confirmed they wish to sit on the Group:-</p> <p>Cllr Bill Crease  Cllr Dave Mackie  Cllr Andrew Parkhurst  Cllr Carolyn Preece  Cllr David Richardson  Cllr Arnold Woolley</p> <p>An e-mail to confirm the date sent to Members of the Committee on 18.11.2022.</p>	Completed.

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## EDUCATION YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> December, 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Elective Home Education
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education and the Welsh Language
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The number of children who are Electively Home Educated (EHE) continues to rise steadily across Wales. There is a similar trend across Flintshire with the number of children recorded as being EHE seeing an increase from 95 in January 2019 to 167 in January 2022.

This report provides an overview of EHE picture across Flintshire and the role undertaken by the Council with regards to monitoring and support.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1.	Members consider the data in relation to EHE across Flintshire and recognise the importance of ongoing dedicated officer time to support and monitor provision for this particular cohort of children.
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING ELECTIVE HOME EDUCATION</b>
1.01	Whilst education for children aged 5 – 16 years is compulsory in Wales, access to that education at a school is not. Parents of compulsory age children have a duty under Section 7 of the Education Act (1996) to ensure that their child/children receive an 'efficient full-time education suitable to their age, ability, aptitude and special needs, either by regular attendance at school or otherwise'.

	The majority of children in Wales receive their education at school, but a small number of parents exercise their right to educate their children themselves which is referred to as Elective Home Education (EHE).
1.02	There has been a steady rise nationally in the number of children whose parents have chosen to electively home educate across Wales over the last few years with a total of 4,340 being recorded as EHE in January 2022. Flintshire numbers have increased from 95 in 2019 to 167 in January 2022 and this figure is slightly above the Welsh median of 165. The rate of EHE per 1000 children in Flintshire continues to rise from 4.6 in 2019 to 8.1 in 2022, but sits below the Welsh average of 10.2 children per 1000. A total of 52 children became EHE between January 2021 and January 2022.
1.03	<p>Parents may decide to home-educate their child from a very early age and so the child may not previously have been enrolled at school. They may also elect to home-educate at any other point up to the end of compulsory school age. The majority of children who became EHE in 2022 had been attending a Flintshire maintained school (89%) with the remaining 11% having previously been educated outside of the authority. Similar to the picture across Wales, the highest percentage of children becoming EHE takes place in September and Year 7 seems to be a pivotal point at which this decision is taken.</p> <p>Flintshire's profile of the key stage at which a child becomes EHE follows the national picture, with 26% electing to EHE in Foundation Phase, 29% at KS2, 35% at KS3 and 9% KS4. This compares with 23%, 30%, 33% and 13% respectively across Wales.</p> <p>The current spread of children across the key stages is as follows: Foundation Phase - 8%, KS2 - 22%, KS3 - 41% and KS4 - 29% which compares with 12%, 25%, 33% and 31% across Wales. The majority of children are male (58%).</p> <p>A small number of the children are identified as having special educational needs (SEN). Where a child has a Statement of SEN, the Council's Additional Learning Needs Team work in collaboration with the Education Welfare Service who monitor provision and the suitability of the education being provided within the family.</p> <p>In the previous year, a total of 26 children returned to school-based education. From September 2022, a further 10 children have also returned.</p>
1.04	Parents are not required to register or seek approval from the Local Authority (LA) to home-educate their children. Where a reason was provided for choosing EHE, 16% related this to anxiety/ concern due to Covid-19, 15% referenced lifestyle/ideological choice and 10% cited pupil anxiety/phobia. Other reasons included medical needs, bullying, awaiting school of choice and 'other'.
1.05	Councils are not responsible for the provision of EHE or under any statutory obligation to support it financially although the recent allocation of grant funding has facilitated councils to provide additional support to



	<p>families who choose to EHE. Under section 436A of the Education Act 1996, councils have a duty to make arrangements to identify children not receiving a suitable education. The duty applies in relation to children of compulsory school age who are not on a school roll and who are not receiving a suitable education otherwise than being in school (e.g. at home, privately or in alternative provision). A School Attendance Order (SAO) applies in cases when a parent of a child of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving suitable education and where the Council believes the child should attend school. The Council therefore has a monitoring role in respect of EHE to ensure that the child is receiving a suitable education. In the absence of the requirement to inform the Council that a child is being home educated, monitoring can only take place with those families from whom we have received notification.</p>
1.06	<p>The monitoring role placed on the Council is carried out by the Education Welfare Service (EWS) in Flintshire. A dedicated Education Support Officer (ESO) has been appointed with a specific remit for EHE. Parents are contacted at the point of the Council being informed of their decision to choose EHE. Visits are undertaken to review the education provision being made although parents are not required to follow the National Curriculum/ Curriculum for Wales. The EWS is experienced in matters of welfare and safeguarding which supports the potential identification of these issues during home visits.</p> <p>There has been a positive response to the visits undertaken by the ESO and she is building links with the families. During the visits, educational arrangements have been discussed and reviewed. As part of the information gathering process, the child is encouraged to share their views regarding the progress they feel they have made since becoming electively home educated, along with their aspirations for the future. Some challenges have been identified including access to suitable educational facilities, e.g. Science laboratories to undertake scientific investigations and access to this across the school network is being explored. Access to appropriate ICT equipment and educational resources has also been flagged and requirements are being considered. Drop-in sessions for EHE families are in the planning process.</p> <p>Good practice is discussed at the half-termly Regional Stakeholder meetings and the EWS Manager has received an award along with colleagues across the North Wales region in recognition of their collaborative work with the EHE community.</p>
1.07	<p>Welsh Government policy on EHE has been under review for a number of years now. There are plans to implement the revised guidance next year following input from national and regional groups.</p> <p>Flintshire has representation on the All Wales EHE forum and is actively contributing to the discussion and future development in this area.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The Welsh Government took the decision to allocate grant funding for EHE from 2020. Flintshire is in receipt of £76,386 for this financial year. The grant is split into funding to support the availability of staff to discharge the monitoring and support role, with additional funding to support families with regards to the additional costs of home education, e.g. textbooks and materials, software, educational trips and access to qualifications. The grant funding has been essential to enable the allocation of a dedicated officer to this area of work.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	Impact assessment is not required as the report is for information only.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	EHE questionnaires are circulated to all parents when they opt to electively home educate their children.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None.

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<a href="#">WG Elective Home Education Guidance</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Jeanette Rock Senior Manager Inclusion & Progression <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704017 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk">jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Elective Home Education:</b> when parents take on the responsibility for the education of their children rather than sending them to a school.  <b>National Curriculum:</b> a common programme of study that is designed to ensure uniformity of content and standards in education.

**Curriculum for Wales:** a new curriculum which replaces the national curriculum. This is currently being implemented across primary schools and is being phased into secondary schools from September 2023.

**School Attendance Order (SAO):** applies in cases when a parent of a child of compulsory school age fails to prove that the child is receiving suitable education and where the authority believes the child should attend school. A SAO may be used to direct a parent to send their child to a specified school, and should be used when a pupil is not on roll at any school.

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## EDUCATION YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> December 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Integrated Youth Provision – Delivery Plan Update
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education and Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Multiplying Impact Delivery Plan 2021 – 2024 is the Integrated Youth Service document which maps out the strategic and operational aims for this four year period. The plan uses the same framework as the Welsh Government Strategic Plan for Youth Work.

The programmes provided through the Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) Team includes youth clubs, school immersion workers, youth homelessness, Welsh language provision, sexual health, detached work, resilience, forest school, LGBTQ+/Inclusion, and The Duke of Edinburgh's Award scheme.

There are currently 11 youth clubs operating in the County, and this is supplemented by our detached offer. In order to maximise this offer we deliver detached youth work in partnership with the Youth Justice Service, Sorted and Aura.

The core team consists of 29 members of full and part time staff and is supported by 15 workers in charge and 19 assistant workers. There are currently three vacant posts. Posts are funded through a combination of core and grant funding.

In a typical week, the service will deliver in excess of 75 sessions to young people which will consist of one to one work, small group work, targeted interventions, youth clubs, education, projects, partnership co-delivery, and forest school.

There have been significant developments since the last report including the appointment of a new Senior Manager. Key focus areas include preparing the service for quality mark accreditation, establishing workforce task and finish groups to develop clear plans for continuous professional development, partnership work, marketing, branding and social media and recruitment.

In order to improve insight into the services delivered, greater emphasis needs to be placed on monitoring, evaluation and learning. Data management is currently captured through a system called QES, although the ability to analyse this data is limited and time consuming.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members approve the decision to replace the QES system with Upshot, allowing for more efficient and effective data collation across all IYP programmes, thus allowing improved monitoring, evaluation and learning which will lead to improved service delivery.
2	Members endorse the facilitation of training for partner organisations, such as sports clubs and uniformed organisations, in order to grow the reach of youth work informed practice, further supporting the health and well-being of young people in Flintshire.
3	Members acknowledge that progress has been made against the plan and that future revisions to the plan should be carefully considered by the wider IYP team in line with feedback from young people.
4	Members support the decision to begin the Quality Mark Accreditation process in the Spring, beginning at Bronze and following the key recommendations from this process, bring the action plan back to Cabinet to agree progression towards Silver and Gold.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE PROGRESS MADE AGAINST THE IYP PLAN</b>
1.01	There have been proactive steps in embedding the Welsh language and culture into the IYP. Each club has a Welsh Wall and is supported to run Welsh projects, young people have been supported to enter the Eisteddfod, immersion workers deliver bilingual sessions, social media is bilingual and audits take place to ensure that we have an internal standard for bilingual information. We actively engage with the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) to ensure we contribute to the Council's wider objectives.
1.02	Detached youth work takes place with partners in a variety of areas based on young person need. This is in addition to club work. New provision has been established in Buckley, Deeside, Connah's Quay and through an LBGTQ+ provision which has been mobile but will settle in Deeside. We have lost provision in Mancot due to staff vacancies.
1.03	Over 100 young people have been supported through their Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) bronze award. The lead officer in Flintshire has retired which has facilitated a revised approach with schools. An open award will now run through the youth service and will travel around the County for greater equity. Participants from Flintshire dedicated 1183 hours to

	volunteering between April 2021 and March 2022, with a social value of £5,465.46.
1.04	<p>Partnership work is a key feature of IYP work and a key area to develop further. Key partners include Youth Justice, Housing, Education/Schools, Aura, Social Services, Youth Cymru and a wide range of third sector organisations to maximise our approach and impact when working with young people. This is facilitating increased provision for young people with a broader range of services.</p> <p>In order to support further partnership delivery and support young people's health and well-being, the Youth Service is planning to facilitate a range of youth work inspired training. This will range from a basic introduction to youth work, workshops around relevant issues such as drugs, alcohol and relationships, to accredited qualifications. This will ensure that youth work practices and approaches are more readily accessible, and that networks of provision are created.</p>
1.05	During the summer holidays, Play Schemes operated from 57 sites, with 3,970 attendances. The Welsh language was used in all sessions.
1.06	Support is provided for a school attendance project in Saltney St David's High School through both the immersion and centre worker. This has focussed on improving attendance and attainment in school. In addition, a lunchtime youth club offering food and support operates for learners. This approach is being evaluated for it to be shared wider.
1.07	Through consultation and delivery, it was identified that young people were not engaging in online provision. As a result, a return was made to face to face delivery in most instances. The exception was the contraception service which is now predominantly phone and postal based.
1.08	Through youth homelessness and the immersion team, qualifications are offered around independent living and personal skills and we will seek to become our own accredited centre in the future. We also offer the John Muir award through forest school.
1.09	Provision is offered through a variety of sources, ensuring young people have access to IYP and partner services in a format accessible to them. It has been identified that this can be increased further through engagement of wider partners who work with young people. This will be supported by a mapping exercise of provision with the aim of producing a comprehensive network of activity which supports young people's health and wellbeing in their own community.
1.10	Continued Professional Development (CPD) events have been taking place for staff during training weeks. This has focussed on food hygiene and allergens, First Aid, Welsh language, safeguarding and youth homelessness. A CPD plan is being produced which will map CPD requirements against each position ensuring we are best placed to support young people's needs.
1.10	An apprenticeship framework has been identified for youth work which will allow the service to utilise apprentices in the future. This is a significant

	step to a progression pathway. Further to this, a young leader's course is being planned for the Spring and a partnership with Glyndwr University has been re-established with two degree placements being allocated to IYP.
1.11	Significant conversations have taken place with Adult Learning Wales and Glyndwr University with regards to youth work qualifications, training and significant challenges within the sector. An action plan will be formulated on the basis of this and other intelligence.
1.12	A recruitment event for sessional youth workers will take place in December. This will be repeated in the Spring. This will allow for applications, interviews and HR processes to be completed in an evening which will speed up the recruitment process and support the sustainability of existing clubs and provision, as well as the potential to create new opportunities, either directly or through collaboration.
1.13	Consent – A theatre production educating and empowering young people to understand and engage with the issues surrounding consent and sexual assault was delivered through IYP to all year 9 learners in five schools with the remaining six establishments being offered the workshop in Spring 2023.
1.14	Health and Wellbeing sessions are offered in schools with immersion workers which support young people who experience stress due to factors such as exams, home life, bullying, school work, and relationships. These sessions will be rolled out to all schools through our partnership with Outside Lives - Outside Lives is a community led social enterprise, set up by the people, for the people. Their aim is to create a more robust, sustainable, and connected community for everyone.
1.15	There is continued support for refugees through a variety of programmes such as the forest school, and to continue to meet that demand we have put 4 youth work members of staff through their level 3 forest school qualification and 1 through their level 2. This will allow more sessions to be delivered offering further trauma informed support for families.
1.16	Youth club attendance overall is positive, with natural spikes during the Autumn and Winter. Sessions taking place include cooking, sports, drama, arts and projects. To aid succession planning, a system of transition is being introduced. This has started in Connah's Quay and Saltney and will be expanded to our remaining sites. Play work supports this process and is a significant step for our future engagement of young people.
1.17	Collating quantitative data with QES is a challenge. The current system works offline and as such paper copies of registers are produced at each session, before being collected each half term. This method provides summative data which does not allow for continuous monitoring and improvement. It is also limited in terms of its use, other than monitoring attendance and session outcomes, not allowing for postcode analysis which would highlight who is attending and from where in the County, breaking down participants by multiple determinants and helping shape our current and future provision.



	Changing to Upshot will allow for more efficient and effective data collation across all IYP programmes, thus allowing improved monitoring, evaluation and learning which will lead to improved service delivery.
1.18	The Quality Mark is a unique tool for self-assessment, planning improvement and gaining a quality mark for youth work. It supports and recognises improving standards in the provision, practice and performance of organisations that deliver youth work, demonstrating and celebrating the excellence of their work with young people. This would support future planning and development, highlighting strengths and areas for improvement across the team, Council and wider partnerships.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Revenue Resource:</b> £12,000 for a three year licence, including training, for Upshot. We currently pay £6,000 per year for QES.</p> <p>Training budget to be utilised collaboratively and additional funding/grants sourced to support wider training</p> <p>The three vacant posts are part of the IYP core budget</p> <p>There are no capital implications</p> <p><b>Human Resources:</b> The delivery plan and associated objectives depend on the current structure remaining with roles remaining fluid to support current and emerging need.</p> <p><b>Technology:</b> Upshot is cloud based and places no additional pressure on the Council IT system. It is fully compliant with data protection and GDPR processes and procedures.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	<p>Risk Management: The report highlights many positive developments made against the IYP Delivery Plan. All sessions and activities are risk assessed in line with corporate policy. This allows for safe and effective delivery. The wider risks that we face are;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Not understanding our data which means that we cannot effectively react and/or plan provision in areas of need, leading to either no provision and/or duplication with other services.</li> <li>2. Not being able to respond to the current and emerging needs of young people due to a depleted workforce, lack of collaboration, lack of training, and poor utilisation of funding.</li> <li>3. Failing to benchmark our service against a standard, which demonstrates our progression but equally supports our future development and ambition.</li> </ol>

	4. Length of time to qualify sessional staff to be workers in charge remains a significant risk. There is a lack of level 3 workers in charge which results in temporary closures for illness and resignations.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	Two youth consultations have been conducted post-Covid by request of the joint Public Service Board for Flintshire and Wrexham. These have informed our service delivery actions over the past 12 months. In addition, a short movie was produced in partnership with Theatr Clwyd, 'What Just Happened', which examined the impact of lock downs and Covid-19 on young people.
4.02	The Youth Participation Officer has maintained an online youth council during and post lockdowns. This will be relaunched after the Youth Conference in March as a hybrid meeting group, with the aim of strengthening the membership and aims of the group.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	<a href="#">REPORT CONSULTATION EFFECTS OF THE PANDEMIC 2. 2022.docx</a> <a href="#">Flintshire Youth Service Provision.doc</a> <a href="#">Multiplying Impact Delivery Plan 2021-24 (S).docx</a>
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	<a href="https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ekl5btFBFA">https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8Ekl5btFBFA</a> (What is Upshot?) <a href="https://www.qes-online.co.uk/about-us">https://www.qes-online.co.uk/about-us</a> <a href="https://www.theatrclwyd.com/news/consent">https://www.theatrclwyd.com/news/consent</a> <a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/youth-work-strategy-for-wales.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/youth-work-strategy-for-wales.pdf</a>
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
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7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Matt Hayes Senior Manager – Integrated Youth Provision <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704112 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:matt.hayes2@flintshire.gov.uk">matt.hayes2@flintshire.gov.uk</a>
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8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p><b>Adult Learning Wales:</b> We are an independent voluntary adult education movement, committed to widening participation, promoting active citizenship and skills development. They provide access to education from Pre-entry Level learning to Level four qualifications and have been providing the Level 2 and 3 youth work qualifications.</p> <p><b>CPD:</b> he process of developing professional skills and knowledge through interactive, participation-based or independent learning.</p> <p><b>DofE (Duke of Edinburgh) Award:</b> A life-changing experience, a fun time with friends, an opportunity to discover new interests and talents, a tool to develop essential skills for life and work, a recognised mark of achievement; respected by employers. The DofE is many things to many people, supporting generations to successfully navigate adult life. 14+ year-olds can do a DofE programme at one of three progressive levels which, when successfully completed, leads to a Bronze, Silver or Gold Duke of Edinburgh’s Award.</p> <p><b>Immersion Workers:</b> School and Community based youth workers working from Castell Alun, Connah’s Quay, Maes Garmon, St David’s and Ysgol Trefynnon</p> <p><b>Integrated Youth Provision:</b> Collective term for Youth Clubs, Immersion Workers, Inspire, Duke Of Edinburgh, Youth Homelessness, Inclusion, Sexual Health, Forest School and Partnership Work</p> <p><b>Upshot:</b> an online system which helps funders and deliverers across better manage their data, improve performance, track progress, and report against outcomes - all with the aim of evaluating their impact.</p> <p><b>WESP:</b> All local authorities in Wales are required by law to have a Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP). Our 10-year strategy shows how we will develop Welsh language provision in our schools based on the outcomes and targets which have been set by Welsh Government so that all our learners become confidently bilingual.</p>

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## Covid-19 effects on Mental Health and Wellbeing: Of Children and Young people in Wrexham and Flintshire.

### Introduction.

Wrexham and Flintshire Youth Services have been working together to support the work of Wrexham and Flintshire PSB Boards, the aim of the work is to see how Covid -19 has affected young people with the objective of 'to protect children and young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing'.

In, March 2021, we ran a consultation to find out how Covid-19 had affected young people, the results were open and honest and played a very important part in the recovery plans in both authorities.

We have since developed a second consultation. In order for us to understand the Covid-19 impact further and to help recognise how young people's physical and mental wellbeing' is now, if it's improved or not and where further supported is needed.

This second consultation went live between; May 6<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> June, 2022.

Over 429 young people responded to the online consultation, which highlights the need for us to think about how we support our young people across Wrexham and Flintshire going forward after the pandemic and beyond.

Below are the survey findings and additional views from respondents

These results reflect what young people have gone and still going through.

Sadly, listening to young people's voices along with some young people's concerns, about the long-term effects that will run further than their mental health and wellbeing, education, work and future.

We would like to thank the young people from Flintshire and Wrexham for taking the time to participating in this consultation process. Information collected will be used to inform the PSB's (Public Service Boards) in Flintshire and Wrexham County Council.

Furthermore, this consultation process will help us to produce new and innovative ideas, by keeping our services current and thriving. It will help enhance our relationships with our service users and further develop our knowledge of their wants and needs. It has provided us with direct live feedback from young people and will enhance a closer connection within our communities.

Respondents taking part in the consultation, what area they live in, age and gender.

Fig 1.

This single response question was answered by 429 young people with their age.

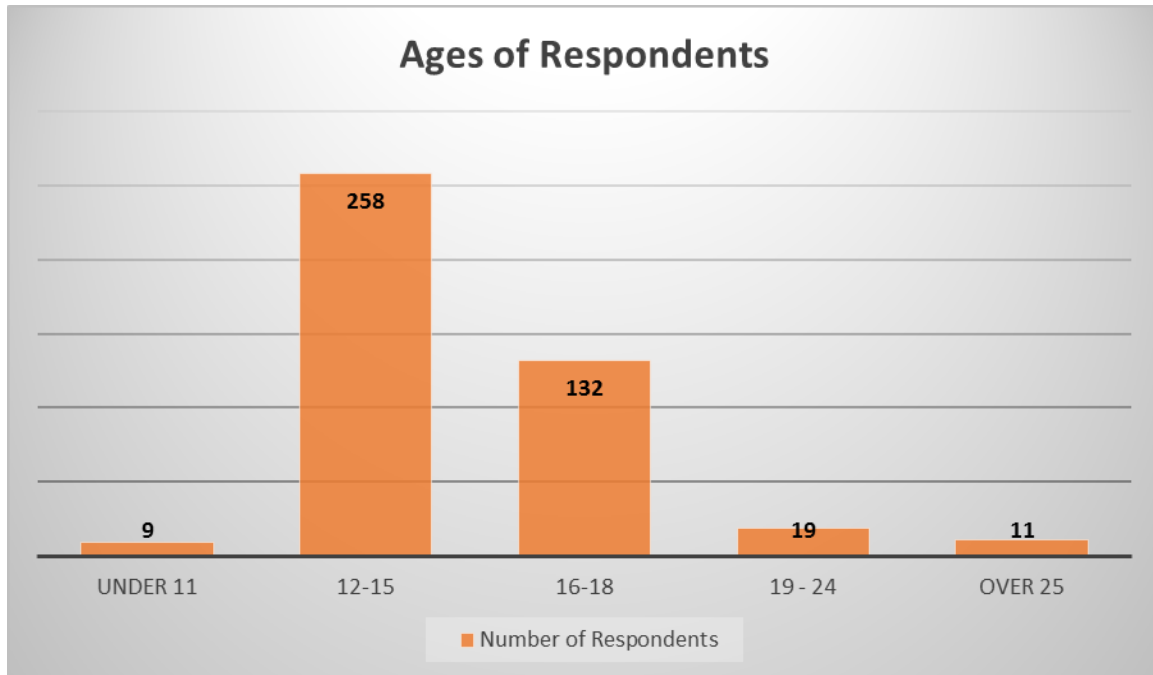


Fig 2.

What area do you live in?

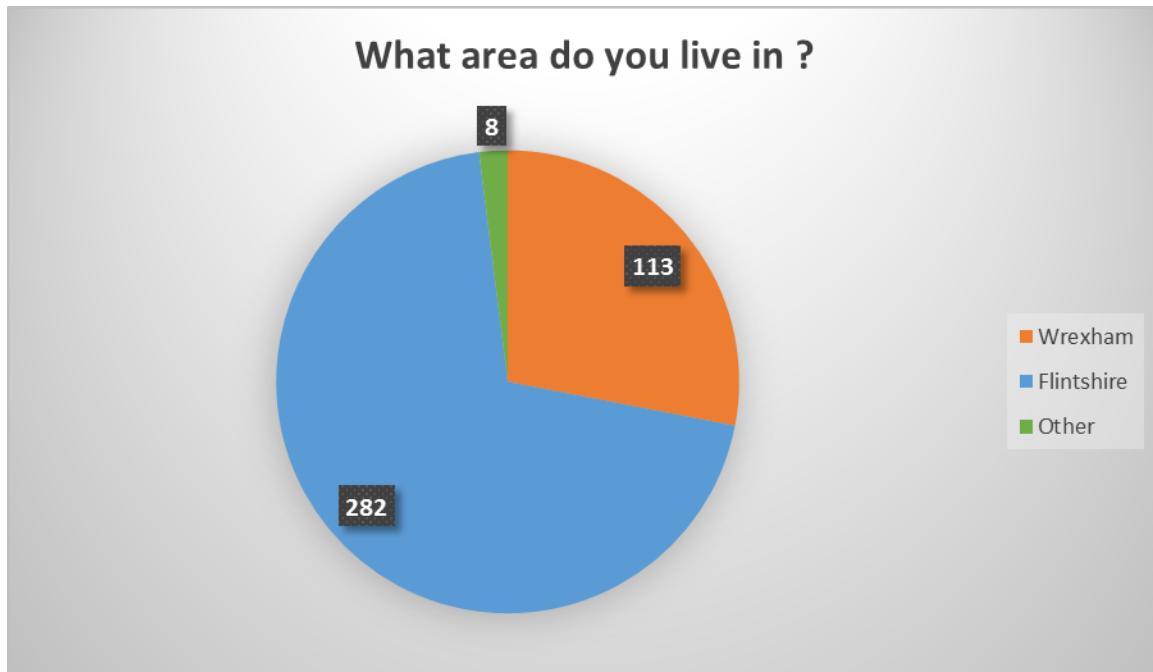


Fig 3/4.

What gender do you identify as? This open response question was answered by 377 respondents.

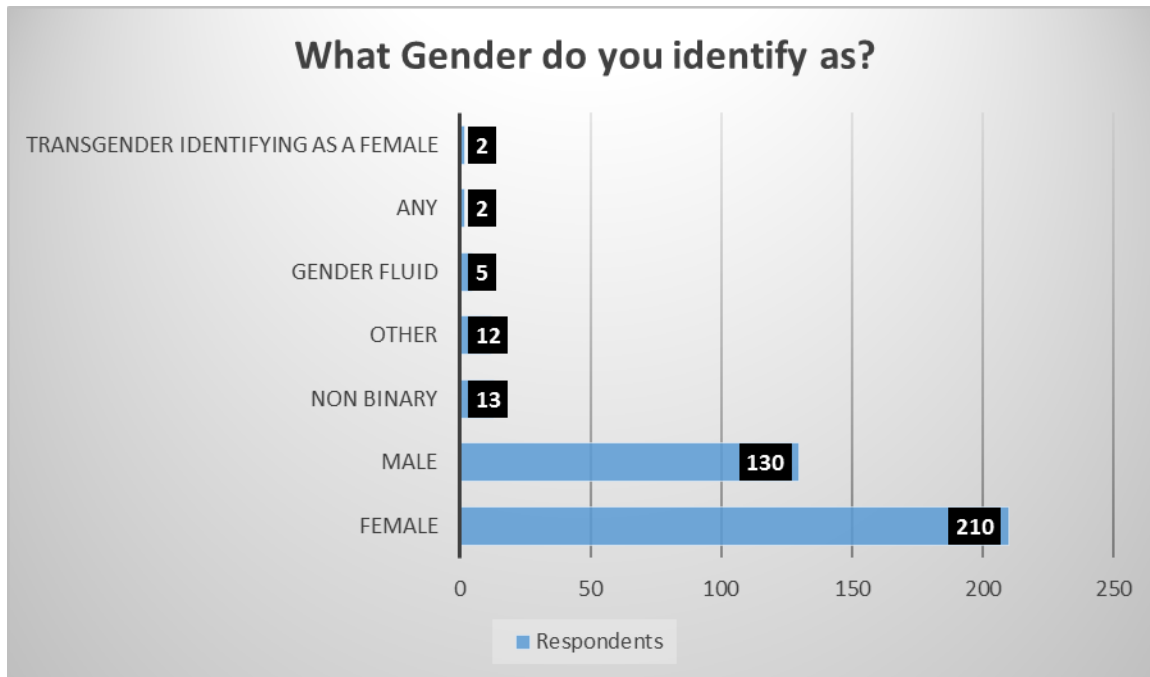
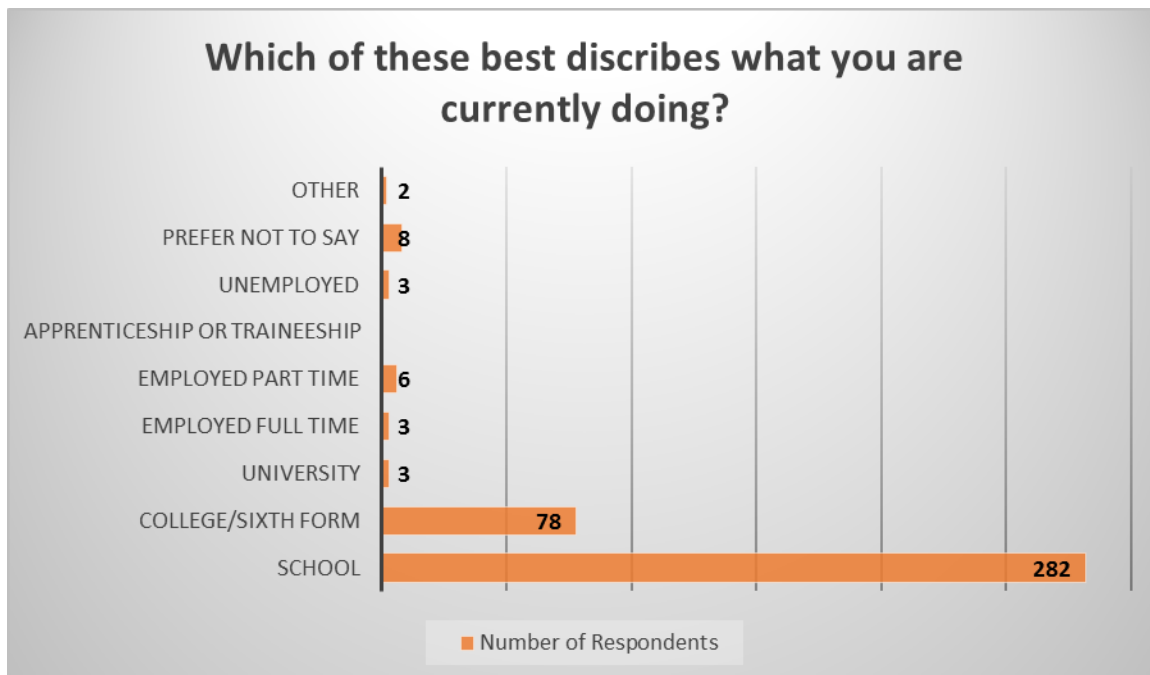


Fig 5.

Which of these best describes what you are currently doing? This single response question was answered by 385 young people. One young person being home –schooled.



## Mental Health and Wellbeing:

We asked young people a series of question around their mental health and wellbeing as we wanted to see how young people’s mental health and wellbeing is now 12 months on from the first consultation, we undertook in March 2021; fundamentally to see if young people’s mental health and wellbeing had improved or not and look at where further support may be needed.

Fig 6.

We asked young people, ‘What has been the biggest impact on your mental health and wellbeing from the effects of the pandemic. This open response question was answered by 279 young people.



The answers have been collated into themes, due to some young people referencing more than one issue.



Fig 7.

Biggest Impact on young people's mental health and wellbeing.	Respondents
Missed education/worried about education/catch up/stress/pressure/lack of support/home learning	50
Missing loved ones, family and friends	47
Loneliness/trapped	39
Isolation	35
Anxiety	18
Social withdrawal	17
Feeling low/ lack of motivation	16
Body image/hating self	12
Getting back to normal	10
Being anti-social	9
Depression	9
Nothing	9
Covid -19	8
Stressed	8
Lack of confidence	7
Lack of support	7
Eating	6
Lack of exercise and weight gain/over eating	6
Lack of health care and support groups	5
Masks	5
Grief	4
Toxic environments/family issues	4
Don't know	3
Self-harm	3
Addiction to games/technology/porn	2
Alcoholism	2
Cyber bullying	2
Financial	2
Missed youth worker support	2
Optimism for the future	2
Suicidal	2
Groomed and trafficked	1
Intentional overdose	1
Mental breakdown	1
OCD with Hygiene	1
Over sleeping	1
Paranoia	1
Positive effect of the environment	1
It's had a Positive impact with family	1
Positive time with family	1
Receiving counselling	1
Scared	1
Under eating	1

Below additional views from respondents on the Impact they have and are still feeling with their mental health and wellbeing:

*“Alcoholism, depression, suicidal, anxiety, social withdrawal, over sleeping and under eating”.*

*“As a result of not being able to see family and friends, I used social media much more and because of this I suffered from cyber bullying and took an intentional overdose and ended up in hospital”.*

*“Before covid, I enjoyed going to school but after it I hated school and don’t want to go”.*

*“Complete and utter isolation”.*

*“Spending so much time to myself has led me to believe that I am full of flaws and has shown me how I truly feel about myself. It’s messed my head up and now all i think of myself is shame for being me”.*

*“Isolation of support groups, lack of support, struggling with depression, no motivation to do anything, feelings of hopelessness ‘a what’s the point when it all sucks and is only going to get worse’ mentality, procrastination, feelings of inadequacy. Feeling guilty by the media and government into being to blame for their mistakes and blunders, feeling like I have to apologise for my existence and right to be in spaces/public spaces - treated by public not welcomed - lack of places to go for wellbeing without being seen as a societal nuisance as a young person. Any form of health was impossible to look after when getting to the doctors was made so difficult and inaccessible. Being constantly dismissed/only there to tick a box as a young person, however I was lucky enough to receive counselling, unlike many others”*

*“My anxiety disorder has suffered greatly due to the pandemic with thoughts of catastrophizing and with depressive episodes during lockdowns”.*

*“Not being able to talk to the youth workers and my mental health progressively getting a lot worse”.*

*“Weight gaining and things like that effected my mental health during lockdown”.*

Fig 8.

We asked young people on a scale of 1-10, how they felt their mental health and wellbeing is right now. (With 1 being low and 10 being very good) 307 young people responded

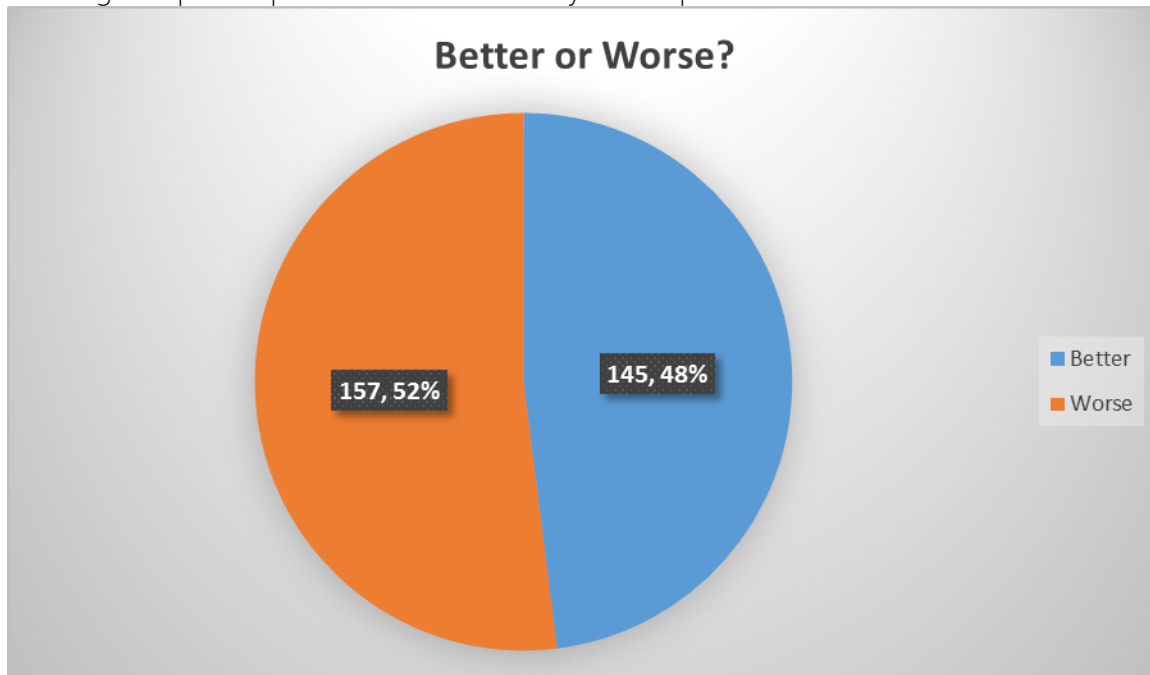
Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	17	5.54%
2	21	6.84%
3	23	7.49%
4	37	12.05%
5	38	12.38%
6	36	11.73%
7	39	12.70%
8	45	14.66%
9	27	8.79%
10	24	7.82%

Fig 9.

We then asked young people:

Do you feel your mental health and wellbeing has got better or worse over the last 12 months?

This single response question was answered by 302 respondents.



We asked the young people to explain, why they feel their mental health and wellbeing has got better or worse over the last 12 months.

There is a slightly higher percentage of young people feeling worse.

For those who said it feels worse; some young people said; that they worry about things going backward.

Young people feel there is not enough support, for them and they are struggling alone!

Some have higher anxiety levels, lower moods, generally feeling worse.

Young people feel they have more things to worry about now.

Life now has more pressures and stresses. Some commented they are only just finding out what support there is for stress, feeling sad, having low energy and not wanting to look after themselves.

Out of the 157 who said; worse, 33 young people are really struggling with their education, worrying about how much they have missed.

Comment about, education and they are now doing exams, but they don't feel they are prepared as they didn't do any revision last year.

Some young people are coming to the end of their degree but with only 2 years of minimal guidance from teaching staff. Some young people don't like going into school, or school life in general. With some commenting school has become more challenging.

4, young people have commented about having suicidal thoughts, 1 young person has acted on this and attempted to take their own life.

Out of the 145 young people who said they feel better, 71 mentioned that this was helped by being able to go back to some sort of normality, going back to a routine, such as school or college.

For some young people being able to spend time outside and spending time with family and friends, being able to get back doing sports and doing the things they enjoy.

This has helped young people feel more confident, less isolated and less lonely, although some have said they still need some help and others have said they feel better but still not the same as before covid!

Views from respondents:

*“As lockdown has been lifted it seems things have been getting worse for me school wise, socially and mentally, I believe this is due to being unfamiliar with these circumstances”*

*“At certain times, I felt extremely low and I took it out on myself in a stupid way. I should've spoken up and talked to someone about my mental health rather than struggling with it alone”.*

*“Barely any improvement in university face to face learning and scheduled online lectures since March 2020 meaning students were left to do two years of their degree with minimal guidance from teaching staff. No reduction in workload to accommodate the change of teaching style and completely independent learning has made me very stressed, overwhelmed, and general low mental health due to feeling like the state of support from the university was going to make it near impossible to complete the degree to a good standard (if at all)”.*

*“Being able to get back into clubs and properly socialising with friends and family has been a big step forwards for everyone and has allowed us to get back into our comfort zone”.*

*“Getting back to social groups has removed feelings of isolation, however work still feels aimless/pointless”.*

*“I had my first attempted overdose a couple of months ago, and I started struggling, and still am, with self-harm, not eating and a lot more”.*

*“I used to love going out to different places but now I'd rather stay home and watch TV which has affected my eyesight a lot. I'm also really shy now and I'm sometimes being left out because they don't notice me”.*

*“I've joined volunteering roles, dropped out of college (a negative space for me) and got a job I really enjoy”.*

*“I've stopped having contact with a parent who was having a detrimental effect on my mental health, since then my grades in school have improved and I'm much happier”. “Being stuck with this parent during lockdown was unbearable, he has mental health issues that he won't accept help for and they were made worse during lockdown”. I felt trapped during the weeks I was with him”.*

*“Some days are good others are really bad”.*

A study conducted by Cardiff University found: Levels of depression in Year 7 starters rises after the pandemic, Children who started secondary school in 2021 were more likely to report increased symptoms of depression than those starting Year 7 before the pandemic.

Responses to a student health and wellbeing survey revealed 21% of starters last year reported increased depression symptoms compared to 15% in 2019. The survey involved 120,000 11-to-16-year-olds from 202 schools in Wales and the data was analysed by researchers at Cardiff University. The research suggested the rise was caused by increased rates among girls and gender non-binary students, as the level of schoolboys reporting depression symptoms did not change.

It was children in Year 11 who had the highest prevalence of mental health difficulties compared to other year groups. 36% of the oldest secondary school year respondents reported elevated symptoms of depression in 2021, up from 33% in 2019.

Professor Simon Murphy, director of the Centre for Development, Evaluation, Complexity and Implementation in Public Health Improvement, said: "*These results, gathered before and 18 months since the beginning of the pandemic, provide important insights regarding changes in young people's mental health and wellbeing during this time.*"

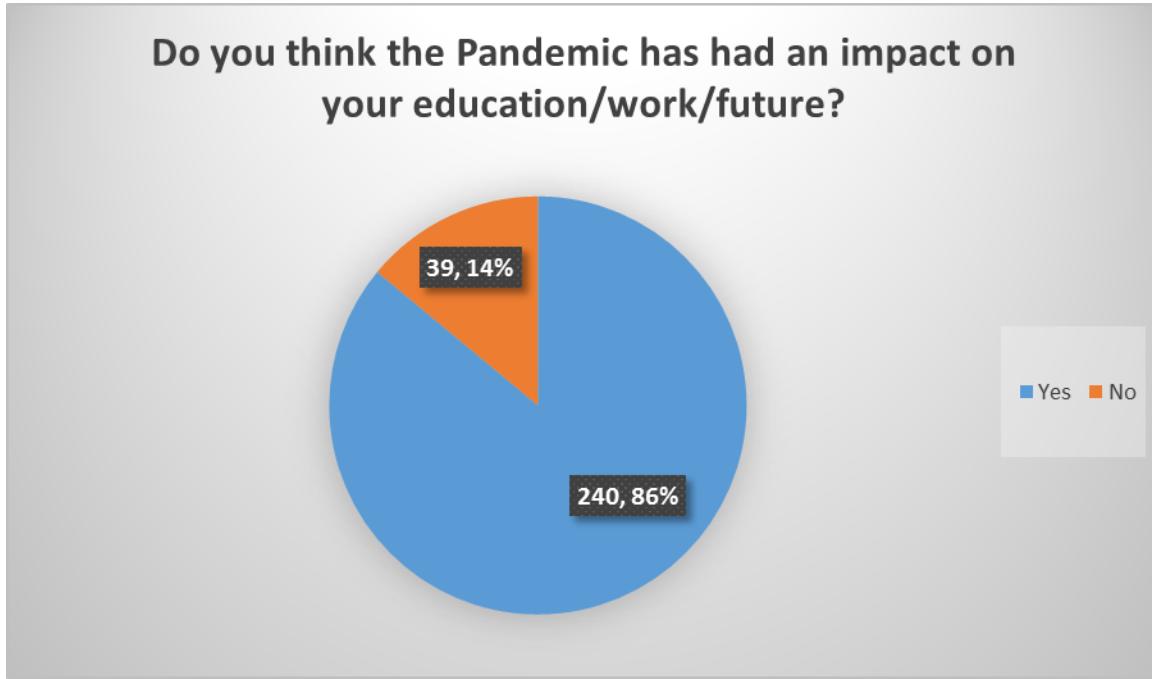
"*While it is not possible to say whether declines in young people's mental health are due to the pandemic or a general trend, it will be important to continue to monitor these indicators to aid Covid-19 recovery efforts in Wales.*" <https://www.itv.com/news/wales/2022-08-04/depression-among-year-7-starters-increases-post-pandemic-study-finds>

Education Work and Future.

Young people were asked a series of questions on, if they felt the pandemic has had an impact on their education, work or future. And if it had, how they felt the pandemic has affected it.

Young people's answers:

Fig 10. Do you think the pandemic has had an impact on your education/work/future?



This single response question was answered by 279 respondents

Fig 11. How do you feel the pandemic has affect your education/work/future?

Young people comments

Response answers	Respondents
Lost education, missed education will affect our future	80
Worried about grades/unable to move forward with further study or careers due to lower grades	35
Little or no effect	29
Finding work/career of choice	18
Having to sit exams now when never had to do them before	17
Gaps in knowledge- missed specific subjects	15
Lack of support during and after	11
Motivation	10
Unable to catch up	8
Health/mental health	8
Don't know	7
Fear of Covid coming back	6
Things have improved/ more positive	5
Not able to get into the University of choice	3
Not being able to buy a house	3
Socially	3
Life is harder	3
Missed memories/opportunities and experiences	3
Employers being less favourable	2
Badly	2
Expectations from teachers	1
Higher standards of hygiene	1
Losing jobs	1
Confidence	1

Additional views from respondents about their education, work and future.

*“A whole year worth of education just thrown out the window”*

*“I've had so much time off school, not being able to be in during the correct lessons. This could affect how my final exams turn out, which will lead to bigger problems during my future, i.e. looking for a higher course in college, getting into one of the higher universities and my ability to work in the area of study i want to work in”.*

*“Demolished any chance of social mobility, and thus probably won't be able to afford house/ high paying job”*

*“Feel like there's no point trying because it'll be impossible to achieve the things I want to do with the current climate of the housing market/economy/wages - work is a soulless machine, no one has your interests at heart they just want to exploit you and blame you for not working fast enough (from all and my current jobs I've had throughout the pandemic) It has made me realise how messed up every system we have is and that I don't want to exist within it. The system is for the*

*1% and not the everyday worker completely failed by the education system. My future looks bleak in terms of finding a job I could actually like that supports me financially”.*

*“Harder to get better results”.*

*“I feel that it has somewhat stunted my ability to adjust to pressure in terms of important scenarios. I had a break down when I did not do as well as I could in an exam. It also may affect me in future, for better or for worse that I am of the covid generation, as I could be seen as a harder worker, or either someone who got let off easy”*

*“I missed out on loads of school and I feel stupid”.*

We then asked: On a scale of 1 to 10, how much does this worry young people. (With 1 being a little and 10 being a lot).

Fig 12. This single response question was answered by 287 young people.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	52	18.12%
2	22	7.67%
3	23	8.01%
4	30	10.45%
5	39	13.59%
6	21	7.32%
7	28	9.76%
8	30	10.45%
9	21	7.32%
10	21	7.32%

The next section of the survey, we explored support over the last 12 months through either education, work and or other services. These questions were targeted around, if the young person needed support, where would they get support from and who did they seek that support from.

The following statistics were developed from the survey findings, alongside a series of examples that respondents included in their answers.



Fig 13. If you needed support with your education/work/future where would you usually look for it? This open response question was answered by 245 respondents.

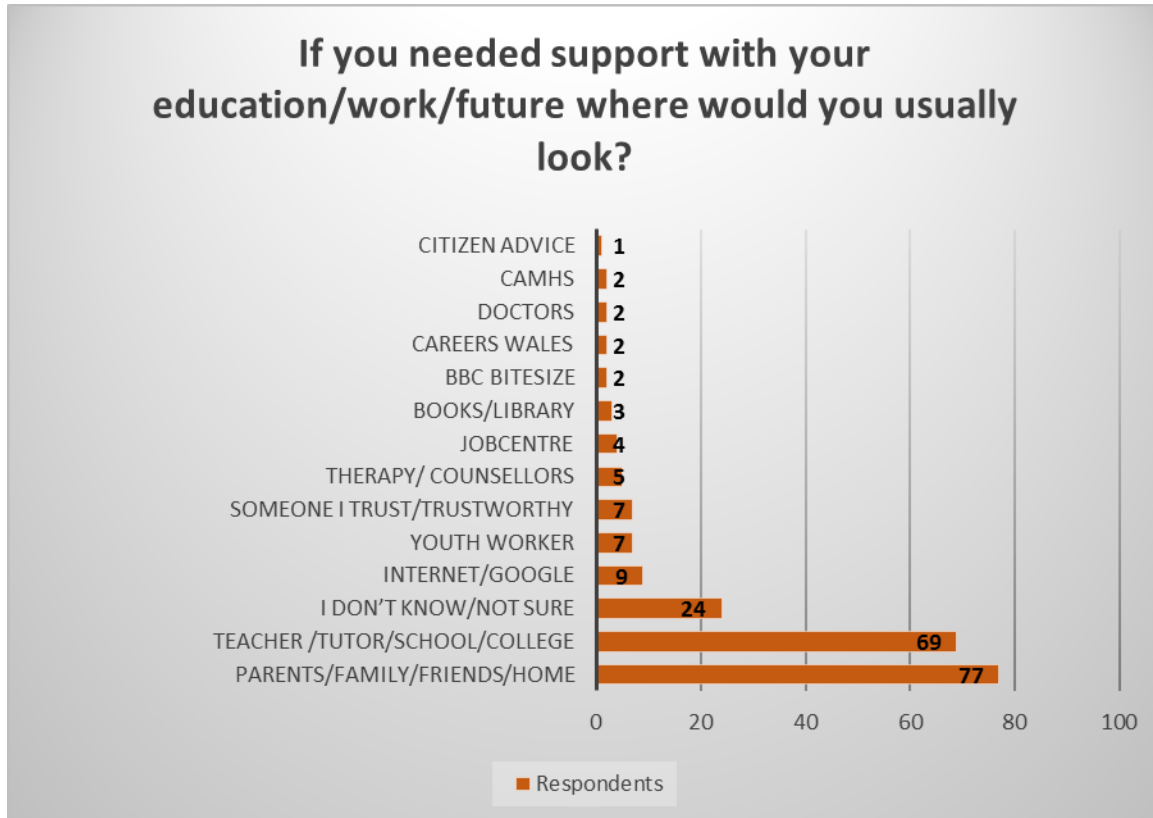
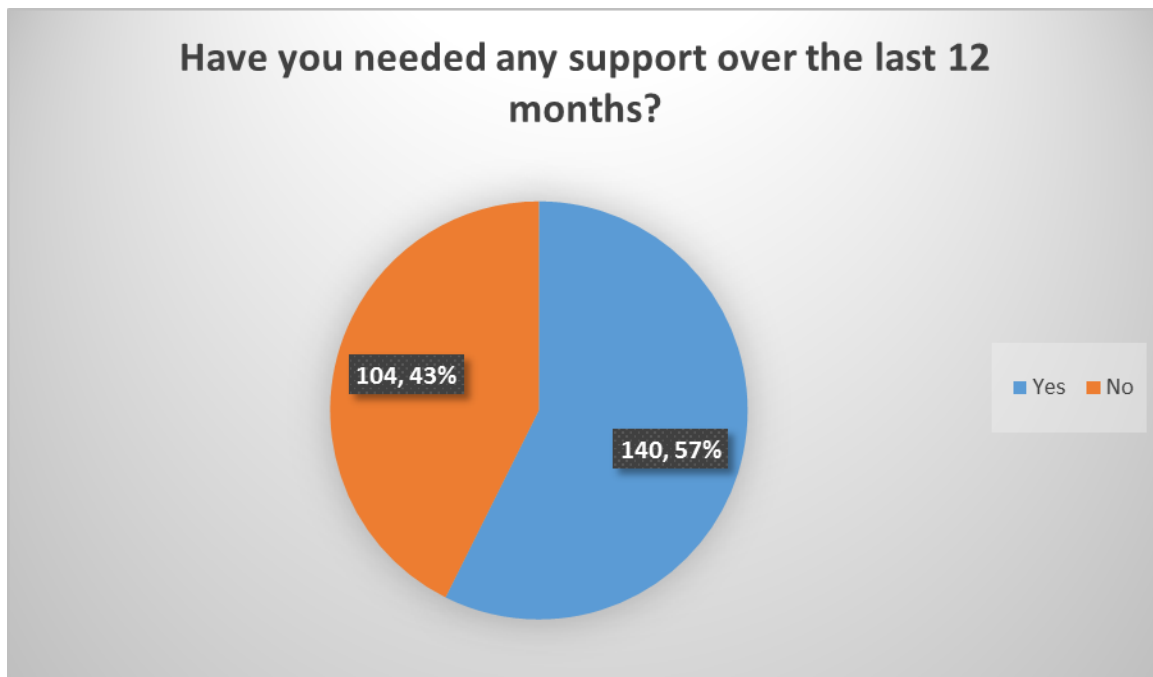
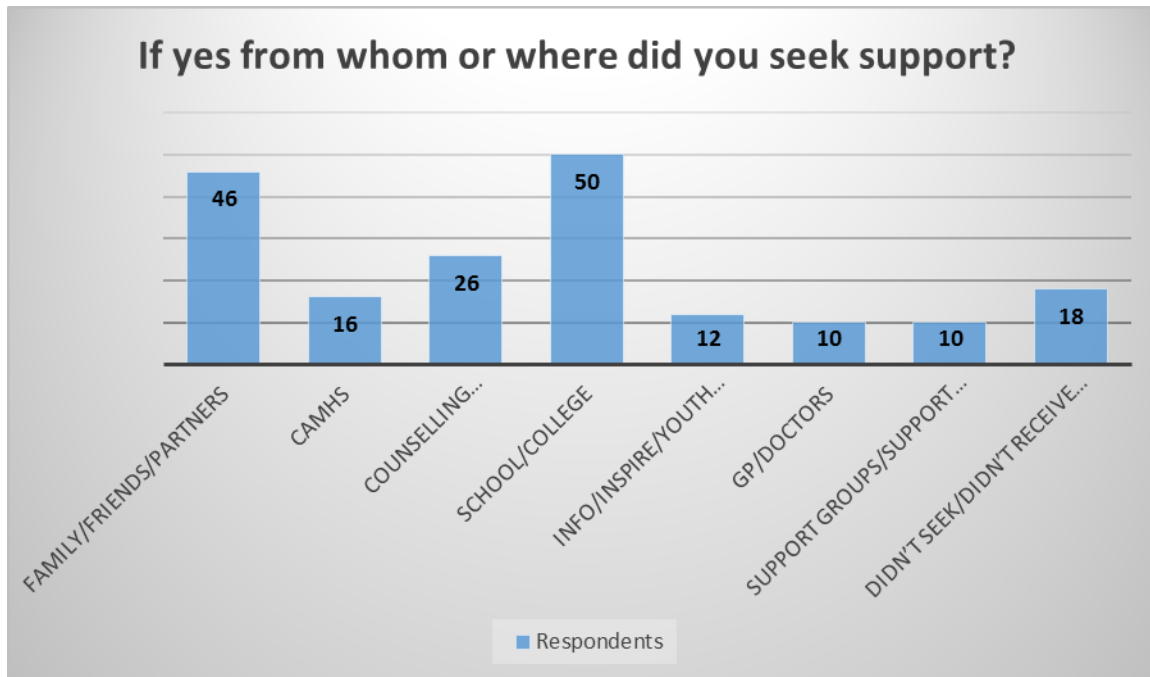


Fig 14. Have you needed any support over the last 12 months?



If yes from whom or where did you seek the support? This open response question, young people could answer with more than one place they sort support.

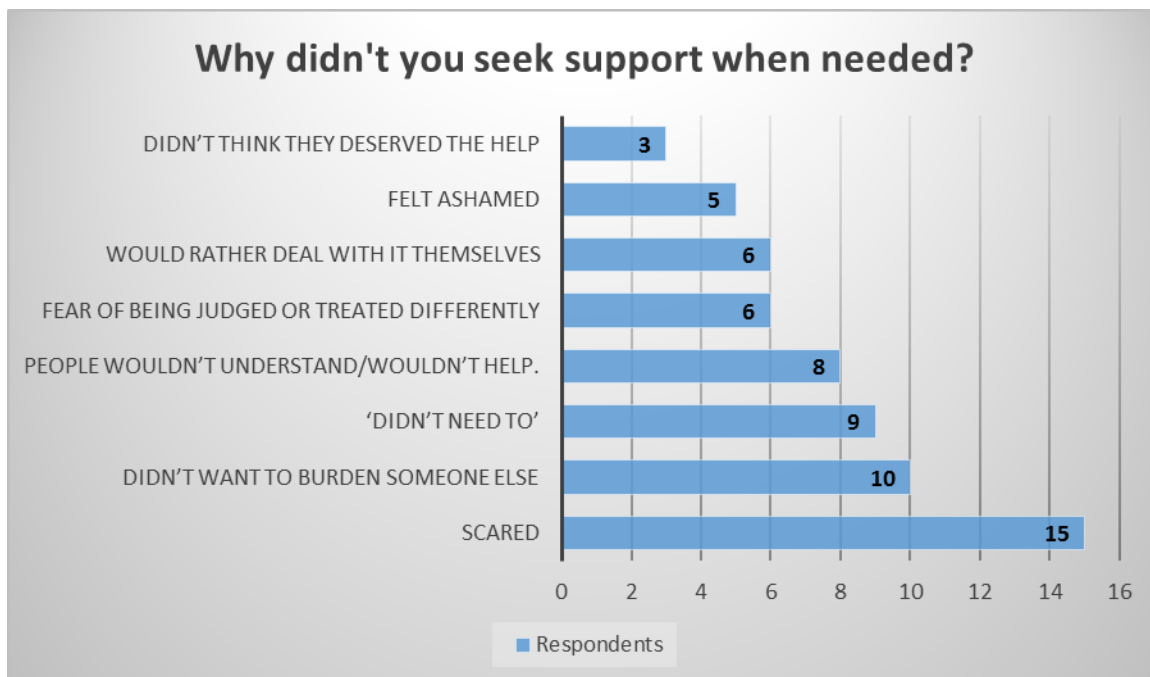
Fig 15.



If you needed support but you didn't seek any support when needed, why not?

Fig 16. This was an open response question.

We have themed the answers from young people, 'why didn't they seek support', in graph below'.



Some young people stated; 'they thought people would think they were 'making it up' or 'no one had the time to listen as everyone was busy', 'not being comfortable talking to other people about it'. Some young people said; 'they didn't know where to look for support', with others quoting they couldn't get through to the support.

Additional views from respondents:

*"At first I did not seek support as I believed that people thought, I was perhaps making it up, or that the problems I was facing were not great enough to warrant support in the scheme of things".*

*"Because I didn't want to put my problems on somebody else, because they might have a lot of problems going on for themselves"*

*"Because I was under 18 and couldn't do it myself since members of my family don't believe in mental health problems".*

*"Cos I have catholic parents who don't believe in suicide".*

*"Difficult to get appointments/ see professionals in person, many things have been over the phone or online".*

*"I did not seek support because i felt embarrassed and guilty".*

*"I feel as though I couldn't or that, I deserved what was going on with me but I just couldn't reach out since I have issues with trusting".*

*"I think it's a common worry that support can be hard to access, and when it is accessed, I've found that for myself and others around me, it's not helped or 'cured' you, which can leave you feeling hopeless and like you've exhausted all help".*

*"Not brave enough to seek help and open up".*

*"When youth club wasn't on I didn't know where to go for support".*

The Samaritans suggests in; 'Pushed from Pillar to Post' research that young people have negativity and concern about the future,

*People aged 16-24 have experienced the biggest drop in employment compared to other age groups due to higher numbers working in hospitality and retail. The increase in unemployment is concerning as there is a significantly higher rate of suicide among unemployed, compared to employed people. Financial concerns, such as problem debt, are also associated with increased suicide risk. [www.samaritans.org/wales/about-samaritans/research-policy/coronavirus-and-suicide/one-year-on-data-on-covid-19/coronavirus-young-people-and-self-harm/2020](http://www.samaritans.org/wales/about-samaritans/research-policy/coronavirus-and-suicide/one-year-on-data-on-covid-19/coronavirus-young-people-and-self-harm/2020)*

Fig 17. We asked young people; if the pandemic had affected relationships they had previously established, for example. Family, partners, friends, teachers, support workers and /or other professionals.

239 young people responded to this question.

Young people response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Family	122	51.05%
Partners	38	15.90%
Friends	156	65.27%
Teachers	65	27.20%
Support Workers	8	3.35%
Other Professionals	7	2.93%
None	59	24.69%

*Other professionals included: Youth Workers, CAMHS Worker, GP, Dentist, sports coach and therapist.*

Social Media, Internet and Social Media Platforms.

In general, most studies reported that social media use increased during the Covid-19 pandemic with the usage of a variety of social media platforms (e.g., Instagram, Snapchat and TikTok).

Fig 18. We asked young people:

In the last 12 months, do you think you are going online and using the internet more?

This single response question was answered by 245 respondents.

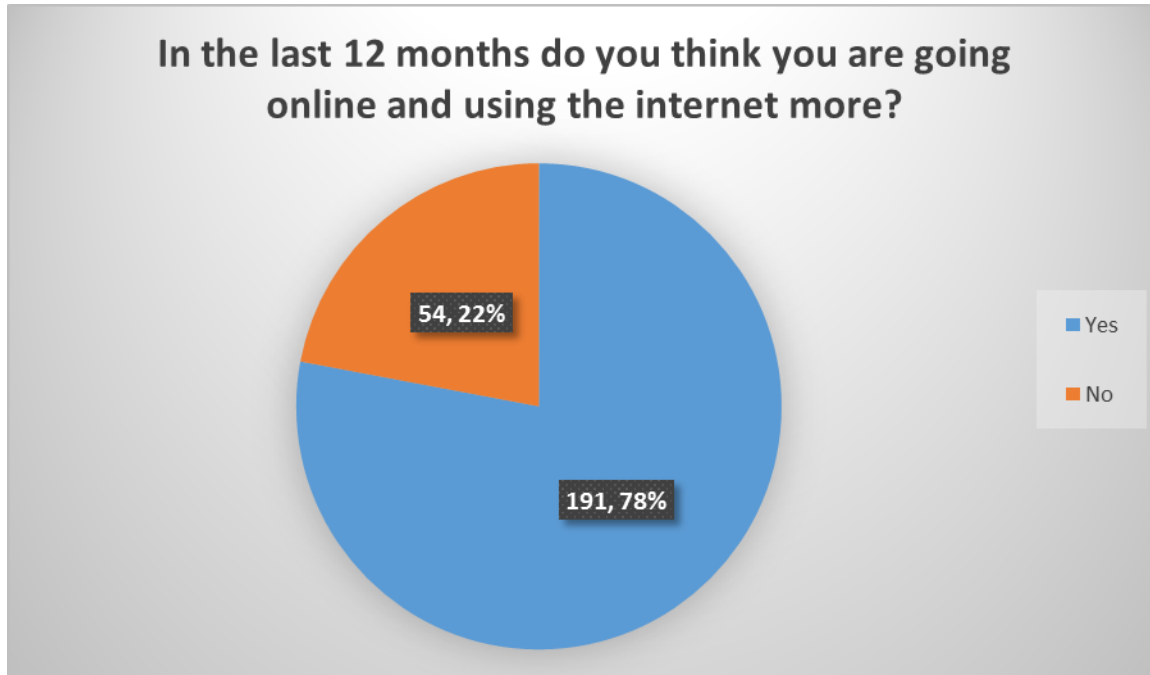


Fig 19. We then asked young people to why they turned to social media platforms.

Why do you think you are going online and using the internet more?	Young people
Education and research	46
Socialising	40
Because of the lockdown/pandemic	38
Entertainment	26
Bored or nothing else to do	24
Young people who thought the amount of time they spent was problematic or they were now addicted	12
Modern way	12
Escapism	3
<b>Total</b>	<b>191</b>

The young people said; 'they had more time to go on the internet and the coronavirus/lockdowns had played a big part in that and that this also was now the modern way.

A lot of education had also moved online, also events and therapy sessions.

Young people had started to use the internet more for entertainment and shopping and spent less time outside or with friends. Some young people spoke that there was nothing else to do and they were bored so they were using the internet more.

Additional views from respondents.

*"As well as being inside all of the time I have widened my network of friends and so reach out more often to them".*

*"Considering there wasn't a lot to do during the pandemic, the internet cured many peoples boredom, including mine. I am very used to using the internet now.*

*"Finding routes of escapism e.g. binge watching mind numbing unintelligent TV to escape the hopeless feeling".*

*"I am googling things i need for school and watching more Netflix but also I am reading books free online to save money".*

*"I have been using the internet more and more to talk to friends and complete school/college work".*

*"I'm basically addicted to my phone, I can't just leave it alone. I'm constantly checking my phone and wanting to see my messages all the time".*

*"My screen time weekly is over 47 hours on average".*

*"Yes to talk to friends, help me with school work, but also as an escapism from hectic life".*

How often do you go online and use the internet? This was an open response question.

The young people mostly mentioned that they spend a lot of time on the internet, **101**, young people mentioned the word daily, and the majority of young people said lots, all the time, many times a day, often.

**22**, young people said they go on too much. Screen time is high, one saying that 'it often upsets me that I can't stop' and another saying they feel their 'internet usage is unhealthy'.

**18**, young people said; they are on the internet for 3 hours or under a day. **29**, young people said; they are on-line between 4 and 10 hours a day and **6**, young people said they are on- line for over 10 hours a day.

Further views from respondents:

*“I can spend hours and hours at once on the internet if I have free time and it is a really bad habit that I need to learn to break”.*

*“My screen time on my phone (which I mostly use for the internet) is around 4 hours a day. This was bad when I had health anxiety as I would spend most of this time googling symptoms”.*

*“Not that often! Maybe a few times a day but only about 3 hours per day maybe less”?*

*“Very often it upsets me that i can’t stop”!*

Fig 20, 21. The top 3 websites young people mostly use.

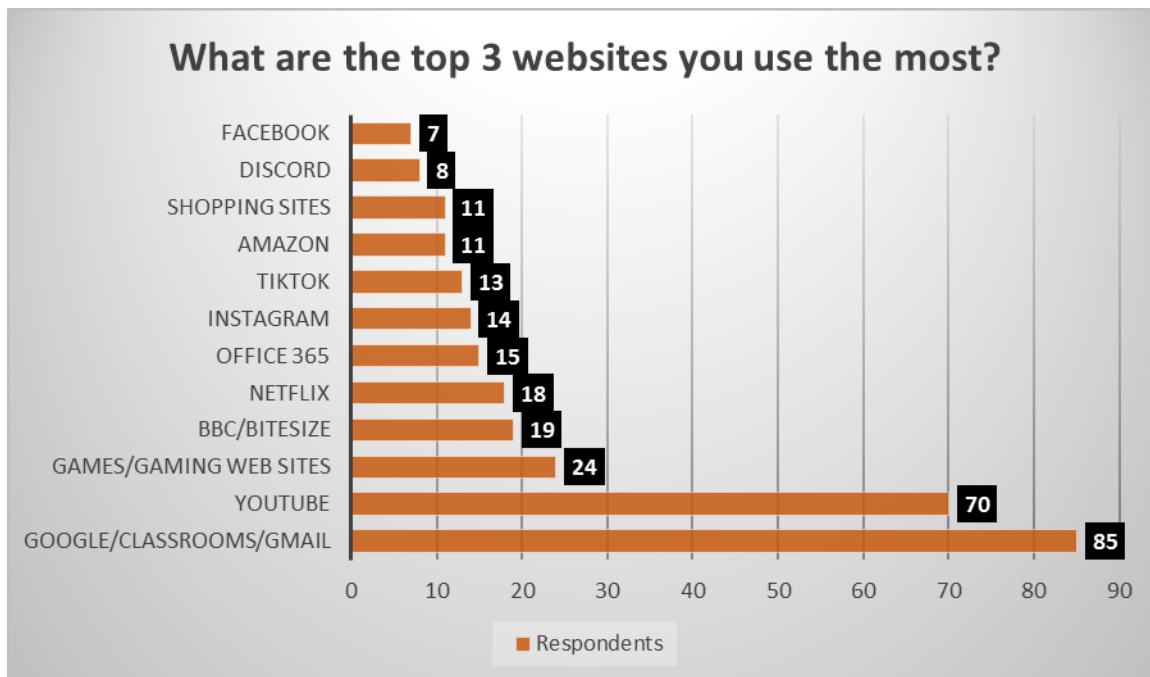
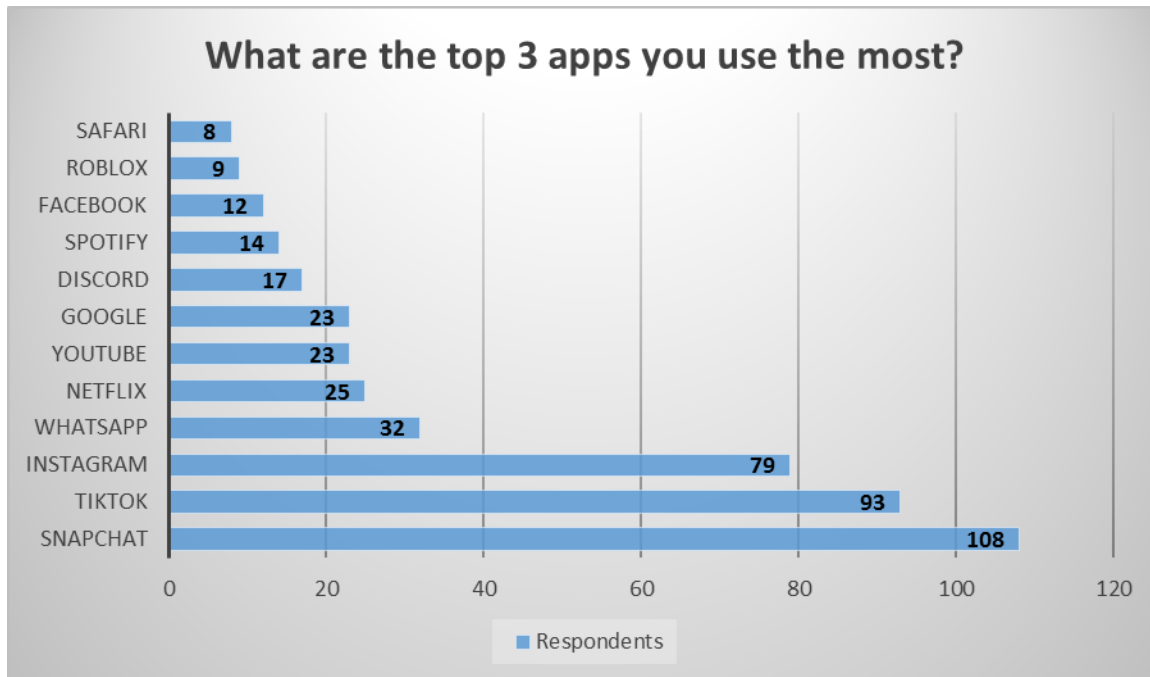


Fig 21.

Additional websites	Respondents
WJEC	6
Disney	5
Safari	5
Wordle	5
Teams	5
Twitter	4
Spotify	4
Mathswatch	3
Gaming porn/porn	2

Fig 22. We then asked young people; what are the top 3 apps you use the most?



According to NSPCC and Barnardos:

*"Online grooming crimes have risen by more than 80% in four years. We may see even higher levels of online child sexual abuse, as record levels were reached during the pandemic, and have not subsided, meaning there may be a long-term increase in risk".* <https://www.nspcc.org.uk/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/>

Barnardo's Interim Co-CEO Lynn Perry MBE said:

*"The increase in the amount of child abuse material online is horrific. Viewing these images is illegal and can be just as harmful to children as physical abuse.*

*"As well as a rise in adults viewing harmful and illegal content, Barnardo's frontline workers are increasingly seeing children watching violent and abusive pornography online which is affecting their understanding of healthy relationships.*

*"In order to prevent abuse, it is vital that there is support and advice not just for adults at risk of becoming offenders but also for children showing harmful behaviours. We also need social media and pornography sites to take urgent action to ensure that they are not continuing to host illegal and harmful content on their platforms."* <https://www.barnardos.org.uk/news/barnardos-statement-stop-it-now-figures>



Open space / Communities.

We wanted to find out if young people had used open space more within their communities due to the lockdown restrictions, and if they will continue to use these now restrictions have been lifted, moreover if lockdown has changed their relationship with the outside world.

Fig 23. Did you use open spaces such as parks, country walks or nature trails to support your mental health during the pandemic? This single response question was answered by 232 respondents.

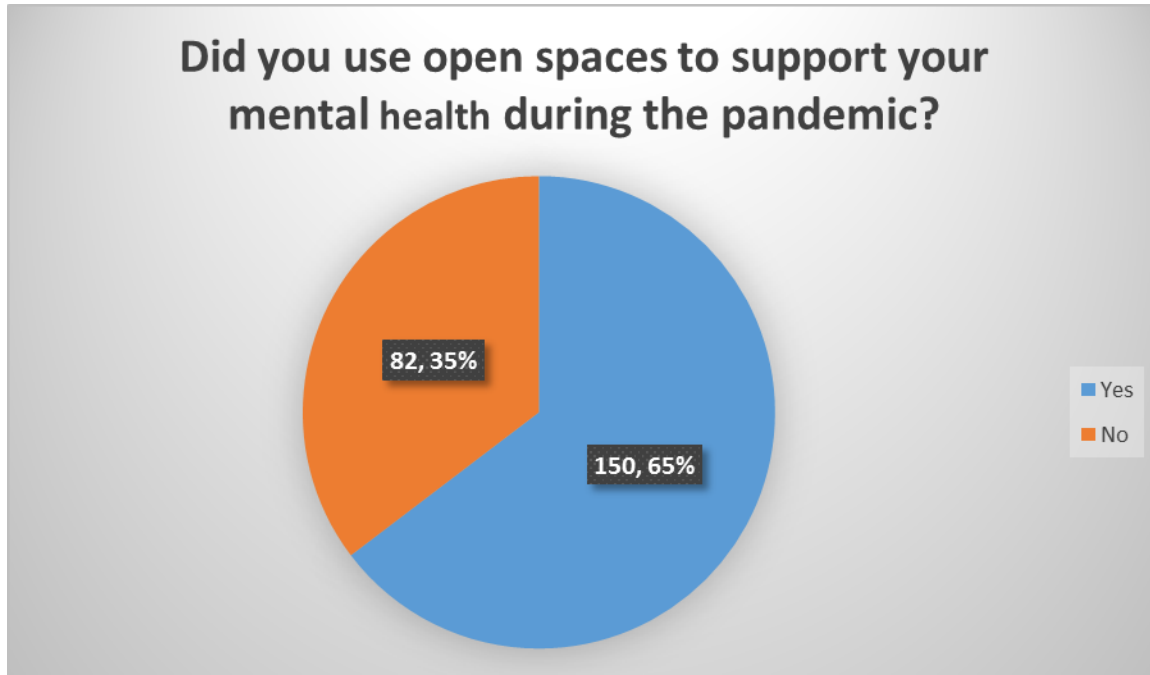


Fig 23. If yes, is this something you will continue to do in the future?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	149	73.76%
No	53	26.24%

This single response question was answered by 202 respondents

Fig 24. Do you feel safe going out in your community?

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
Yes	163	69.96%
No	70	30.04%

If No please explain why not.

This was an open response question for young people to add their thoughts:

Our survey has highlighted that;

**38** young people spoke of being scared, this included being kidnapped by groomers, rape, dying, other people, getting hurt, creepy people, getting jumped, lots of crime and drugs in the area.

**13** young people were not confident to go out in their communities, this included meeting other people, being harassed, people making fun, being judged, people not liking me and laughing at me, other people seeing their face and body, not wanting to go out on their own, getting bullied and fear of the 'New World'.

**3** young people mentioned that their community is not Trans and LGBTQ+ friendly!

**2** young people didn't feel comfortable in their community for getting 'catcalled'.

Additional views;

*"Because I feel like I could get kidnapped by my groomer or get catcalled".*

*"Because I'm gay and I think others will hurt me".*

*"For a start my community does not feel like a safe space to be LGBTQ+!"*

*"I feel judged, like everyone's staring at me and laughing at me".*

*"I have an expensive bike and people always want to take it. And there is always big gangs of people causing trouble".*

*"Men couldn't walk alone by myself might die or get raped"*

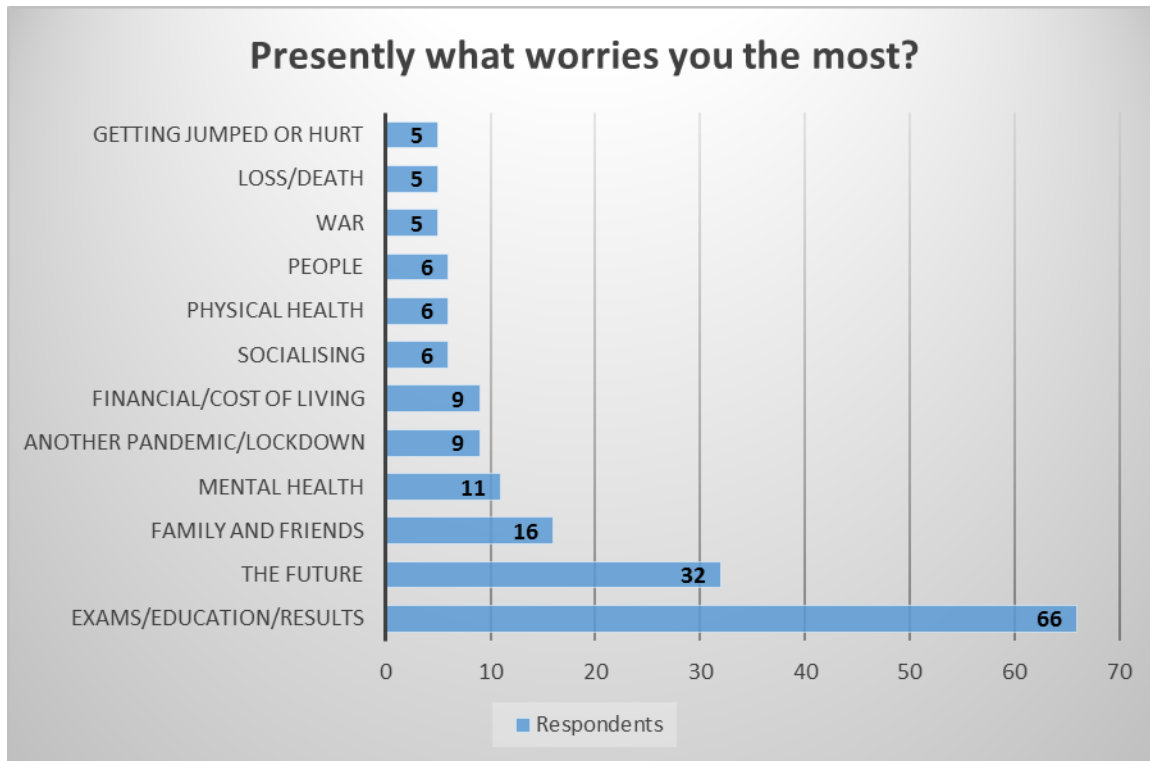
*"People are everywhere, they will see me, my body, and my face, everything. I hate that"!*

*"Idiots from my school have started hanging around on my street and knocking on my door taking the mic out of me, I'm scared to leave my home because people are so disgusting".*

*"Within minimal things to do outside during the pandemic, 'the news was the only thing available', and it has caused more fears, as I have not been outside into the "new world often".*

We then went on to ask young people what worries them the most. This was an open response question

Fig 25. Presently what worries you most? This was an open text question.



Respondents also left additional views:

*"Academic results and my future".*

*"Cost of living bills".*

*"Death and being kidnapped and raped".*

*"Everything, school, not having friends outside".*

*"Existing in a world where it's increasingly hard to exist without working myself into the dirt, be financially stable or otherwise just be because the world is fucked and no one cares, it's all about green washing and ticking boxes and paperwork and lies instead of lives Getting depressed, losing my support network, not being able to afford anything, finances, unable to have independence due to options lost in COVID, not being able to afford further education or a home".*

*"I am worried about Climate change and what is going to happen with our planet in the future".*

*"Losing the people that I love the most".*

*"My eyesight, my mental health and my education".*

*"My physical health".*

*"Probably my health. This is almost always my biggest cause of anxiety. I also worry a lot about the way I look and being alone".*

*"We'll have another quarantine".*

*“War in Ukraine, school/not doing well in school- currently I’m not doing the best I can in school as I am getting low grades”.*

On a scale of 1 to 10 how much does this worry you? (With 1 being a little and 10 being a lot).

Fig 26. This single response question was answered by 224 respondents.

Response	Number of Respondents	Percentage of Respondents
1	43	19.20%
2	5	2.23%
3	7	3.13%
4	7	3.13%
5	19	8.48%
6	12	5.36%
7	24	10.71%
8	34	15.18%
9	34	15.18%
10	39	17.41%

We then asked young people; 'Has the Coronavirus Pandemic affected you in any other way that you would like to tell us about?'

This open response question was answered by over 150, young people.

Young people spoke of how Coronavirus had affected their confidence, making them feel lonely and isolated. Their lack of communication with others, has made it harder to socialise, some young people are struggling to have a social life and struggling with social anxieties.

Young people said; 'that they are suffering from anxiety and panic attacks, some are feeling paranoid and worried.

Relationship breakdown has been mentioned, but also the importance of family and friends and what they mean to them.

One young person said; 'they now have a greater understanding of diseases and viruses, and others said that they now feel they are able to help themselves better also some new hobbies have been found'.

Additional views from respondents:

*"Coronavirus made me realise how important my family and friends are, because when I wasn't with them for a while, it had a big impact on my social life".*

*"COVID, made everyone paranoid and worried, It isolated people and caused relationship breakdowns even among families as we couldn't be there to support each other if living in different households".*

*"Friendships in school due to lack of social life".*

*"I have been able to realise what's really important to me; for example, I've stopped certain activities like swimming as I realised I was happier without the added stress of balancing homework with the hours of pool time. Instead, I've been able to concentrate on school and my love of music and brass banding. In this way, I've become happier and less stressed. I have also discovered other forms of exercise that I enjoy, like home workouts, going on family walks, and using an exercise bike".*

*"I'm just so lonely even though I speak with people on-line but I don't meet them".*

*"It made me a lot more upset".*

*"It positively affected my hobbies as I had more time at home to find new ones and do work I enjoyed".*

*"Just feeling too scared to go out again - also mum is struggling with all the bills".*

*"My mental health and social skills".*

*"My mum has long covid, my nana die because of it".*

*"My step dad has almost always been horrible to me and covid made him worse"!*

Is there anything, you can think of that Wrexham or Flintshire Council could presently do, to better support young people's wellbeing? This open response question was answered by 150 respondents.

There was a lot of varied answers to this question, broadly, the answers were for better support for young people's mental health and better services for young people, also with a suggestion to share these results and comments with teachers.

What can Wrexham / Flintshire Council do to help support young people	Young people
More funding for young people's mental health, free support.	12
More youth clubs and safe spaces.	12
Places for young people to go and talk, some of these could be confidential	11
Don't know.	9
Easier access to support, better promoted.	6
Better wellbeing resources in schools, more funding for counsellors and therapists. Training for teachers.	6
More support for exam stress.	6
More activities and events and better promotion of these.	6
More support on a casual basis, instant messaging, phone services or helplines.	4
More support for young people who don't have a diagnosis.	4
Talking	4
Online youth clubs.	3
Teachers to approach the young people to ask about their mental health, a yearly check in regardless of age.	2
More support for LGBTQ+ and Transgender youth.	2
Better parks and skate parks.	2
Better online work.	1
Don't blame the young people.	1
Options not to attend sessions/ lessons that might trigger stress.	1
No homework, this causes more stress.	1
More drop ins and short notice appointments.	1
More volunteering opportunities.	1
More opportunities for young people to have their say.	1
Better access to Doctors appointments.	1
Help young people to understand mental health.	1
More funding for young people.	1
More sports and clubs.	1
Support for grief	1
Stop using Mental Health power points.	1
Take all bullying seriously.	1

Additional views from survey respondents.

“A place where kids can go to talk to each other about problems/worries”.

“Approaching students about their mental health instead of expecting students to openly talk about it and ask for help”.

“Change schools' wellbeing resources as everybody says that they don't work or have the opposite effect”.

“Do private and confidential psychological meetings for younger people in schools who have poorer mental health, without telling the parents, (This is what worries people the most)”.

“For teachers to take courses to be able to recognise when a child is struggling with their mental health. Give us the option to not attend PSE lessons which could be triggering (with a given reason). Not set homework (it causes unnecessary stress and most pupils have outside lives with problems)”.

“Free access to mental health support on more of a casual basis than what's offered by child, adolescent and adult mental health services in the hospital, and places like the INFO shop. i.e. an instant messaging/phone call service and drop in or short notice booking services in accessible hours (after-school and weekends), for people whose mental health is at a low but they are not experiencing a diagnosable condition, or for those who don't wish to commit to a course of therapy”.

“Get more youth clubs”.

“Give us more to do, nothing is going on in the Flintshire community which therefore makes us bored and causes anti-social behaviour, give us numerous places to hang out, put events on, give us a reason to get out of the house and turn our phones off for a little while”.

“Have a lesson a week in school for young people to talk about their health and problems”.

“Have better support for transgendered youth”.

“Have more activities that will bring people together as well as providing better guidelines for exam and mental health support”.

“I have noticed a worrying increase in the number of students self-harming throughout the area, I'm not sure if it's linked to lockdowns, but a very high number of students are struggling with it. It's awful to see people you know struggling so much and I feel quite upset when I'm unable to help them. At the moment, all I can do is try to be a good and supportive friend, however I think that really there needs to be more professional support in place for these situations. Our school does offer a lot of support and is part of several mental health pilot schemes, but I think there may still need to be more advice available”.

“Invest more into adolescent mental health services - the pandemic has exposed a crisis,

“Make more youth clubs that are on every day”.

“Mental health days- sometimes our brains cannot function without a break”.

“Offer support to families who have lost loved ones”.

Based on survey findings from listening to young people's voices.

This 2<sup>nd</sup> consultation highlights the need for us to re- think about how we support young people going forward after the pandemic, looking at the results, the majority of young people need more support and help now than they did between March 2020 and during the pandemic. As we come out of the Covid pandemic is clear to see young people are still struggling with the effects of last 2 years and the toll on their mental health and wellbeing and seem to be getting worse.

With young people's service for mental health and support i.e. CAMHS and counseling services trying to deal with the vast referrals, a lot of young people have been left trying to manage their stress, anxiety, and pre-existing mental illness or health issues on their own.

We have all as a society changed due to the pandemic, the impact has affected everyone's lives in one way or another. However It is clear that young people are finding it harder than others to be able to move on, their mental health and wellbeing has been challenged with very little or no support over the previous lockdowns.

All we want to do is to support young people through this transition, we want young people get the support that they need now, so they can start planning for their future!

The consequences of isolation and social isolation has had enormous effect on young people. We feel it's essential to continue to listen to and put young people's voices at the forefront of what happens next.

As youth services, we have been able to adapt our services over the last 2 years to reach out to young people throughout the pandemic with online services, along with giving young people a voice by listening to them.

We want to keep developing their wellbeing in educational settings and developing their life skills by continuing to support and work with young people.

We have been able to put in place intervention in for our service users, developing resources for immediate help, 24 hour websites and contacts numbers making sure that all young people know where and how to find support now and that there are clear pathways between our services to others key services.

We are improving access and inclusion for LGBTQ young people by developing a safe environment and supporting our LGBT+ community to make positive life choices.

There is limited employment opportunities predominantly for the most vulnerable young people. The impact of the cost-of-living crisis on young people and their families struggling to cope has put the need for effective early help.

Although, Welsh Government have implemented a number of measures to help against the some of the effects of the pandemic, families are still struggling. Some families are living with no jobs. The economic state of the country fuel rise, utilities prices still on the rise. The worst is actually still to come for all families.



Welsh Government conducted a, 'Review of the impact of mass disruption on the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people, and possible therapeutic interventions'.

The aim of this Rapid Evidence Assessment (REA) was to explore the impact of disasters that have caused mass disruption (including school closure) on the wellbeing and mental health of school-aged children and young people (aged 3 to 18 years). Risk and protective factors for children and young people's mental health were explored, and the effectiveness of post-disaster interventions were highlighted.

3.6 UK research has suggested that COVID-19 is adversely affecting the mental health of children and young people, with child and parent reports demonstrating children's COVID19 related worries.

3.7 In the UK, children from lower socio-economic backgrounds seem to be at greater risk of falling behind in their education compared to peers.

Williams, Z. (2020). Review of the impact of mass disruption on the wellbeing and mental health of children and young people, and possible therapeutic interventions. Cardiff: Welsh Government, GSR report number 62/2020 Available at: <https://gov.wales/review-impact-mass-disruption-wellbeing-and-mental-healthchildren-and-young-people>

Addition info from Wrexham / Flintshire- we need to add here what we would like the PSB TO DO?

Recommendations?

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**CLUBS (Term Time only)**

AREA	DETAILS	M	T	W	T	F
<b>Connah's Quay Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services / Community Centre premises)	Connah's Quay Community Centre, Tuscan Way, Connahs Quay, Flintshire, CH5 4DZ. WIC: Sandra Morris Area Manager: <a href="#">Laura Roberts / 07741 833072</a>				18:30 – 19:30	
<b>Deeside Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services / Aura Leisure Services Premises)	Deeside Leisure Centre, Chester Road West, Queensferry CH5 1SA WIC: Gareth Roberts Area Manager: <a href="#">Gary Williams / 07876 391267</a>		17:30 – 20:00			
<b>Detached / Outreach support</b>	No specific location – support based on local need Contact: <a href="#">Kate Glover-Jones / 07554 416160</a>					
<b>Flint Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services / Aura Leisure Services Premises)	Jade Jones Pavilion, Flint, Flintshire. Earl Street CH6 5ER WIC: Janet Evans Area Manager: <a href="#">Mick Holt / 07786 126898</a>	18:30 – 21:00		18:30 – 21:00	18:30 – 21:00	
<b>Greenfield Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	School Lane, Greenfield, Nr Holywell. CH8 7HR. Tel: 01352 716649 WIC: Avril Williams Area Manager: <a href="#">Mick Holt / 07786 126898</a>	17:30 – 20:00		17:30 – 20:00		
<b>Leeswood Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Ysgol Derwenfa, Leeswood. CH7 4RQ. Tel: 01352 770479. WIC: Richard Douglas Area Manager: <a href="#">Gary Williams / 07876 391267</a>				18:30 – 21:00	
<b>Mancot Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services / Sandycroft CP School Premises)	Leaches Lane, Mancot. CH5 2EH. Tel: 01244 531247. WIC: Colin Pritchard Area Manager: <a href="#">Mick Holt / 07786 126898</a>				CLOSED	
<b>Mynydd Isa Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services / Caffi Isa Premises)	Mynydd Isa Community Centre, Mercia Square, Mercia Drive, Mynydd Isa. CH7 6UH Tel: 01352 757921 WIC: Linda Brackenbury Area Manager: <a href="#">Mick Holt / 07786 126898</a>	18:00 – 20:30		18:00 – 20:30		

<b>Open Award Centre</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Glanrafon Centre, Glanrafon Road, Mold, CH7 1PA. Tel: 01352 752588. WIC: Rachel Lavender McGlashen (DofE) Area Manager: Gary Williams / 07876 391267			18:30 – 21:00		
<b>Penyffordd Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Hawarden Road, Penyffordd. Ch4 0JE. Tel: 01244 550436. WIC: Dave Butler Area Manager: Mick Holt / 07786 126898	18:30 – 21:00			18:30 – 21:00	
<b>Saltney Dinner Club – Years 10 &amp; 11</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Across the bridge from St David’s High School, Sandy Lane, Saltney. CH4 8UB. WIC: Julie Pugh Area Manager: Laura Wright / 07775 681450	12:25 – 12:55	12:25 – 12:55	12:25 – 12:55		
<b>Saltney Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Across the bridge from St David’s High School, Sandy Lane, Saltney. CH4 8UB. WIC: Julie Pugh Area Manager: Laura Wright / 07775 681450	18:30 – 21:00		18:30 – 21:00		
<b>Sealand Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Sandy Lane, Garden City, Sealand. CH5 2JN. Tel: 01244 830129. WIC: Rebecca Ellis Area Manager: Gary Williams / 07876 391267		18:30 – 21:00			
<b>Treuddyn Youth Club</b> (Managed by Youth Services)	Ffordd y Llan, Treuddyn. CH7 4LR. Tel: 01352 771232. WIC: Leslie Critchlow-Hughes Area Manager: Mandy Jackson / 07766 417079			18:30 – 21:00		

**IMMERSION WORK WITHIN SCHOOLS**

HIGH SCHOOL	DETAILS	M	T	W	T	F
<b>Castell Alun</b>	Fagl Lane, Outer Hope LL12 9PY Immersion Worker: Bev Carroll / 07795 496618	09:00 – 15:00	09:00 – 15:00	09:00 – 15:00		
<b>Connah’s Quay</b>	Golftyn Lane Connah’s Quay, Deeside CH5 4BH Immersion Worker: Laura Roberts / 07741 833072		09:00 – 15:00			
<b>St David’s</b>	St David’s Terrace, Saltney, Chester CH4 0AE Immersion Worker: Laura Wright / 07775 681450		09:00 – 15:00		09:00 – 15:00	

<b>Ysgol Treffynnon</b>	Pen Y Maes Road, Holywell, Flintshire, CH8 7EN Immersion Worker: Mandy Jackson / 07766 417079			09:00 – 15:00		
<b>Ysgol Maes Garmon</b>	Conwy Street, Mold, Flintshire CH7 1JB Immersion Worker: Laura Roberts / 07741 833072			09:00 – 15:00		

**PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER SERVICES**

ORGANISATION	DETAILS	M	T	W	T	F
<b>Buckley Town FC Youth Club</b>	Buckley Town Football Club, The Globe, Globe Way, Off Liverpool Road, Buckley CH7 3LY	Open monthly with support from Youth Service. No set details, please contact Buckley Town FC for upcoming dates.				
<b>C Card Scheme Sexual Health support</b>	No location Contact: Bev Carroll / 07795 496618	Evenings	Evenings	Evenings	Evenings	
<b>Duke of Edinburgh Award</b>	Within multiple schools within Flintshire, supported by Youth Service.	No specific days or times. Dependable on the Schools registered to complete the award				
<b>Education and Youth Forest school</b>	Within multiple schools within Flintshire, supported by Youth Service at our Eco Centre (as below).	Ysgol Maes Hyfryd	Ysgol Treffynnon		PRUs	
<b>Flying Start Woodland Adventure</b>	Eco Centre, Hanson Cement, Padeswood Works, Chester Road, Mold CH7 4HB Contact: Mick Holt / 07786 126898				13:00 – 14:30	
<b>Inspire Mental Health Youth Club (closed group)</b>	Glanrafon Centre, Glanrafon Road, Mold, Flintshire CH7 1PA. Contact: Kate Glover-Jones / 07554 416160		17:00 – 19:00 Fortnightly			
<b>Pride Foundation LGBTQ+ Group</b>	Deeside Leisure Centre, Chester Road West, Queensferry CH5 1SA Contact: Kate Glover-Jones / 07554 416160			17:00 – 19:00	Ysgol Treffynnon (lunchtime)	
<b>St David’s High Bridge Project</b>	Across the bridge from St David’s High School, Sandy Lane, Saltney. CH4 8UB. Contact: Laura Wright / 07775 681450			Need to confirm with LW		Need to confirm with LW
<b>Theatr Clwyd (October) Consent Project</b>	Raikes Lane, Mold CH7 1YA Contact: Bev Carroll / 07795 496618	Annual project run within schools in Flintshire during October. Full list of schools can be provided by Bev Carroll.				

<b>Ukrainian Refugee</b> Forest School	Eco Centre, Hanson Cement, Padeswood Works, Chester Road, Mold CH7 4HB Contact: Mick Holt / 07786 126898					10:00 – 14:00
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**SEASONAL PROGRAMMES**

PROGRAMME	DETAILS	M	T	W	T	F
<b>Art &amp; Music Project</b>	<b>DARREN???</b>					
<b>Need to add in Playschemes..</b>						
<b>Saltney Summer Programme</b> 25/07/22 – 04/08/22	Across the bridge from St David's High School, Sandy Lane, Saltney. CH4 8UB. WIC: Julie Pugh Contact: Laura Wright / 07775 681450	13:00 – 16:00	13:00 – 16:00	13:00 – 16:00	13:00 – 16:00	
<b>Summer Family Woodland Adventure</b> 26/07/22 – 25/08/22	Eco Centre, Hanson Cement, Padeswood Works, Chester Road, Mold CH7 4HB Contact: Mick Holt / 07786 126898		10:00 – 15:00		10:00 – 15:00	

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# MULTIPLYING IMPACT 2021 – 2024

## Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision Delivery Plan



## Introduction

Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) aspires for all Flintshire young people to have the support that contributes to their being safe, healthy, reaching their potential and living free from disadvantage and inequalities of opportunity. As a youth work provision service, we are committed to:

- The importance and relevance of all young people's voice in all that we do.
- Young people choosing to engage and to take part.
- Treating all young people with respect and where we respect and value differences.
- An asset-based and strengths based approach, working alongside young people to build their skills, their capabilities and their sense of self-worth and self-confidence.
- Helping young people develop stronger relationships and cohesive communities. We recognise that this happens when we are led by, and negotiate with, young people. We recognise also that this requires constant adaptation and ever closer partnering with a range of services and other sources of formal and informal support. This includes families, town and parish councils, schools, colleges, play and leisure services and diverse partners from across the statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors.

In reviewing our efforts and consulting on our future during COVID-19 pandemic, we recognise that there has been innovation in service delivery that is worth sustaining as we move forward. For example, embedding and further expanding digital and remote contact methods with young people and offering sustaining a youth club model that is safe, adaptable and sustainable.

We also recognise that there are significant worries about more young people and stakeholders requiring support for their mental and emotional health and wellbeing as the course of the pandemic and recovery in the coming months and years takes place. We also recognise that for many young people and families at the time when they needed support the most, many of the protective factors which normally help them to cope were inaccessible because of the restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic; for example, school and workplace closures, as well as closing of gyms, leisure centres, sports clubs and missing out on meeting up with friends and family. Many young people and families also continue to face major financial challenges and worries about employment and poverty.

As lockdown conditions have now begun to ease, schools and further education offers have reopened and universal services have started to operate more normally, the full impact of the pandemic on the lives of young people and families will become more visible, especially for those who are more vulnerable. We will build on our history of advocating for, and partnering with, young people, schools and key support services to prepare for an increase in young people with more complex problems, such as young people with self-harming behaviours, suicidal risks and other mental health difficulties.

Welsh Government is promoting a whole-school approach to mental health and encourages greater use of youth-work approaches to support young people with emotional and mental health and wellbeing needs and those at more risk of disengaging with education, training and employment. As schools begin implementing the revised National Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 onwards, this focus will become sharper and more detailed. Youth work offers insights about how to engage young people who are at greater risk. In Flintshire, we are determined to work strategically and collaboratively with young people and partners to ensure everyone benefits and therefore multiply our impact. Welcome to *Multiplying Impact: Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision FIYP Delivery Plan 2021- 2024*.



## Flintshire context for youth work

Flintshire occupies a unique border location in the North East corner of Wales, serving as the gateway to North Wales. Flintshire is bounded by the Welsh authorities of Wrexham and Denbighshire as well as Cheshire West and Chester in England. The population is spread across the towns of Flint, Buckley, Holywell, Connah's Quay and Mold, but unlike some Welsh counties there is no main centre. The remainder of the population are located either in a westward linear pattern extending along the Flintshire coast, with more rural and dispersed communities to the central and western areas of the County or in more commuter-based villages to the south and east.

Almost uniquely in the UK, manufacturing is at the heart of the local economy, providing 24% of all jobs (the figure for the UK is 13%). High value manufacturing is central with aerospace, automotive components, specialty chemicals, food and paper and packaging industries all well represented. Brexit related regulatory burdens are a key worry, given estimates of £300m per year in lost revenue to Flintshire and Wrexham. This will cause higher unemployment, demand on already stretched public services and reduce opportunities for young people for good local jobs.<sup>1</sup> Sustainable energy generation is becoming a more significant part of the local economy. At the Port of Mostyn, Flintshire has the most successful offshore wind servicing and support centre on the west coast of Britain.

156,100 people live in Flintshire (2019 ONS estimates), which represents about 5% growth since 2001. Of the total population, 28% are aged 0-25 years (42,314). Young people aged 11-25 years account for 56%, totalling 23,714. Flintshire people are amongst the most economically active in Wales. In September 2020, 78.9% of people aged 16-64 years were employed, with only Monmouthshire having a higher economic participation rate at 80.6%. By contrast, the Wales average is 73.3% and UK average is 75.5%. There are 13.7% workless households in Flintshire, which compares to 18.4% for Wales and 13.9% for the UK.

Worries about rising unemployment caused by COVID-19, Brexit related trade disruption and economic contraction are reflected in rising numbers of claimants for out-of-work benefits. For example, in January 2021, there are 4,835 claimants in Flintshire (5.1%). This compares to 2,605 in November 2019 (3.1%): a 54% increase in 14 months. Young people are even worse affected. In January 2021, there were 10 young people aged 16-17 years in receipt of out-of-work benefits (0.3%) and 955 young people aged 18-24 years in receipt of out-of-work benefits (8.8%), which compares to an all-Wales average of 8.5% and a UK average of 8.8%. In November 2019, there were 10 young people aged 16-17 years in receipt of out-of-work benefits (0.3%) but only 545 young people aged 18-24 years in receipt of our-of-work benefits (5%). This represents a 75% increase in 14 months.

Our geography means that some of our young people are more confined to their own areas than is true for counties with main centres. This impacts most on those with less means and less confidence to travel in order to access provision in neighbouring towns and/or villages. This isolation has been exacerbated further for young people, their families and communities because of COVID-19.

Our geography and local patterns of inward and outward migration with nearby English towns and cities e.g. Chester and Liverpool, have also meant we have tended to have fewer Welsh language speakers (13.2% cf. 19% for Wales in 2011 census). Through our Council's *Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2018 – 2023*, we are taking a multi-pronged approach to overcome this. Part of our strategy in the Integrated Youth Provision has been to appoint a Welsh Language Officer who has been in post since May 2021.

Youth work; the Youth Provision Service and Youth Support Services in Flintshire have been planned and delivered in an integrated way since 2015, with enhanced collaboration between

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<sup>1</sup> See Deeside News, *Brexit trade impact could see Wrexham and Flintshire economies lose £300m a year*, 8 March 2021 quoting a Grant Thornton report prepared for the Welsh Local Government Association.

providers in all sectors. Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) operates across the spectrum of need with a reach across all secondary schools, statutory and voluntary sector partners. FIYP utilises the Youth Support Grant (YSG) and the Families First grant to support a strategic approach to partnership work and an active voluntary sector provision. This has enabled us to adopt a strategic approach to planning and delivering support for young people. For example, we have been able to unlock broader opportunities for more comprehensive, well-coordinated wraparound support for those young people at more risk of poor life chances. This has included the creation of multiagency, multidisciplinary initiatives such as the Early Help Hub and is reflected in the local governance arrangements established to oversee implementation of the Children and Communities Grant and Housing Support Grant.

## Policy context for youth work in Flintshire

### National context



#### Youth Work Strategy for Wales



The Learning and Skills Act 2000 s.123 obliges local authorities to provide and/or secure the provision of Youth Support Services (youth services). Youth services operate from multiple settings, including schools, homes and in communities. This includes dedicated provision for young people more at risk of poor outcomes such as young carers and young people with disabilities, at risk of exclusion, having unhealthy relationships and those with emotional and mental health problems. Youth workers provide these services via 'youth work' - a recognised methodology for working with young people, underpinned by National Occupational Standards and regulated professional qualifications. Youth work aims to enable young people to develop

holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.

Since 2010, traditional youth service activities in Wales, which were mainly community-based, drop-in and open-access, have reduced. Reasons for this include national policy change, young people's growing preference for digital interaction, more time spent on school-related activities and study and the impact of austerity. The national policy context increasingly focused youth service activities to more targeted provision. The Welsh Government and key agencies such as Estyn have increasingly recognised the essential role of youth workers to helping support positive outcomes with young people that are more vulnerable to disadvantage and exclusion. For example:

- Estyn (2018)<sup>2</sup>: *"The support for these (vulnerable) young people that is most successful in the long-term is engagement with well-trained youth workers who take time to build a relationship of trust with them. They then can foster these young people's personal development, build their confidence and resilience, and develop*

<sup>2</sup> Estyn. (2018). *Youth Support Services in Wales, The Value of Youth Work*. [estyn.gov.wales] Wales: Estyn, p.7 Used. Available at: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Youth%2520Support%2520Services%2520in%2520Wales.pdf> [Accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022]

*their social skills, so that they are more likely to make better life decisions and in due course re-engage with learning programmes.*

- The Welsh Government reports that ‘youth work interventions have been shown to have a positive effect on formal education outcomes, behaviour, attendance and progression through key points of transition’.

### Key national policy changes include:

Youth Support Grant changes	Since 2019/20, requirements for youth work approaches to providing emotional and mental health support and to co-ordinate activity to meet statutory requirements for a Youth Homelessness Prevention Service.
Curriculum for Wales 2022	Embeds health and wellbeing as a core ‘area of learning and experience’ in the new curriculum progressively rolled out from 2022.
Estyn framework for inspection of secondary schools	Inspectors will make judgements about schools making appropriate use of partners to provide effective support for pupils where that is required and also about the quality of approaches to improving pupil wellbeing and addressing the needs of more vulnerable learners.
Families First	Since 2016/17, requirements for specific programmes to support young people at more risk of disadvantage e.g., because of experience of care, adverse childhood traumas (ACEs).
Youth Engagement and Progression Framework	A Welsh Government Implementation Plan that aims to increase the education, employment and training of young people aged 11 to 24.

## Flintshire policy and operational context

At a Flintshire County Council level, key local priorities are:

<p><b>Reducing homelessness</b> because Flintshire young people aged 16-24 represent 23% of those presenting as homeless. The aim is to reduce the number of young people who are homeless by 50% every year to 2024</p>	<p><b>Reducing school absenteeism &amp; permanent &amp; fixed term exclusions</b> as exclusions in secondary schools in Flintshire are higher than all Wales averages.</p>	<p><b>Improving outcomes for children and young people who are ‘looked after’ (LAC) &amp; for care leavers.</b> Flintshire currently has 252 children and young people who are ‘looked after’. This represents a rise of 21% since 2016. The Council is ambitious for their outcomes and future prospects.</p>
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We know from national research and local analysis that young people affected by adverse childhood traumas (ACEs) and with other challenges arising from factors such as being young carers, intergenerational poverty and/or having a disability, neuro-diverse condition and poor mental and emotional health and wellbeing underlie many of these key priorities.

For example, of young people known working with the Flintshire Youth Justice Service across January-November 2019, 85% have 2+ ACEs, of which 50% have 4 or more. 15% have 7+:

- 85% are affected by parental separation
- 58% by domestic violence
- 47% by drug use
- 46% by mental illness
- 33% by alcohol harm
- 31% parental incarceration
- 28% have been physically abused
- 14% have been sexually abused.

### Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

We already know that an online mental health support service, Kooth PLC found relatively steady engagement with their service across the pandemic period. Early presenting issues were anxiety and relationships but as the pandemic progressed there was an increase in young people presenting with thoughts of self-harm and suicide, (COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report<sup>3</sup>). The Early Intervention Foundation (June 2020)<sup>4</sup> Action for Children reports *'The assumption was that there would be a **significant spike** in early help and social care referrals. Services will face a double hit, not only from more families needing more support to deal with a wider range of problems, but also from the knock-on consequences of fewer children and families having received the support that would usually have been available at key moments in their lives.*

With this in mind, we consulted young people and wider stakeholders from within our staff team, councillors, parents/carers and partners during the third national lockdown (beginning in December 2020) to inform our *FIYP Delivery Plan 2021-2024*,

### Consultation Outcomes

**From our consultation which included over 80 young people, we learned that the majority who use FIYP services rate these as great or good** with informal education and play activities during the summer, 1:1 and group activities with youth workers in the community, during the school day (but not at school), online and youth clubs all scoring highly.

**The areas for us to develop further are** improving the experience of young people engaging with youth workers at school and in accessing information, advice and assistance through telephone/email contact with youth workers.

Service	Great/good	Not good/terrible
1:1 & group activities with youth workers in the community	72%	9%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers online	70%	14%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers during the day at school	28%	30%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers during the school day but not at school (e.g. Forest School)	73%	11%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers at youth clubs	64%	7%
Informal education & play activities at school during the lockdown (Resilience Hubs)	55%	22%
Informal education & play activities during summer time	75%	13%
Information & advice I can get from Youth Services Facebook page	57%	14%
Telephone or email contact with youth workers	62%	25%

<sup>3</sup> Kooth PLC. (25<sup>th</sup> February 2021). *COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report; Research and analysis Children and young people*. [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england] Public Health England, Ch.7 Telephone and online support service use – children and young people Used. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/37458/1/7.%20Children%20and%20young%20people%20-%20GOV.UK.pdf> [Accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022]

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, H & Waddell, S. (2020). *Covid-19 and early intervention: Understanding the impact, preparing for recovery*. [www.eif.org.uk] London: Early Intervention Foundation, p.14 Used. Available at: <https://media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/embargo-covid-19-impact-recovery.pdf> [Accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022]

### Amongst young people, we also found strong demand for FIYP to prioritise support:

- In how to feel more confident, for chances to learn something new, stay safe, relax/have a break, do something different and for support with education and/or employment (85-90% of all young people)
- Chances to meet more young people like themselves and for support to deal with anxiety, stress and problems at school with other young people (80-84%)
- Access to youth workers as sources of information and advice about other types of available support and to assist with problems with family/at home and in addressing problems with teachers and school work (67-79%)

At least half of young people also value as very important/important FIYP youth and play workers providing information and advice about sexual health, drugs and alcohol and housing.

While there was little difference in preferences based on location, gender, having a disability or a health/neuro-diverse condition, for some cohorts of young people there were particular areas of support that are more strongly valued. These include:

- **For LGBTQ+ young people**  
100% rated support with anxiety and stress as very important/important, of which 87% rated this as very important. They are also far more likely to want support with the following issues - problems with family/at home (93%), where else they can go for information and advice on housing (93%) and with sexual health information and advice (87%).
- **For young people where Welsh or English is not their first language**  
100% rate support for problems at school with other young people as very important/important and 100% rate the chance to relax/have a break as very important/important.
- **For young carers**  
100% rate support with anxiety and stress, the chance to relax/have a break, support for problems at school with other young people, problems with teachers and school work, feeling more confident, staying safe and school/college/getting a job as very important/important. Young carers were also significantly more likely than all other cohorts to report requiring support for problems with teachers and school work.

### For 122 FIYP staff, partners, parents/carers and councillors, they largely validated the key priority areas for young people in Flintshire in need of support.

- **Support for young people's mental health and wellbeing**, including anxiety and stress, support networks and to address waiting times for specialist mental health services (43%).
- **Pro-social community activities**, including access to informal education, play and activities that alleviate boredom and give young people something to do (33%).
- **Safe environments** for young people to meet, access support, hang out etc. (25%).

Other priority areas are:

- Information, advice and assistance related to alcohol and drugs (17%).
- Support for economic empowerment, including jobs and financial advice (13%)
- Support related to education, such as to help reduce exclusions, support pupil engagement (12%)
- Access to online support services, including improved online safety and to address digital exclusion (10%).

They were more emphatic than young people about FIYP prioritising as important:

- Supporting young people experiencing anxiety and stress e.g. feeling worried, feeling lonely, self-harm (99%).
- Supporting young people to feel more confident e.g. body image, peer pressure (99%).
- Supporting young people experiencing problems with family/at home (99%).
- Supporting young people experiencing problems at school with other young people e.g. bullying, peer pressure (98%).
- Support with school/college/getting a job (97%).
- Giving young people a chance to do something different (97%).
- Giving young people a chance to learn something new (97%).
- Giving young people a chance to meet more young people like them e.g. Welsh speakers, disabled young people, LGBTQ+ young people (97%).

We also asked young people and wider stakeholders about what they consider best ways of FIYP providing that support. There are some interesting differences between what young people and wider stakeholders told us. While both agreed that youth clubs near where young people live is the 'number one' priority, the consultation also indicated that:

- Online youth clubs are 2<sup>nd</sup> choice for young people but 5<sup>th</sup> choice for wider stakeholders
- Accessing information and advice from a youth worker at school was 3<sup>rd</sup> choice for both young people and for wider stakeholders
- Accessing information and advice from a youth worker remotely when needed e.g. by telephone, email, social media, Zoom was 4<sup>th</sup> choice for both young people and for wider stakeholders
- Accessing information, advice and support from a youth worker at places a young person might be, such as a leisure centre, park, sports club, hospital or homeless shelter was 5<sup>th</sup> choice for young people and 2<sup>nd</sup> for wider stakeholders.

**This tells us we need a multifaceted and inclusive approach to engagement to maximise access for young people to our support.**

We found mostly strong support for proposals for service development related to:

### 1. Expanding digital and remote engagement with young people and staff:

- 65% rate this great/good (78)
- 18% okay (23)
- 8% not good (9)
- 9% don't know (10)

Some stakeholders were concerned that digital interaction would become the default way of supporting young people, especially when many young people benefit from face-to-face interaction. For example, one partner noted *'Humans are social beings and as such require social connections and interaction in the real world. Whilst digital content may be better than nothing in times of perceived emergencies that limit freedom, they are a poor substitute for high quality face to face youth work.'*

Overall, there was strong support for expanding the digital and remote offer. For many, there was a sense that this about adapting to the times and for others, simply identifying the benefit to having another method for contact with young people as part of a hybrid service model. For some there was also a sense that expanding digital services was important as a tool for education about online safety. As one community member noted, *'Because young people and*

*a growing number of adults inhabit a virtual, on line world, a world fraught with opportunities and also dangers, being able to navigate this space and act professionally within it is of vital importance.'*

FIYP have set up all communication systems in line with FCC policies and age appropriate requirements. All bilingual posts to our thriving social media platforms are made by the Estyn Llaw/Reaching Out team.

## **2. Sustaining and developing partnerships with schools and other services such as AURA, Housing and Children's Services to make youth workers available in settings that young people attend. For instance, young people at risk of homelessness, self-harm and who are at risk of exclusion from school:**

- 89% rate this great/good (109)
- 7% okay (9)
- 1% not good (1)
- 3% don't know (3)

There was very strong support for this objective with a clear recognition of the benefits of joint and more integrated work in order to provide a more seamless and accessible service relevant to the needs of individual young people. Some partners used the opportunity to seek to work closer with FIYP. For example:

- An AURA representative said, *"great for FIYP youth workers to be present in venues and services across the community and happy to support with our venues."*
- An Education representative said, *"We already link with some Youth Workers and Youth Justice Service so that is proving positive. But as always, could do more. Could Education and Youth also be offered similar training. A Senior Youth Worker has helped with some - brilliant. More joint work, provision to increase links and support for young people and staff. We have great groups running with AURA and Theatre Clwyd so instead of duplication, stronger links. Also using the tools, the Learner Profiling Tool which highlights potential NEETS". (Not in Employment Education or Training).*

## **3. Proposals to re-establish regular youth clubs at Connah's Quay, Flint, Greenfield, Leeswood, Penyffordd, Saltney and Sealand, Mynydd Isa and Treuddyn. To develop new provision in the Deeside area and to have schools and community organisations manage some buildings:**

- 60% rate this great/good (73)
- 18% okay (22)
- 16% not good (19)
- 6% don't know (7)

Worries about specific communities not having a regular youth club were the main cause for concern amongst those who said 'not good'. There were particular worries expressed about a lack of youth club provision in Buckley, Hope, Holywell, Caergwrle, Abermorddu and Cymau. There were also concerns raised about having static youth clubs. For instance, one councillor expressed worries about them being targeted by 'County Lines' (a form of Criminal Exploitation of young people by out of county drug dealers).

While many local authorities have closed all regular youth clubs, Flintshire will continue to operate clubs in specific geographical communities. We will aspire to supplement this with specific interest youth clubs and pop-ups, with peripatetic play and youth work in locations across the County that is based on local needs and conducted in partnership with town and parish councils and other key service providers. We will also continue to build on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic by further developing our online offer. This includes:

- Enhancing our social media presence. Building on our successful IYP Facebook page launched during 2020 (14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – 282 “likes” 336 “followers”), we have also established an Instagram account in 2021 which now has 301 individuals who “like” the account (January 2022). This has been essential in promoting the new democratic voting entitlement for the 16+ cohort and other local and national campaigns.
- Online special interest youth clubs; for example, Welsh Language speakers that has over 70 young people participate, young people that are supported through the Inspire programme, LGBT+ people
- An online sexual health service delivered by the FIYP sexual health nurse who has a degree in youth work and two level 3 workers. This includes 1:1 support, videos and other resource. This is supplemented with a postal service for prophylactics. This will be supplemented with face-to-face sexual health clinics for young people when safe to do so.



## Delivering on our vision for the future

Using the Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2019 as our overarching framework, we have structured our strategic plan to deliver on the following 5 aims:

1. Young people are thriving
2. Youth work is accessible and inclusive
3. Voluntary and paid professional youth work staff are supported throughout their careers to improve their practice
4. Youth work is valued & understood
5. A sustainable model for youth work delivery

### 1. Young people are thriving

To make Flintshire a great place for young people to grow up and thrive, we want young people to:

- Feel valued, respected and supported to live authentically in a community that is inclusive and draws strength from diversity.
- Have opportunities for personal and social education in English and Welsh relevant to their need and through which, they will grow in self-confidence and self-worth, stay safe, enjoy healthy relationships and develop resilience and emotional wellbeing.
- Have access to trusted adults in safe environments where they feel they belong and can enjoy opportunities to relax, have fun and meet peers, learn new skills and seek information, advice and assistance.
- Decide for themselves what support they need and how they access it. They will know their rights and responsibilities and have meaningful opportunities to inform decision making about the issues that affect them.

Some of the things we have done to further these aims include:

- 1.1 Operating a fully bilingual service.
- 1.2 Maintaining a network of youth clubs across Flintshire and where clubs have needed to close, working with partners to enable continued access to support.
- 1.3 Supporting our Youth Council to meet regularly.
- 1.4 Facilitating meetings of the Youth Council with the Council's Leader and Deputy Leader and other senior officers to inform the development of policy affecting young people within Flintshire.
- 1.5 Partnering with services to co-locate youth work services within settings accessed by young people; for example, working with AURA sports club at Connah's Quay.
- 1.6 Co-locating youth workers within 5 secondary schools, including our Welsh medium secondary school, Ysgol Maes Garmon, for 1 day per week each week of each school term to deliver 1:1 and group work. We also work with secondary schools to make available the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award programme to 100+ young people across Flintshire every year, and were the first Welsh local authority to provide a specific DoE programme with our specialist secondary school, Ysgol Maes Hyfryd.

- 1.7 Developing young people's leadership skills through a longstanding partnership with Glyndwr University. Thereafter, these young leaders work in youth clubs and at our annual residential camps providing support to young people. Some young leaders have gone on to represent the young people in their local areas in town and community councils. Four young leaders have gone on to study the Youth Work at Glyndwr University with two having progressed through foundation levels to their final year Degree. One of these has subsequently been employed in a full time capacity with our partner organisation, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and will jointly facilitate the Young Leaders Project 2022 and the Youth Council. This further enhances our Welsh Language offer to young people in Flintshire.
- 1.8 Delivering a summer play schemes for children – these have run for 26 years for children aged 5-12. In 2021, despite the pandemic the Flintshire Summer Play Scheme ran at 55 sites within 28 Town and Community Council areas. 2,779 children were registered to participate including 38 disabled children supported by our buddies system. In total, resulting in a total attendance across all schemes of 14,019 children including 120 children who received their play scheme through the Welsh language.
- 1.9 Contributing to the Welsh Government's 'Summer of Fun' programme for children and young people aged 0—25 by leading the development of a range of activities and experiences across the County during the summer holidays of 2021. This work is currently being extended through the 'Winter of Wellbeing' programme being promoted and funded by Welsh Government.
- 1.10 Rapidly innovating our service model in response to the pandemic, our Play Development Service delivered Informal education and play activities each day at Resilience Hubs based in several primary schools when schools were closed for formal education in the early stages of the pandemic.
- 1.11 Developed a creative drama project (devised by a young professional director trained by the Welsh Arts Council) named 'what just happened?' that enables young people to share their thoughts, hopes and fears about the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and futures. The inclusive project involves young people sharing their perspectives using various devices and formats and gives them opportunities to work alongside script writers and digital editors to create a product which can have several uses, e.g. shape service/ amplify the voice of our young people in their own words.
- 1.12 Making available safe digital, remote services for young people; including online meetings for the Youth Council, 1:1 support, online youth clubs and establishing a Facebook page and an Instagram account to share information and advice and to facilitate contact  
<https://www.facebook.com/YouthProvisionFlintshire/>  
[https://www.instagram.com/youth\\_provision\\_flintshire/](https://www.instagram.com/youth_provision_flintshire/)

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- 1.13 Continue to deliver youth clubs where they are sustainable
- 1.14 Develop new regular provision in key locations across the County to strengthen partnership working e.g. alongside Aura Libraries and Leisure service
- 1.15 Deliver programmes of daily sport, recreation and informal education in areas where anti-social behaviour is high and where the Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment identifies gaps.

- 1.16 Re-establish our Youth Exchange programme when travel conditions allow, which broadens opportunities for young people through involvement in a 3-way exchange with young people in Ireland and England. The programme also advances understanding and appreciation of Welsh language and culture.
- 1.17 Utilising our new colourful distinctive FIYP Estyn Llaw / Reaching Out bespoke bus and pop up shelters, bringing youth services into communities throughout Flintshire. Working with town and parish councils and other key service providers, this provision is based on local needs and in partnership. For instance, we have commenced in 2021 with a pop up classrooms and forest school offer at Ysgol Maes Garmon, our Welsh medium secondary school.
- 1.18 Expanding our partnerships with other services to co-locate youth work services within settings accessed by young people. This includes developing a more comprehensive youth work offer across AURA managed leisure centres and sporting clubs and working with Theatr Clwyd Cymru to develop creative provision focussed on self-care and preventative messages.
- 1.19 Expanding the co-location of youth workers working one day per week every week of every term to five secondary schools in 2021, with aspirations for this model to operate at all secondary schools by 2024.
- 1.20 Enhancing our digital and remote offer for young people. This includes:
- An online youth club through our partnership with the Urdd for Welsh language speakers that involves 70+ young people and a digital Eisteddfod to facilitate the celebration and promotion of Welsh culture, augmented with TikTok dancing competitions and other social media innovation.

## 2. Youth work is accessible and inclusive

We want youth work to:

- Inform young people about available support
- Give choice to young people about how they choose to access support
- Work collaboratively with partners to help build resilience and wellbeing for young people that are more vulnerable to disadvantage and problem escalation
- Be responsive to changing needs, circumstances and interests of young people

We have multiple and diverse methods for engaging young people that includes face-to-face engagement through youth clubs, youth workers in schools and play and youth workers in settings which children and young people go to. This includes dedicated open access activities such as those made available during Easter and summer holidays for children and young people. Our engagement with young people is enhanced with digital and remote contact methods, which has expanded in response to the pandemic. We have maximised our offer through the additional funding programmes made available by Welsh Government e.g. Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing.

We have also undertaken the following to advance accessible and inclusive youth work for young people with a wide range of needs:

- 2.1 Offering informal education packages for young people that are struggling with educational engagement through our bespoke Forest Schools / skills programme which this delivers the John Muir Award.

- 2.2 Making the Inspire programme based at the Wrexham Maelor hospital available to support young people in Flintshire with needs related to self-harm and suicide risk. This includes access to dedicated online youth clubs to support positive behavioural change and connection, including a dedicated club for LGBT+ young people. This project is supported by a member of the Estyn Llaw team on a weekly basis.
- 2.3 Co-located youth workers within Housing Needs and Children's Services to work with young people at risk of homelessness, including dedicated support for young people leaving care. This is helping contribute to annual targets in our *Flintshire Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024* to cut youth homelessness by 50% each year.
- 2.4 Co-locating the Families First Young People consortia and Disability consortia within the Early Help Hub to enable comprehensive information sharing and a rapid and bespoke service response to meet the needs of young people and families that will benefit most from early help.
- 2.5 PALS (Play and Leisure Support) Project provides 1:1 support for children and young people with disabilities to participate in play, the arts, recreational, cultural, sporting, and other social opportunities.
- 2.6 Flintshire New Dragons Youth Project for young people with communication and language difficulties. The project is led by young people, with support from a communication champion and youth workers. We add value through providing accredited training.
- 2.7 As part of our service response to the pandemic: facilitating access to laptops for young people at risk of digital exclusion; and making available additional support for young carers and carers in partnership with North East Wales Carers Support Service (NEWCIS) by providing food and essentials deliveries direct to the home as part of the "Keep well keep safe" initiative set up within the first 2 weeks of lockdown in March 2020.

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- 2.8 Build on the legacy of the Resilience Hubs emergency provision to provide ongoing play support to young people attending Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Specialist High School
- 2.9 Update our Play Sufficiency Assessment to identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- 2.10 Further develop our Welsh language provision
- 2.11 Expand our Forest School programme and make it available to a wider cohort of young people including those 'school phobic' young people supported by the Education Progression Team and young people attending the PRU. We will also aim to expand this provision to work with Social Services for Children family Social Workers.
- 2.12 Develop a pilot transition programme to help to smooth the progression for young people from primary into secondary school.
- 2.13 Expand our support for young people to improve their mental health and wellbeing and to equip staff from across schools, universal and targeted services with the know-how to respond in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Expand our support to prevent youth homelessness. This includes:

- 2.14 Equipping schools and other services with the know-how to consider homelessness risks in interactions with young people. This includes a focus on hidden cohorts such as young people that are LGBT+, carers and experiencing mental ill health.
- 2.15 Deploy play workers and youth workers to provide informal education and play opportunities for children and young people at family centres in Holywell and Northop attached to accommodation managed by Clwyd Alyn.
- 2.16 Develop a digital theatre production about homelessness will be used for a campaign to help prevent problem escalation and support early help for young people at risk of homelessness (and then be an available resource thereafter).
- 2.17 Provide youth work support to a planned Homelessness Prevention Hub in Flintshire by 2024.

### 3. Voluntary and paid professional youth work staff are supported throughout their careers to improve their practice

In Flintshire, we want voluntary and paid professional staff to:

- Recognise and be recognised for the essential work they do alongside young people
- Be highly skilled practitioners with ongoing support to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence
- Contribute to the development of local policies affecting young people

Some of what we have done to further these aims include:

- Evaluating of our work with young people and partners. For example:

- 3.1 Informal feedback has been very positive overall about Resilience Hubs, summer play sessions and commissioned services particularly Families First services delivered through the Action for Children led Young People consortia and Disability consortia.
- 3.2 External evaluation of targeted play work at the Holway Community Centre; the co-location of youth workers within schools, the hospital based Inspire programme; and a package of play, forest school and youth worker led 1:1 and group activities in targeted schools
- 3.3 Making available support for staff to gain youth work qualifications. This includes staff of partner services, e.g. AURA staff access our IYP training programme.
- 3.4 Expanding professional development opportunities for full time, part time, sessional staff and volunteers. This includes:
- Increasing the number of staff that are qualified Forest School Leaders
  - Mindfulness training offered to all staff during lockdown
  - Zoom training offered to staff during lockdown
  - Delivering on line training offered to staff during lockdown
  - Internet delivery safety and participation standards training
  - Health and Safety mandatory training

- Food hygiene mandatory training
- First aid mandatory training

3.5 Sharing learning and contribute to wider advocacy through the All-Wales Principal Youth Officers Group

3.6 Funding the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council to support the local voluntary sector with training, advice and networking opportunities.

3.7 Consulting staff about proposals for service development.

## 4. Youth work is valued and understood

In Flintshire, we want youth work to:

- Be positively recognised and celebrated for its contribution to the personal, social and emotional development of our young people
- Be positively recognised and celebrated for its contribution to prevention and early intervention for young people that are at more risk of disadvantage and problem escalation
- Inform the development of services for young people

Some of what we have done to further these aims include:

4.1 Locating decision making about the Youth Support Grant and Families First provision within overarching multidisciplinary governance arrangements about prevention and support for children, young people, families and more vulnerable adults in Flintshire. For example, FIYP practice has informed commissioning of support for young people at risk of homelessness and support for families with multiple needs.

4.2 Presenting to key decision makers and partners e.g. the Council's Cabinet; Education Youth & Culture Scrutiny Committee and Secondary Head Teachers Federation meetings.

4.3 Progressively increased greater levels of joint work with key partners. For instance:

Increasing co-location of youth workers within schools. External evaluation confirms that school staff are very positive about the impact and would welcome increased provision.

4.4 Play Development Service delivery as part of the Resilience Hubs established in response to the pandemic has left a legacy. A number of schools have requested ongoing involvement of play workers to support children and young people.

4.5 More partnering with Education Inclusion Services to provide 1:1 support for young people at greatest risk of disengagement from education, training or employment.

4.6 Gained recognition for the impact of our youth work practice. For example:

- The Estyn inspection of Flintshire Education Services (2019) positively noted the Council's provision of good opportunities to develop young people's self-esteem and social skills and for purposefully engaging individual learners at risk of disengaging with education.

- Duke of Edinburgh Awards evenings
- Positive media interest about our play and youth workers.

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- 4.7 Build youth worker knowledge and skills in techniques for effective evaluation of their roles and the impact they are having.
- 4.8 Partner with schools and Education colleagues to help implement Curriculum 2022 which locates health and wellbeing as a core area of learning for all young people.
- 4.9 Commission part of the Inspire Project to develop and deliver initiatives that further support schools, universal and targeted services and parents/carers with the know-how to better identify and support young people engaged in self-harming behaviours and at suicide risk.
- 4.10 Participate in the updating and re launching of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework
- 4.11 Develop a communications strategy to inform wider stakeholders about the impact that youth work is having and the new initiatives and pilot work we are testing.
- 4.12 Hold an annual digital celebration and promotion event in Youth Work Week.
- 4.13 Recommission Families First support for young people and children and young people with disabilities.

## 5. A sustainable model for youth work delivery

We want a sustainable model for youth work in Flintshire that:

- Has strong creative leadership across the Flintshire statutory and voluntary and community sector to help guide the sector moving forward and is accountable for performance and standards.
- Maximises resources through effective partnership working and embedding youth work in diverse services and settings that interact with young people.
- Promotes good quality youth work.
- Is planned on the basis of good quality data.
- Is financially sustainable

Some of what we have done to further these aims include:

- 5.1 Developing a financially sustainable service that is responsive to local and national priorities and the needs and interests of young people, especially those at greater risk of disadvantage and problem escalation.
- 5.2 Facilitating support to key services for young people that have been at risk of closing. For example, helping the URDD with a transfer of staff to FIYP which has permitted the widening of Welsh language youth work provision across FIYP and funding AURA to redevelop two rooms that can support open access activities and delivery of targeted youth work in an accessible, non-stigmatising environment.
- 5.3 Supporting community asset transfers of youth club buildings to other interested parties to reduce operating costs and allow for investment in other areas of service provision.

5.4 Joint work with partners to facilitate improvements in settings that, in turn, facilitate opportunities for good quality play and youth work. For instance, FIYP brokering access to funding for play space redevelopment at Holway Community Centre.

5.5 Growing our volunteer base consistent with safer recruitment practices. For example, PALS volunteer buddies support children and young people with disabilities to engage in informal education and play activities, including summer activities. The Welsh Language Co-ordinator recruiting and training volunteers to offer increased bilingual provision.

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

5.6 Jointly develop more proposals for funding youth work services with key partners in the voluntary and community sector.

5.7 Embed into our commissioning strategy requirements on providers to expand apprenticeship and accredited training opportunities for Flintshire young people.

5.8 Expand our volunteer workforce with an ambition to develop a cadre of volunteer peer mentors to support young people during the transition process into secondary school.

5.9 Continue to support community asset transfers of youth buildings wherever possible to maximise core youth service funding for investment in broader initiatives

5.10 Develop access cards for free or low-cost services for young people at more risk of disadvantage and problem escalation. For example, looked after children and care leavers and young carers.

5.11 Recruit and train apprentice youth worker through the Council's apprentice scheme to enable us to grow our own staff.

## Final observations

FIYP will make sure that we build on our collective successes, question ourselves continually and always listen to the voices of our young people, our staff, our partners and our wider stakeholders.

*FIYP Plan: Multiplying Impact 2021 – 2024* has been developed in that spirit and is grounded in our recent consultation feedback.

This Plan will bring the results of that thorough consultation to life, whilst embedding good practice and being agile and open to change across the lifetime of delivery.

The 2021 – 2024 Multiplying Impact plan promises to deliver through our proactive and effective partnership work, a relentless focus on quality and holistic support, a bilingual offer and evidence-based youth work provision.