

## SOCIAL SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	7 <sup>th</sup> September, 2023
<b>Report Subject</b>	Child to Adult team (C2A) and the provision of respite to children with disabilities at Arosfa, Mold, provided by Action for Children.
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer: Social Services
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational report

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Child to Adult team (C2A) work with children and young people with disabilities (0-25 years) and their families.

This report seeks to provide a historic perspective, managerial information, and a sample of the work they undertake.

Part of this work is the provision of respite to families provided through Action For Children at Arosfa in Mold. Information will be provided on this service.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members are informed about the work undertaken within C2A team.
2	Members are informed about the provision of respite based at Arosfa in Mold.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>Explaining the Child to Adult team (C2A) report</b>
1.01	<p><b>Historic perspective</b></p> <p>C2A team was previously located within Children's Services but was transferred to Adult Services in 2008 to improve the experience for older children, aged 14-25 years.</p> <p>Strong links exist between the team and Children's Service to ensure best practice in all areas of work.</p> <p>The team underwent a detailed service review approx. 5 years ago with changes made to ensure the team provide the best responses to the needs of almost 200 children with disabilities and their families.</p> <p>The current average caseload for team members is 15 children/young people, but the team also support the siblings within the family, some with significant needs themselves.</p>
1.02	<p><b>Team structure</b></p> <p>Located within the Disability Services, the team has a dedicated Team Manager, along with two Deputy Team Managers and two Senior Social Workers. The team comprise of Social Workers, Children's Services Assistants, and Paediatric Occupational Therapists. The team is formed of 15 people. C2A also receive excellent administrative support from a dedicated officer.</p> <p>Following feedback from the team during the review, we now operate two distinct sub teams, one supporting children under 14 years, and one supporting young people aged 14 -25 years. This enables each sub team to develop specialism in aspects of work relating to the age of the child and the experiences the family might be having. We do have flexibility to retain the same social worker if it is in the best interest of the young person.</p>
1.03	<p><b>How the team support children and families throughout their lives</b></p> <p>The team support children and young people through every circumstance in their lives and usually have a long terms relationship with the family. Life events would include:</p>
1.04	<p><b>Small children.</b></p> <p>C2A might provide practical and emotional support to parents if their baby or young child is diagnosed with a disability. Some families feel loss/grief/ are overwhelmed/ struggle with day to day living. The team would support the parents and their other children. The Occupational Therapist can also help with practical matters as the child grows, such as bathing and seating.</p>
1.05	<p><b>Adolescence</b></p> <p>As the child grows, the family might need support with the behaviours of the child, the child wanting friends and activities, additional support if parents are working or struggling to cope. We use Direct Payments creatively to support children and their families and this can take the form of Personal Assistant support or equipment. Families comment that this</p>

	give them flexibility to suit their circumstances and it is becoming more widely used amongst children and families.
1.06	<p><b>Teenagers</b></p> <p>As young people grow up, they might need support when leaving school, wanting to go on to college, moving to live away from the family home, employment. For parents who struggle with children who have complex needs, they sometimes feel unable to carry on and the young person might need to live elsewhere. C2A would assist in finding appropriate placements, and the legal aspect of placing children away from parents/carers.</p>
1.07	<p><b>Statutory/legal processes.</b></p> <p>The team also undertakes work relating to Statutory responsibilities and legislative requirements. These would include Safeguarding, applications to Court of Protection, Fostering, Adoption. C2A team support the family unit in these instances.</p>
1.08	<p><b>Provision of respite for families.</b></p> <p>Respite can be provided using various options, designed to suit the individual family circumstances and need.</p>
1.09	<p><b>Use of Direct Payments</b></p> <p>Families can recruit Personal Assistants using Direct Payments to fund. The Personal Assistant can support the child in the family home, the community or their own home and gives the family a break. Families often choose a relative or close friend to provide overnight support to the child, enabling parents to have a break either at home, or away.</p> <p>Respite can also be commissioned by Social Services through Action for Children based at Arosfa.</p>
1.10	<p><b>Arosfa Respite provision</b></p> <p>Prior to March 2023, Arosfa supported 16 children over 324 nights of the year, usually 3 at a time, but sometimes the young person is best supported on their own. They also provided 6 tea visits and 4-day care sessions which offer flexible respite for families. Since March 2023, the contract has been increased to 364 nights of the year.</p> <p>Staff work out the rota's and share with families but are flexible if parents need urgent support. They provide a lovely, homely environment in a residential property in Mold and give the families a much-needed break knowing the child is very well cared for and having fun.</p> <p>Action for Children gain feedback from young people through 'House Meetings', and they conduct Peer audits to assess the quality of documentation. They also have a Registered Individual (Care Inspectorate Wales requirement), who visits approx. once every month and manages staff questionnaires to gain feedback and make improvements.</p> <p>This service is very popular and there is a wait for places. We have been able to use additional grant funding over recent years to provide additional support at Arosfa.</p>

	<p>We also used grant funding to modernise a disused unit at the property which now has self-contained flat with two bedrooms, kitchen, bathroom, and lounge. There are currently two young people 'living' in the flat, and they will continue to do so until they become adults and move to supported living. C2A team will remain involved with the 2 young people through this process.</p>
1.11	<p>Use of the additional unit at Arosfa (referred to above in 1.10) has proven successful for both young people The alternative would have been a more costly placement outside of Flintshire which would have meant moving schools and leaving connections behind. At Arosfa they have been able to stay at their local school and maintain the friendships they have built.</p>
1.12	<p>Arosfa celebrated their 10th anniversary last year and feedback from families is extremely positive. The staff their support children with a range of needs, some complex health needs and some with challenging behaviours. Staff receive training and supervision to be able to look after children safely and for them to enjoy their stay. It also provides the family with a much-needed break, and parents can spend time with siblings, who also value this time.</p> <p>With regards to the teatime and evening support, along with Saturday support, young people don't stay overnight but are offered time and support to do activities outside school, again being fun for them and giving parents a break. This type of provision suits some people better than overnight and means there are options for people to choose.</p>
1.13	<p>The biggest challenge for Arosfa is the number of children and young people waiting for a place. There are eight children and young people on the waiting list. This is managed by Action for Children and C2A team.</p>
1.14	<p><b>What the team members think of working in C2A</b></p> <p><b>Team members were asked to provide some comments on their experiences within the team and this is often a valuable way for managers to find out how the team function.</b></p> <p><i>I wanted to work on the team due to having family members with disabilities and wanting to gain experience in another area of social worker. Also due to the team manager being very hands on, visible and supportive. Karen has not failed to disappoint and is all the above and more.</i></p> <p><i>I really enjoy the variety and diversity of the work. I hold a mixture of children's, adults, Looked After Children and Child Protection cases.</i></p> <p><i>It is really refreshing to work for a team that are truly happy and do not have recruitment and retention of staff problems.</i></p> <p><i>I have found it to be a very positive team, colleagues are willing to offer support and guidance as I've navigated through this new (to me) world of children with disabilities. I wanted to work in this team to develop my skills.</i></p>

	<p><i>The work has been more complex than I expected, using other Teams paperwork and processes</i></p> <p><i>In today's financial troubles it is a challenge to provide the families and children with the respite and support they need, especially the children with very challenging behaviours. As there is not enough provision out there for them. But it feels good to get access to the support you know the family needs in place, the information and support to enable the families to make and have choices around the care of their child. It can be a very gratifying experience indeed.</i></p>
1.15	<p><b>Some examples of recent work undertaken:</b></p> <p>The Social Worker lead the legal process for a long-term foster family to adopt the 7-year-old girl who has lived with them most of her life.</p> <p>Supporting families through Children's Safeguarding process and other legal/formal processes.</p> <p>For children and young people unable to continue living with their families, the team are involved in finding suitable placements where the children's her needs could be met, and behaviours managed. The team support the family through this difficult decision and process. They would also liaise with Education, Health, and others to ensure correct legal processes were followed. Once placed, the team will support the family to maintain relationships and visit as often as they are able.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p>The challenges facing the C2A team include:</p> <p>Expertise needed is vast and includes knowing about issues for babies all the way to 25-year-olds. The team must be knowledgeable and confident to advise and lead in specialist aspects. This is a challenge to the team to keep informed, work with best practice, learn about legislative requirements and internal processes to manage the Statutory requirement of the work. From survey work undertaken with parents, they told us they value having information provided to them, so the team work hard to maintain knowledge and information.</p>
2.02	<p>High level of demand. There are currently 195 children with disabilities being supported by C2A and their siblings, and their parents/carers.</p> <p>Achieving what matters to the child/young person. There is often conflict within the family who may want different outcomes, there are safety considerations, practical challenges, and expectations to manage.</p>
2.03	<p>Sourcing and funding appropriate placements when families can no longer support their child at home. The team submit applications for residential placements to the Children's Services panel which are scrutinised. These placements are difficult to source, even with the support of the Brokerage team, and are expensive in a provider lead market. Specialist providers</p>

	can command fees of over £6,000 per week. Such provision is often out of the County which makes contact with the child more challenging.
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<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	None

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None required for this report

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Who's who document

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	None

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Jo Taylor, Manager Learning Disabilities <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 70 <b>E-mail:</b> Jo.Taylor@flintshire.gov.uk

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p>C2A - Child to Adult team. This team sits within Disability Services and provides support to children and young people from 0-25 years.</p> <p>Arosfa - This is a respite facility located in Mold managed by Action for Children. It offers a homely environment and very skilled and committed staff who care for children and young people for nights away from the family home which gives parents a break from their caring role and a nice environment for the child.</p>