

Public Document Pack



Contact Officer:
Maureen Potter 01352 702322
maureen.potter@flintshire.gov.uk

To:

Councillors: Marion Bateman, Paul Cunningham, Peter Curtis, Adele Davies-Cooke, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Veronica Gay, David Healey, Cindy Hinds, Ray Hughes, Hilary Isherwood, Colin Legg, Phil Lightfoot, Brian Lloyd, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Nancy Matthews, Hilary McGill, Vicky Perfect, Mike Reece, Ian Roberts, Ian Smith, Nigel Steele-Mortimer, Carolyn Thomas and David Wisinger

Co-opted Members

Janine Beggan, David Hytch, Rebecca Stark, Bernard Stuart and Rev. John Thelwell

18 March 2016

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Joint Education and Youth and Social and Health Overview and Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 2.00 pm on Thursday, 24th March, 2016 in the Council Chamber, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

Members are asked to note the venue for the meeting.

A G E N D A

1 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIR

To appoint a Chair for the meeting.

2 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

4 **EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE** (Pages 3 - 10)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To update Members on the attainment of Looked after Children in Flintshire in the 2014-15 Academic Year

5 **SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION** (Pages 11 - 20)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To provide Members with statistical information in relation to Child Protection and Safeguarding

6 **EARLY YEARS AND FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE ANNUAL UPDATE** (Pages 21 - 28)

Report of Chief Officer (Education and Youth) - Cabinet Member for Education, Cabinet Member for Housing

Purpose: To provide Members with information to demonstrate how both the early years programme and family first programme operate in FCC to support families in line with the Welsh Government Strategy.

7 **CORPORATE PARENTING** (Pages 29 - 42)

Report of Chief Officer (Social Services) - Cabinet Member for Social Services

Purpose: To advise and report on the progress of corporate parenting within the Local Authority

Yours faithfully



Peter Evans
Democracy & Governance Manager



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

Date of Meeting	Thursday 24 th March 2016
Report Subject	Educational Attainment of Looked After Children in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report informs Members on the academic attainment of Flintshire Looked After Children (LAC) for the academic year 2014-2015.

The data relates to the LAC cohort identified in line with the Welsh Government definition below:

A child of statutory school age, i.e. between 5 and 16 years, who was looked after during the academic year 2014-15, for at least one year prior to 31st August 2015.

For the purposes of the report children looked after under Short Breaks/Respite Care are not included in the statistical analysis.

(NB The definition of LAC used for data collection for educational attainment performance indicators has recently been changed. The revised definition extends the qualifying period of LAC to 31st March of the academic year following the period of assessment. This definition will be used in future reports.)

The data has been grouped into four age groups corresponding to the National Curriculum Key Foundation Phase to KS4 (Key Stage 4).

Primary	School Year	Age	School Stage	Secondary	School Year	Age	School Stage
Group 1	Reception	4 - 5	FOUNDATION PHASE	Group 3	Year 7	11 - 12	KEY STAGE 3
	Year 1	5 - 6			Year 8	12 - 13	
	Year 2	6 - 7			Year 9	13 - 14	
Group 2	Year 3	7 - 8	KEY STAGE 2	Group 4	Year 10	14 - 15	KEY STAGE 4
	Year 4	8 - 9			Year 11	15 - 16	
	Year 5	9 - 10					
	Year 6	10 - 11					

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members act as 'Champions' for LAC, promoting awareness and challenging provision within Flintshire educational settings.
2	That the Annual LAC Education Outcomes report is moved to a cycle following the performance indicator submission at the end of April.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE EDUCATIONAL ATTAINMENT OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN FLINTSHIRE								
1.01	<p>The LAC cohort within Flintshire is fairly stable in terms of overall annual number however, the individual circumstances and resulting needs vary from year to year.</p> <p>The following descriptors provide an overview of the 2014-15 cohort.</p> <p>A Key Stage profile of the cohort:</p> <p>There are 130 relevant children within the cohort.</p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Group 1 Foundation Phase</td> <td>39</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group 2 Key Stage 2</td> <td>38</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group 3 Key Stage 3</td> <td>28</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Group 4 Key Stage 4</td> <td>25</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Average age at becoming LAC was 7 years.</p>	Group 1 Foundation Phase	39	Group 2 Key Stage 2	38	Group 3 Key Stage 3	28	Group 4 Key Stage 4	25
Group 1 Foundation Phase	39								
Group 2 Key Stage 2	38								
Group 3 Key Stage 3	28								
Group 4 Key Stage 4	25								
1.02	<p>Type of Educational Establishment Accessed by LAC in 2014-15:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 84% Mainstream LA Maintained schools • 5% Pupil Referral Units • 9% Non-maintained private/residential/hospital • 2% maintained Special School 								

1.03	<p>Additional Learning Needs:</p> <p>The term additional learning needs describes learners with a diverse range of needs who require targeted support to enable them to access educational opportunities and fulfil their potential. Some learners may be identified as having special educational needs (SEN). Those with significant SEN may have a statement of SEN issued by the Local Authority (LA) under part IV of the Education Act 1996. This follows a process of statutory assessment by the LA and other agencies such as Health.</p> <p>Learners with less significant SEN may also have their needs identified by a school and be identified as needing additional resources but not a statement. This is School Action (SA) where a child requires additional resources provided within and by the school. If additional external intervention and/or advice is required, the learner is categorised as School Action Plus (SAP). The 2014-2015 Cohort profile is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 22% of children with a statement of SEN. • 15% of children receiving support through School Action or School Action Plus.
1.04	<p>Learner Outcomes: Group 1 - Foundation Phase</p> <p>There were 39 children in the Foundation Phase cohort. These children were following the Welsh Foundation Phase curriculum and progress is measured against the following Foundation Phase Outcomes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Personal and social development, well-being and cultural diversity (PSD) • Language, literacy and communication skills - English (LCE) • Language, literacy and communication skills - Welsh (LCW) • Mathematical Development (MDT) <p>The general expectation is that the majority of 7 year olds will attain outcome 5. The Foundation Phase Indicator (FPI) represents the percentage of pupils achieving outcome 5 or above in PSD, LCE/LCW and MDT in combination.</p> <p>In 2014-15, 8 were subject to the end of Foundation Phase assessment at the end of Year 2. Of the 8, 5 achieved the FPI, i.e. 62.5%</p>
1.05	<p>Learner Outcomes: Group 2 - Key Stage 2</p> <p>Reports on attainment at Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 3 (KS3) are based on the national baseline Core Subject Indicator (CSI). To achieve the Core Subject Indicator at KS2 the learner must gain a level 4 assessment in all Core Subjects, i.e. Maths, Science and English (or Welsh).</p> <p>In 2014-15 there were 38 learners within KS2, 12 of which were subject to the end of key stage assessment at the end of Year 6. For this group 4 learners had a statement of SEN. Of the 12, 4 achieved the CSI i.e. 33%.</p>

1.06	<p>Learner Outcomes: Group 3 – Key Stage 3</p> <p>To achieve the Core Subject Indicator at KS3, the learner must gain a level 5 assessment in all Core Subjects, i.e. Maths, Science and English (or Welsh).</p> <p>In 2014-15 there were 28 learners within KS3, 8 of which were subject to the end of key stage assessment at the end of Year 9. 1 learner was exempt as they were working significantly below the expected levels. For this group 3 had a statement of SEN and 3 were at SA/SAP. Of the 7 learners, 4 achieved the CSI i.e. 57%</p>
1.07	<p>Group 4 – Key Stage 4</p> <p>In 2014-15 there were 25 learners within KS4. 14 children were subject to assessment at the end of Year 11. For this group 1 pupil had a statement of SEN and 6 were at SAP.</p> <p>The average points score for LAC leaving at the end of Key stage 4 was 254 within a range of 12 – 606. 100% of the cohort left with a formal recognised qualification this year.</p>
1.08	<p>Attendance Rate</p> <p>Attendance in Primary schools for LAC (2014-15) was 97.42%. This compares favourably with the overall Primary school attendance in Flintshire (94.7%).</p> <p>Attendance in Secondary schools was 90.3%. This was below the Flintshire average of 94.2%.</p>
1.09	<p>Exclusion Rates</p> <p>There have been no permanent exclusions of LAC for 2014-15. During the year, there were 12 fixed-term exclusions, all within the secondary sector. This resulted in a loss of 31.5 school days.</p> <p>This represents an overall reduction in exclusions. This is attributed in part to the Relationship Trauma training provided to all schools and Pupil Referral Units which has supported a greater understanding and empathy of LAC along with knowledge of a range of suitable intervention strategies.</p>
1.10	<p>LAC Educational Support, Provision and Coordination</p> <p>The education of looked after children is set as high priority in Flintshire and many initiatives have been instigated to improve the outcomes for this group of vulnerable learners.</p> <p>There is an established LAC Steering Group comprising of a range of professionals who oversee the education of LAC. This has representation from CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health Services), Behaviour Support Service, schools, Children’s Services, Inclusion, LAC advocacy and the LAC Co-ordinator. Young people can through the LAC advocate make their feelings known to the group or are invited to attend in person.</p>

The Steering Group has a remit to develop Action plans for the LAC Pupil Deprivation Grant. Previously this was allocated to schools to meet the individual needs of LAC. Welsh Government changed the policy around allocation for 2015-16, moving to a regional funding model. GwE has a lead role in supporting a regional policy approach. This is also informed by Flintshire's LAC Steering Group.

Training has been identified as a key priority and has been provided to key representatives from schools and the Local Authority by the 'Yellow Kite Company' who are nationally recognised in the training of professionals in 'Attachment Theory' and associated best practice. On-going workshops in schools across Flintshire are building on these initial events and serving to develop awareness of all school staff of the needs of children who have difficulties in making positive relationships because of traumas and losses in their lives.

In addition to training, the PDG has been spent on the following:

- After school 1:1 tuition for Year 6 learners.
- After school 1:1 tuition for Key Stage 4 learners in core subjects plus French.
- Access to 1:1 in class support to maintain engagement.
- Support to access After School Clubs.
- Literacy, language/communication aids and programmes.
- Study packs for exams, coursework specialist text books.
- 15 laptops, with specialist software and licences.
- Higher education bursary £2000 for care leaver starting university.
- Teaching Assistant and Teacher support for Catch Up programme.
- Purchase of iPads and relevant software.
- Letter Box Club.

The majority of LAC access their education within mainstream settings. There are a number of learners who require a more specialist setting such as special schools. A number of learners are also educated through the Pupil Referral Units (PRU). The managers and Teachers in Charge of the PRU are mindful of the often poor academic outcomes achieved by young people who are LAC and to that end, the curriculum offer to these children and others is changing to meet their needs. In future, a broader range of options including college link courses will help learners reach their full potential.

The Flintshire LAC co-ordinator, Kate Wylde, retired in December. This has provided the opportunity to review the role and strengthen the links between Children's Services and Education to support better outcomes for LAC.

1.11

Current numbers of LAC for the academic year 2015-2016

LAC PROFILE 1st MARCH 2016

Year/Age	Key Stage	Numbers
Nursery – 4	Foundation	11
Reception – 5		8
Year 1 – 6	Key Stage 1	11
Year 2 – 7		12
Year 3 – 8	Key Stage 2	9
Year 4 – 9		10
Year 5 – 10		11
Year 6 – 11		11
Year 7 – 12	Key Stage 3	9
Year 8 – 13		15
Year 9 – 14		13
Year 10 – 15	Key Stage 4	15
Year 11 – 16		19
TOTAL		154

LAC Pupils Out of County in Wales – 21
 LAC Pupils Out of County in England – 18

2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 The PDG Action Plan will identify the key issues and challenges around education for LAC. The resource implications of these will be identified and supported through the available funding.

3.00 CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT

3.01 None required.

4.00 RISK MANAGEMENT

4.01 The risks are around ensuring the funding is appropriately targeted to maximise the opportunities and educational outcomes for LAC. The Steering Group has a key role in engaging all stakeholders and ensuring relevant information is accessed and services/provision is targeted effectively.

5.00 APPENDICES

5.01 None.

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jeanette Rock – Senior Manager – Inclusion & Progression Telephone: 01352 704017 E-mail: jeanette.rock@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	GwE – Regional School Improvement Service
7.02	Pupil Deprivation Grant – Welsh Government funding to improve outcomes for learners eligible for free school meals (eFSM) and Looked After Children (LAC). It is intended to overcome the additional barriers that prevent learners from disadvantaged backgrounds achieving their full potential.

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Date of Meeting	Thursday, 24 th March 2016
Report Subject	Safeguarding and Child Protection
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide members with information in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection within the county boundaries.

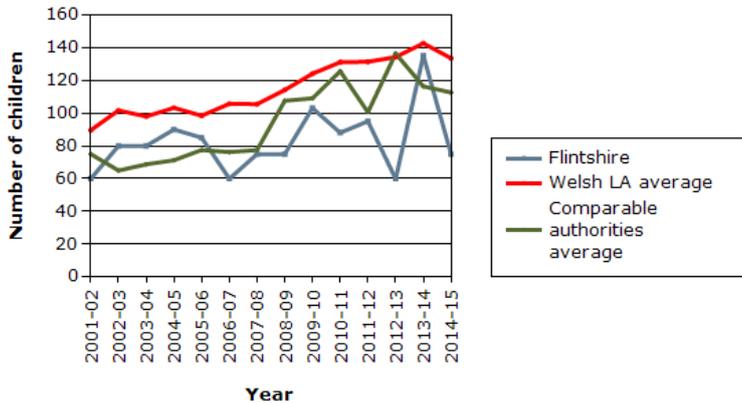
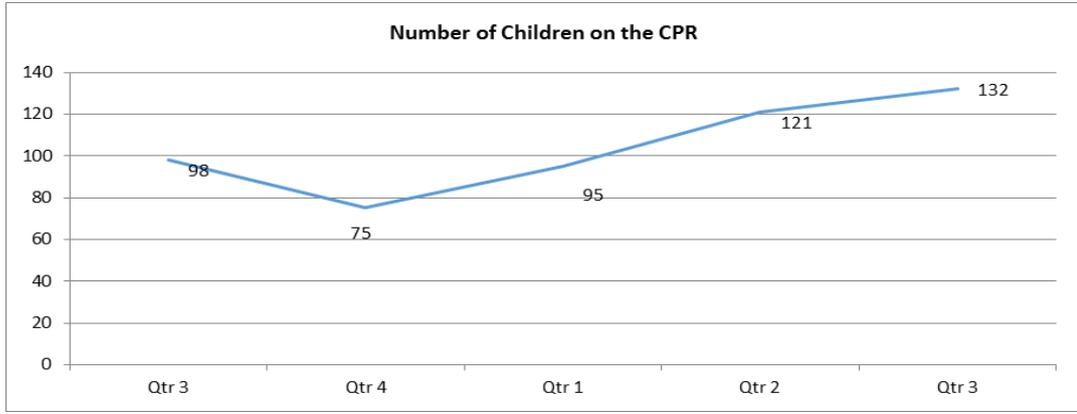
In line with the Council's strategy for developing a systematic Performance Management Framework, Social Services routinely collates safeguarding activity for children in need and those children whose names are included on the Flintshire Child Protection Register.

This report is to inform Members of key statistical and performance related information about children for whom the Authority has significant safeguarding responsibilities.

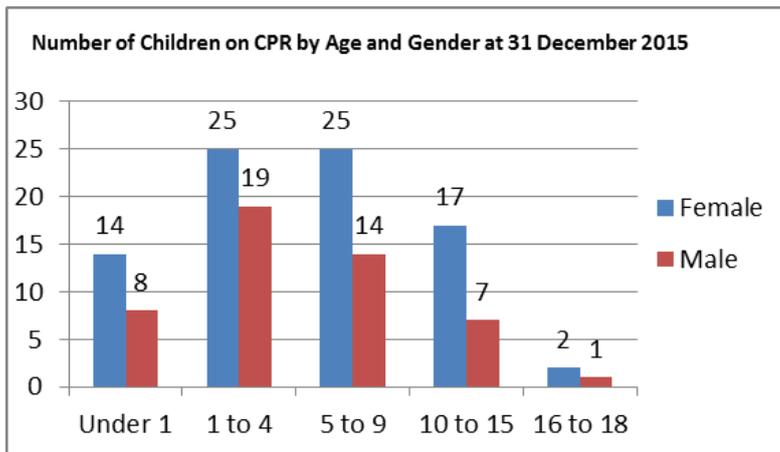
RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members accept this report as information in relation to Safeguarding and Child Protection for the period 1 st April, 2015 to 31 st December, 2015.
---	--

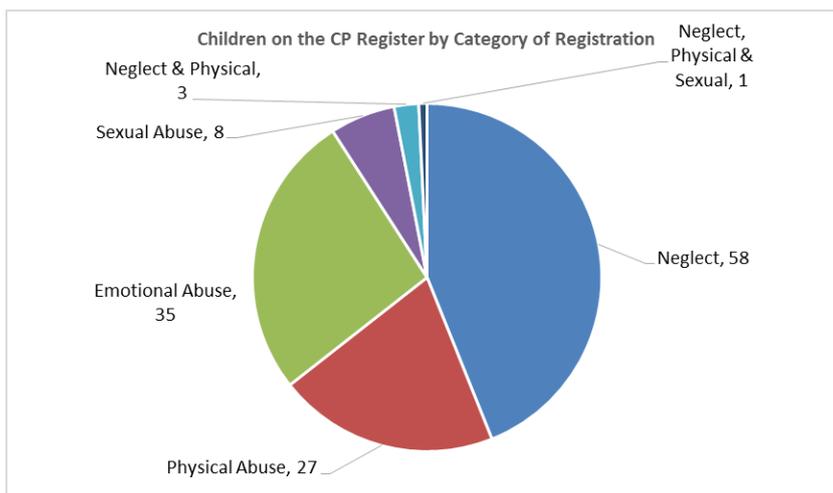
REPORT DETAILS

<p>1.00</p>	<p>EXPLAINING THE SAFEGUARDING AND CHILD PROTECTION REPORT APRIL 2015 – DECEMBER 2015</p>																																																												
<p>1.01</p>	<p>Child Protection Register The purpose of the Child Protection Register is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To provide a record of all children in Flintshire with unresolved child protection issues and who are currently the subject of an inter-agency protection plan; and • To ensure that the plans are formally reviewed every six months. 																																																												
<p>1.02</p>	<p>Number on the Register</p> <p>The table below shows the trend in numbers on the Child Protection Register from 1st April 2001 to 31st March 2015. The graph shows that within this 15 year period, there has been a modest rise in the numbers on the register with a variation from year on year including a decrease in the last year.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Estimated data for Number of children on the register (2001-02 to 2014-15)</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Year</th> <th>Flintshire</th> <th>Welsh LA average</th> <th>Comparable authorities average</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>2001-02</td><td>60</td><td>85</td><td>65</td></tr> <tr><td>2002-03</td><td>75</td><td>95</td><td>70</td></tr> <tr><td>2003-04</td><td>80</td><td>95</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>2004-05</td><td>90</td><td>95</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>2005-06</td><td>85</td><td>95</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>2006-07</td><td>60</td><td>95</td><td>80</td></tr> <tr><td>2007-08</td><td>75</td><td>105</td><td>85</td></tr> <tr><td>2008-09</td><td>100</td><td>115</td><td>105</td></tr> <tr><td>2009-10</td><td>90</td><td>125</td><td>115</td></tr> <tr><td>2010-11</td><td>95</td><td>130</td><td>125</td></tr> <tr><td>2011-12</td><td>90</td><td>130</td><td>115</td></tr> <tr><td>2012-13</td><td>60</td><td>135</td><td>135</td></tr> <tr><td>2013-14</td><td>135</td><td>140</td><td>115</td></tr> <tr><td>2014-15</td><td>75</td><td>135</td><td>115</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Year	Flintshire	Welsh LA average	Comparable authorities average	2001-02	60	85	65	2002-03	75	95	70	2003-04	80	95	75	2004-05	90	95	80	2005-06	85	95	80	2006-07	60	95	80	2007-08	75	105	85	2008-09	100	115	105	2009-10	90	125	115	2010-11	95	130	125	2011-12	90	130	115	2012-13	60	135	135	2013-14	135	140	115	2014-15	75	135	115
Year	Flintshire	Welsh LA average	Comparable authorities average																																																										
2001-02	60	85	65																																																										
2002-03	75	95	70																																																										
2003-04	80	95	75																																																										
2004-05	90	95	80																																																										
2005-06	85	95	80																																																										
2006-07	60	95	80																																																										
2007-08	75	105	85																																																										
2008-09	100	115	105																																																										
2009-10	90	125	115																																																										
2010-11	95	130	125																																																										
2011-12	90	130	115																																																										
2012-13	60	135	135																																																										
2013-14	135	140	115																																																										
2014-15	75	135	115																																																										
<p>1.03</p>	<p>During the 9 months from 1st April 2015 to 31st December 2015, the number of children on the register have modestly increased in line with national fluctuations. As at 31st December, 2015 the number of children on the CPR was 132. This remains below the Welsh average.</p>  <table border="1"> <caption>Number of Children on the CPR</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Quarter</th> <th>Number of children</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>Qtr 3</td><td>98</td></tr> <tr><td>Qtr 4</td><td>75</td></tr> <tr><td>Qtr 1</td><td>95</td></tr> <tr><td>Qtr 2</td><td>121</td></tr> <tr><td>Qtr 3</td><td>132</td></tr> </tbody> </table>	Quarter	Number of children	Qtr 3	98	Qtr 4	75	Qtr 1	95	Qtr 2	121	Qtr 3	132																																																
Quarter	Number of children																																																												
Qtr 3	98																																																												
Qtr 4	75																																																												
Qtr 1	95																																																												
Qtr 2	121																																																												
Qtr 3	132																																																												

1.04 A breakdown of the children on the register at 31st December, 2015 by age and gender is provided below. 50% of children on the CPR were under 5 years old, this compares to the Wales average of 41% as at 31st March, 2015.



1.05 The category of registration for children on the register on 31st December, 2015 is broken down below.



The majority of cases in Flintshire are Neglect, with Emotional Abuse now more prevalent than Physical Abuse. However, Emotional Abuse is considered to be implicit in all types of abuse and therefore the Emotional Abuse category will only be used where there is no other abuse indicated.

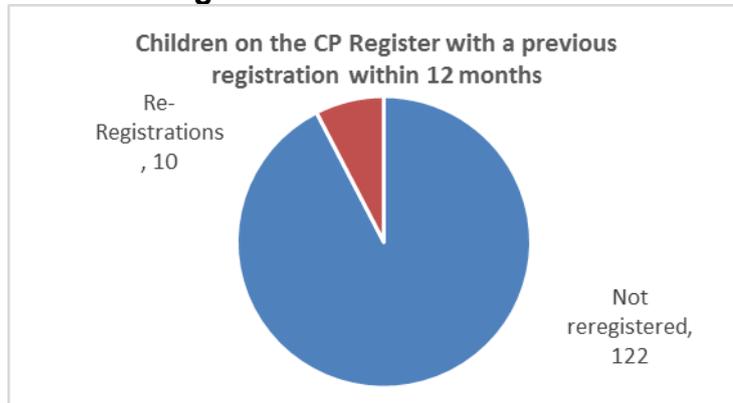
These cases of Neglect and/or Emotional Abuse are usually linked to incidents of domestic abuse and this has been the case in Flintshire for some time, a trend which is also seen regionally and nationally.

The category of Physical Abuse is used where there is evidence of actual physical

harm or where there is domestic violence evident, in which case the category may indicate a risk of physical harm.

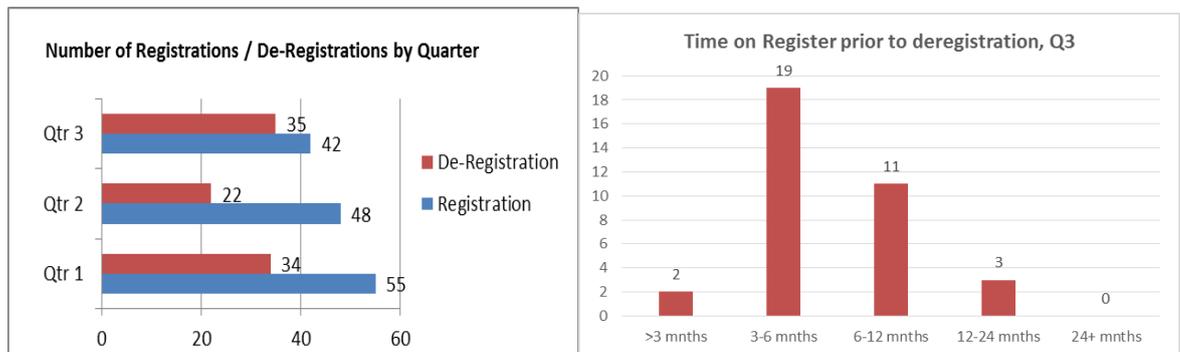
Flintshire continue to register under multiple categories in line with guidance, this allows us to reflect the true risk.

1.06 Previous Registration within 12 months



Ten children from 4 families on the Child Protection Register were the subject of a previous registration within 12 months, this compares to the Welsh national average of 15. Repeat registrations frequently indicate a change of circumstances within the family, resulting in an increase in the level of risk. All cases of re-registration are subject to an independent audit by the North Wales Safeguarding Children Board.

The graphs below shows the number of registrations and de-registrations in the year to date, and the time spent on the register prior to de-registration.

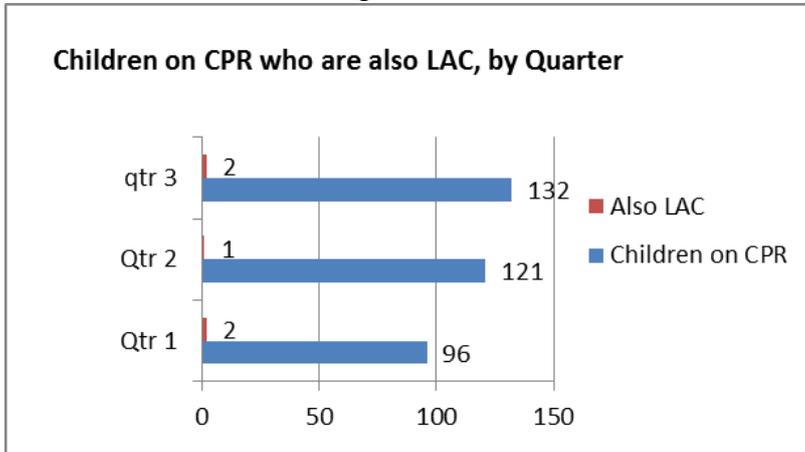


1.07 Children on the Register reaching the time of their third review are automatically reviewed under the new court and Public Law Outline and are subject to a legal advice meeting.

The Children’s Safeguarding Managers undertake a regular review of cases that have been on the child protection register for twelve months or more, and report the findings to the Senior Manager. This process provides an additional layer of oversight to ensure children are not on the register longer than necessary. On

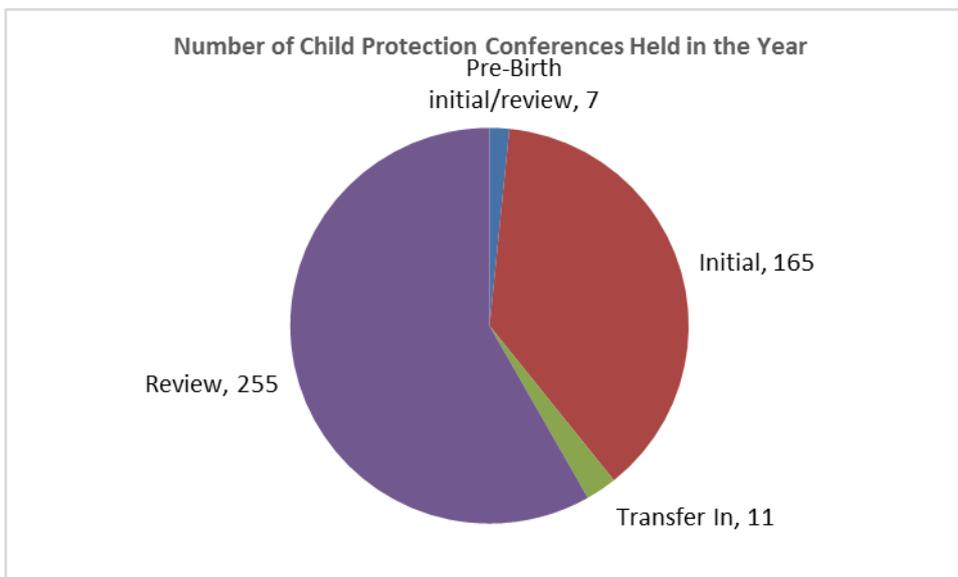
31st December, 2015, no children had been on the register in Flintshire for more than 24 months. Protracted registration potentially indicates that the child protection plan needs addressing or the case escalating if parental change is absent.

Two children on the register on 31st December, 2015 were also looked after



1.08 Child Protection Conferences

438 child protection conferences have been held between 1st April, 2015 and 31st December, 2015. The breakdown is given below:



Child protection conferences are subject to monitoring via the Performance Measurement Framework.

1.09 The percentage of initial child protection conferences due in the year which were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion.

For the 12 months to 31st March, 2015 91.2% of initial child protection conferences

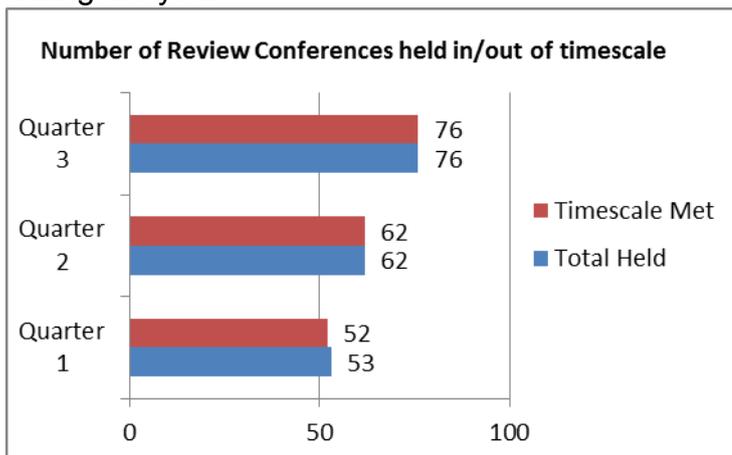
were held within 15 working days of the strategy discussion.

During Quarter 1 (1st April to 30th June, 2015) 80.9% of initial conferences were held within the 15 days due to unprecedented number of requests for initial conferences were 68 children were conferenced from 31 families (compared to Q4 last year when 38 children were conferenced from 19 families).

During Quarter 2 (1st July to 30th September, 2015) 98.2% of initial child protection conferences took place within 15 days of the strategy discussion and finally, in Quarter 3 (1st October, 2015 to 31st December, 2015) 84.8% of initial child protection conferences took place within the 15 days. Delays for the 7 cases were due to diary capacity and non-family attendance.

Occasionally, conference requests are made late to the Safeguarding Unit, or the Chair may decide to delay a conference in order to ensure that all the required information and attendees are available. However, in spite of the consistently high numbers of requests for conference, the Safeguarding Unit are continuing to manage the scheduling of the majority of initial conferences within timescales.

1.10 The percentage of child protection reviews carried out within statutory timescales during the year



The timeliness of child protection review conferences was 100% during Quarter 2 and 3 (1st July to 31st December, 2015).

It is occasionally necessary to reschedule conferences, for reasons out of the control of the Safeguarding Manager. Although it appears worrying, in terms of statistics, for a conference to be held late, we collect reasons for all late conferences and occasionally reschedule because, in the interests of the child, it would be inappropriate for the conference to go ahead. These are usually cases where a family member or professional whose attendance the Chair feels is essential, is unable to attend. But delays can also be due to staff sickness, late request of the conference by the Social Worker, or family non-cooperation. Conferences may also be delayed to ensure that the family have adequate time to

	read through reports in accordance with the All Wales Child Protection Procedures.
1.11	<p>There has recently been an increase in case conferences for unborn children. Again these increases cannot be quantified. Flintshire arrange conferences for unborn children in line with All Wales Child Protection Procedures guidance, i.e. between 24-32 weeks gestation whilst they undertake assessments. This gives the Social Worker a timescale within which to work rather than bringing mother's into conference late into pregnancy.</p> <p>In the 9 months from 1st April, 2015 to 31st December, 2015 7 Pre-birth Case Conferences took place and we currently we have 8 unborns on the register with another 8 pending over the next few months.</p>
1.12	<p>Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)</p> <p>Currently there are 3 cases on the register linked to CSE. These cases would also be managed under MASM's (Multi Agency Strategy Meetings) which would have plans generated by SERAF assessments.</p> <p>Flintshire County Council's Children's Services and its partner agencies employ the CSE Panel as the mechanism to improve outcomes for children and young people in cases of known or suspected child sexual exploitation.</p> <p>The CSE Panel has three primary roles:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To ensure that cases of suspected or actual child sexual exploitation are well-managed and co-ordinated and that all possible action has been taken to protect the victims. 2. To ensure that all cases are considered by a single group who are then able to identify any links between individual cases. 3. To ensure that intelligence relating to patterns of child sexual exploitation in the area can be identified and action taken where necessary. This will include the sharing of intelligence in relation to suspect groups of victims, perpetrators, vulnerable locations etc.
1.13	<p>The Safeguarding Unit</p> <p>The Adults and Children's Safeguarding Units have now been brought together to form the Flintshire Social Services Safeguarding Unit based in County Offices, Flint. The Unit is managed by the newly appointed Safeguarding Unit Manager who reports directly to the Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning. This structure has enabled a sharing of best practice between Adults and Children's Safeguarding, whilst maintaining the expertise in each field. Placing the Unit within the Safeguarding and Commissioning Service Area has also brought greater independence whilst continuing to offer support and advice to the</p>

	<p>frontline workforce.</p> <p>We currently have a vacancy in one of the Children’s Safeguarding Manager roles following the appointment of Jayne Belton as Safeguarding Unit Manager. Jayne continues to deliver many of the key tasks of the Children’s Safeguarding Manager role, until her replacement is recruited. Also, the second Children’s Safeguarding Manager will be leaving the Authority to further his career at the end of May and both posts have been advertised simultaneously are currently out to advert both internally and externally, with interview arranged for the 13th April, 2016.</p>
--	---

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no financial implications arising from this report.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	N/A

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	N/A

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Jane Davies – Senior Manager Safeguarding and Commissioning Telephone: 01352 702503 E-mail: jane.m.davies@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p><u>Child in Need</u> A child is defined as being in need if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • S/he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him/her of services by a local authority; • His/her health or development is likely to be significantly impaired without the provision of such services; • S/he is disabled. <p>(Section 17, Children Act 1989).</p>
7.02	<p><u>Looked After Child (LAC)</u> A child who is being looked after by their local authority is known as a Looked After Child. They might be living: with foster parents, at home with their parents under the supervision of social services, in residential children's homes or other arrangements.</p>
7.03	<p><u>SERAF Assessment</u> SERAF is the Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework which forms part of an information and intervention pathway for safeguarding children and young people.</p> <p>The risk assessment tool and information and intervention pathways have been developed in response to practitioners' difficulties in identification and intervention with children and young people at risk of or abused through sexual exploitation.</p>
7.04	<p><u>All Wales Child Protection Procedures</u> All Wales Child Protection Procedures, implemented on April 1st 2008, help safeguard children and promote their welfare.</p> <p>The All Wales Child Protection Procedures 2008 replace earlier jurisdiction. The procedures combine the shared knowledge and experiences of Wales' 22 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and reflect the changes required as a result of high-profile child protection reports like the Laming Report.</p> <p>They address a wide range of safeguarding issues, including new mediums in which abuse can occur, such as the internet, and incorporate learning from research and practice from other parts of the world.</p>

This page is intentionally left blank



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

Date of Meeting	Thursday 24 th March, 2016
Report Subject	Early Years and Family Support Service Annual Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide a summary of the work undertaken by the Early Years and Families Support service during 2015-16, funded through three of the Welsh Government anti-poverty programmes (Flying Start; Families First; Communities First), other Welsh Government funded projects and funding streams including European and Big Lottery.

To evidence how this supports Welsh Government legislation and strategic guidance including. 'Raising the Ambitions and Educational Attainment of Children who are looked after in Wales'.

The Early Years and Family Support Service consists of the following services:

- Parenting Strategy (including the Supporting Parents of Adolescents)
- Family Information Service
- Flying Start
- Y Teulu Cyfan
- Community Parents Volunteer Project
- Family Centres: Gronant and Westwood
- Quest (Opus; previously Novus)

The report focuses on themes used in, '*Grasping the nettle: early intervention for children, families and communities. A practical guide to the challenges and opportunities in supporting children, families and communities through early intervention, based on effective local, national and international practice*', as well as the outcomes of the national child poverty strategy programmes listed below:

Flying Start	Families First	Communities First
<p>Healthy and thriving</p> <p>Capable and Coping</p> <p>Reaching Potential</p>	<p>Working age people in low income families gain, and progress within employment.</p> <p>Children, young people and families, in or at risk of poverty, achieve their potential.</p> <p>Children, young people and families are healthy and enjoy well-being.</p> <p>Families are confident, nurturing resilient and safe.</p>	<p>Prosperous communities</p> <p>Learning Communities</p> <p>Healthier Communities</p>
Lead Officer: Gail Bennett	Lead Officer: Ann Roberts	Lead Officer: Niall Waller

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Endorse the work and service delivery of the Early Years and Family Support Service, and approve a continued focus on early intervention and prevention services in Flintshire leading to better outcomes for families in need.
---	---

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE SERVICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR EARLY YEARS AND FAMILY SUPPORT DURING 2015-16 AND ITS IMPACT ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES.
1.01	The crucial role of parents and parenting in achieving and influencing the seven core aims for children and supporting the child's health, learning and wellbeing is fundamental to outcomes for children and influences the work of the Service. This reports considers service delivery and partnership using a thematic approach, the five golden threads , as identified in 'Grasping the Nettle: early intervention for children, families and communities'.
1.02	The best start in life One of the aims of Parenting Strategy, funded through Families First, is to provide the infrastructure and support to services across Flintshire to increase access to evidence based parenting programmes through the offer of training, peer support and supervision, quality accreditation, resourcing and evaluating to measure impact. Evidence-based parenting

	programmes are important because they aim to ensure that support provided to families is based on sound theory, research and experience of what works best.
1.03	Parenting programmes should only form part of an intervention to be offered to families, hence services are encouraged to build delivery within their own business plans; they are the partners with parents and have the relationships and specialism for their client group, and it leads to increasing longer term sustainability and cross-agency delivery.
1.04	<p>Parenting programmes offered in Flintshire – early years:</p> <p>The following programmes are recommended by the multi-agency Parenting Programmes Development Group:</p> <p>Incredible Years Baby (0 – 7 months) <i>Parents learn how to: help their babies feel loved, safe, and secure and to encourage their babies’ physical and language development. The parenting group format fosters peer support networks and shared learning. Trained Incredible Years® facilitators use video clips of real-life situations to support the training and stimulate group discussions. Parents practice skills with their babies in the group.</i></p> <p>Incredible Years Toddler (12 months – 24 months): <i>Parents learn how to: Help their toddlers feel loved and secure; Encourage their toddler’s language, social, and emotional development; Establish clear and predictable routines; Handle separations and reunions; Use positive discipline to manage misbehaviour.</i></p> <p>Incredible Years Attentive Parenting (3 – 7): <i>The Attentive Parenting® program is a 6-8 session group-based “universal” parenting program. It can be offered to ALL parents to promote their children’s emotional regulation, social competence, problem solving, reading and school readiness.</i></p> <p>Family Links Nurturing Programme (3 – 11): <i>The Nurturing Programme aims to help adults understand and manage feelings and behaviour and become more positive and nurturing in their relationships with children and each other. It encourages an approach to relationships that gives children and adults an emotionally healthy start for their lives and learning. It is based on four constructs: Self-awareness and self-esteem; Appropriate expectations; Positive discipline; Empathy.</i></p>
1.05	<p>Services trained to offer the above programmes include generic Health services, CAMHS; Flying Start; Y Teulu Cyfan; Children’s Services; TAF; Daffodils.</p> <p>Services are also offered training in the principles of the programmes to support their practice. This ensures a consistent approach and language across the County.</p> <p>Services include: Flintshire Crèche Service; Home Start; Children’s Services; Flying Start and Early Entitlement settings.</p>

1.06	<p>In collaboration with the Money Advice Service parenting programmes are supplemented with some additional learning as part of research project: Talk, Learn, Do: Parents, Kids and Money. Parents are encouraged to help their children develop skills such as self-control, perseverance, sensible attitudes to money and setting financial goals.</p> <p>Confidence Building programme - STEPS® to Confidence: <i>Participants co-create their learning through interactive discussions, personal reflection time, the use of short video bursts and activities utilising a wide variety of learning styles. After participating in the programme, individuals have greater expectations of success and higher self-efficacy. Parents and carers see: higher levels of motivation; increased self-belief; improved ability to set goals; raised levels of personal accountability; insight into how their mind works.</i></p> <p>Services trained to offer the programme include Flying Start; Y Teulu Cyfan; Quest; Parenting Strategy; Barnardos. There may be other services using the programme that have self-trained.</p>
1.07	<p>June 2015 saw Flying Start receive the prestigious CANparent Quality Mark, a first in Wales for public service. It proves the service is delivering quality approved programmes based on sound evidence, with strong governance practices, financial and risk management procedures, coupled with robust systems for training, supervision and measuring and evaluating outcomes.</p> <p>The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 focuses on promoting the well-being of people through transformation of the way services are delivered which includes placing a renewed focus on prevention and early intervention as well as the provision of information, advice and support. The Chief Medical Officer (CMO) for Wales has emphasised the important of the first 1000 days in a child's life to be able to break the link between poverty and poor life outcomes.</p> <p>Flying Start took the lead to offer peri-natal mental health training to Flying Start and Families First funded projects. The training event was a collaborative event between Flying Start Health Services, CAMHS and Adult Mental Health and led to improved networking between the services. It is planned that this will be an annual event with two training days offered.</p>
1.08	<p>In November 2014 Flying Start recruited a Clinical Nurse specialist for safeguarding, this was identified as a gap across Wales, and many Authorities have taken this approach. The data for Term 1 and Term 2 of Flying Start shows the need for early advice and additional training for staff and support services e.g. childcare and support to work cases or escalate concerns between health and local authority. Level 3 training on record keeping, consent and confidentiality has been delivered. Staff have benefited through keeping up to date with current guidelines and clarity to consent issues and what is required to be written and how within the child's health record. This will ensure early intervention and prevention, and earlier escalation when necessary.</p>
1.09	<p>The Community Parents service receives core grant funding to support</p>

	<p>families ages 0 – 4, it also aims to secure other funding streams to support the wider population. Parent volunteers are recruited, trained and supported and they then visit parents monthly in their own homes, armed with a set of strategies focusing on health care, nutrition and overall child development and wellbeing. There are benefits for families, the community and the volunteers.</p>
1.10	<p>The provision of good quality childcare for children from 2-3 years of age is the centrepiece of services to be delivered under the Flying Start initiative. A total of 49 settings were registered with the Flying Start programme at the end of Term 2 (31 December 2015). The number of childcare sessions have been made available to children has increased from 14,421 during 2014-15 Term 2, to 18,181 in 2015-16, an increase of 26%. Attendance has also increased from 73.3% to 81.9%. Once a child reaches the term after their third birthday they have access to Early Entitlement.</p> <p>The advantage to Flintshire families is that settings receive Flying Start support and training which benefits all children attending a setting. And if the Setting has had the benefit of Flying Start capital all the children receive the advantage of an improved setting.</p>
1.11	<p>Engaging parents</p> <p>It is known that parents are the most significant influence on children, and parenting has profound consequences for their future lives; positive parental engagement in a child's development can make a difference. A number of Guidance documents have been published by Welsh Government to support services to effectively engage with parents.</p> <p>Parenting Strategy offer two qualifications to staff to help them develop their skills in working with families: Work with Parents Level 4, funded through Families First and Children's Care Learning and Development Level 5, external funding. Schools are also opportunities for training staff in parenting programmes; making an impact; engaging the right services at the right time.</p> <p>The Incredible Years School Readiness programme (ages 3 – 5 years) is proving to be an effective engagement programme, along with the FAST (Families and Schools Together) programme.</p>
1.12	<p>There are two schools currently running FAST, an effective approach to engaging parents in supporting their children's success in school. Parenting Strategy has secured funding through Save the Children to enable one school to run the programme from September 2016, and another school could be co-funded through Families First and their Pupil Deprivation Grant or any other school funding stream.</p> <p>There are 76 facilitators trained to offer the Incredible Years evidence based School Readiness programme, enabling 29 primary schools to offer this service to parents, alongside any other family learning/support activity. The Parenting Strategy promotes the programmes through Head teacher conferences and all schools get the offer for training, and the offer of resources and support. A Service Level Agreement details the</p>

	<p>expectations on Parenting Strategy and the school. This is funded through Families First.</p> <p>The work of Parent Support Advisor / Family Liaison roles in schools, generally paid from Pupil Deprivation Grant (PDG) is proving to be effective if staff are provided with the necessary leadership and support.</p>
1.13	<p>Smarter working, better services</p> <p>The service continues to work on multi-agency projects and the alignment of different services and infrastructure to provide effective and joined up service planning and commissioning, seen as a continuum of services, not an either or of early or late intervention. Many children and families need continuing support and interventions at a number of points, with the pertinent issue being to identify the most appropriate intervention to match specific needs at a particular point.</p> <p>An example of Smarter working, better services is the award of the Big Lottery Project at Erw Groes Family Centre, an 11 flat Project in Holywell that provides short term/ emergency accommodation for homeless families. Starting in 2014 a multi-agency group worked on a collaborative bid to see how gaps in services relating to health and parenting could be filled to reduce the demand on generic services by offering a client based on-site service. The launch was 11 March and will fund extended Health Visiting and staff training in parenting programmes and delivery and counselling and domestic abuse and relationship support.</p> <p>Supporting Parents of Adolescents funded through Families First offers a service of early intervention and prevention to parents and an education programmes for services to work with parents of adolescents.</p>
1.14	<p>The Quest Project works with parents who are not active within the labour market to provide intensive support in order to improve confidence, self-esteem, skills, qualifications and aspirations so that they can overcome the barriers that are preventing them from achieving paid employment. It is funded through Families First. They are currently working on a regional European bid, Opus.</p> <p>The Y Teulu Cyfan (The Whole Family) project is funded through Families First. They support families who have been referred to Team Around the Family, and other prevention and early intervention services. They use a 'whole family' approach for parents and carers with children up to 18 years of age. They are working with families of varying ages and relationships including grandparents, siblings, separated parents and the numbers of individuals they have worked with compared to the number of families reflect this. Some of the sessions are more intensive than others.</p> <p>Social Care Accolades Award: In April 2015 Flintshire Early Years and Family Support service, were winners of the 2015 Accolades in the Better outcomes through working together category.</p>
1.15	<p>Knowledge is power</p> <p>There have been a considerable number of new roles emerging as</p>

	<p>parenting and family services develop. These roles require workers to have a range of knowledge, skills and characteristics alongside a qualification framework that provide for competency, reflective practice and progression thereby enhancing the quality of services to children, young people and their families.</p> <p>Our aim is to make better use of data to aid practice, policy making and monitoring or educational outcomes. Flying Start and Families First funded projects are continuing to use outcome-based accountability tools.</p>
1.16	<p>The Family Information Service Flintshire is a statutory function of the Local Authority, acting as a central information point supporting parents, prospective parents and carers of 0 - 20 year olds looking for information and advice about childcare, children's activities and family support and how to access these resources and services. It is also an initial point of contact for Services supporting families. The service relocated to Flint Offices in January 2016 from the Westwood Centre, Tabernacle Street, Buckley. The Service operates via numerous outreach events and locations to ensure whole county coverage. The team also includes staff at the Gronant Family Centre and shared roles with Wrexham for support for young parents and parents of children with a disability.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	None.

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	None.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	None.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>None.</p> <p>Contact Officer: Gail Bennett, Early Years and Family Support Manager Telephone: 01244 551140 E-mail: gail.bennett@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	Wellbeing: related to those who need care and support as well as carers who need support in relation to a person, it can mean any of the following – physical and mental health and emotional well-being; protection from abuse and neglect; education, training and recreation; domestic, family and personal relationships; contribution made to society; securing rights and entitlements; social and economic wellbeing; suitability of living accommodation. In relation to a child it also includes: physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development; welfare.
7.02	Flying Start: working with families in the most deprived areas of Wales supporting those with children between 0 and 4 years old. A prescriptive approach to improve the development of children ensuring they are ready for the Foundation Phase of school and in the long term to improve their life chances through achievement in education.
7.03	Families First: provides an integrated whole family approach to supporting families out of poverty. Provision of support sits within the prevention and protection elements identifying families early to support them and divert them from statutory intervention, or to provide a step-down service following statutory service intervention.
7.04	Communities First: support to communities in the most deprived areas to narrow the inequality gap encouraging communities to develop their own solutions in partnership with key providers. The programme works with all members of the community to engage them in activities and services that will improve their circumstances and move them away from deprivation.
7.05	Welsh Government Child Poverty Strategy: poverty eradication is embedded in the Children and Family (Wales) Measure 2010 (Measure) and has a number of broad aims around increasing income, not materially deprived, paid employment, skills base and addressing inequalities in educational attainment.
7.06	FAST (Families and Schools Together) programme: <i>FAST is an eight week, family programme designed to build protective factors to increase child well-being and enhance children’s resilience. Its aims are to enhance family functioning; prevent children from experiencing school failure; and reduce the stress that families experience from daily life.</i>



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

Date of Meeting	Thursday 24 th March, 2016
Report Subject	Corporate Parenting
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services and Cabinet Member for Education
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Strategic

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Corporate Parenting is the term used to describe the collective responsibility of the Council towards looked after children and care leavers. Corporate Parenting is founded on the principle that we have the same aspirations, and provide the same kind of care, that any good parent would provide for their own children. This report provides an overview of the Council's effectiveness as a Corporate Parent and explores:

1. how well we engage with looked after children and listen to their voice
2. the health and wellbeing of children in care
3. how stable and secure are the lives of our looked after children whilst they are in our care
4. the support we provide to young people leaving care

The report provides a particular focus on the expectations of Corporate Parenting within the framework of the Social Services and Well-Being Act (the Act). The report identifies the need to refresh our existing Corporate Parenting Strategy within the context of the Act and the Council's Improvement Plan priorities for 2016/17.

A separate report is being presented to the Scrutiny Committee on the educational attainment of children in care.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members scrutinise the Council's effectiveness as a Corporate Parent and endorse the development of a revised Corporate Parenting Strategy.
---	---

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING CORPORATE PARENTING
1.01	Children in the care of a local authority are often referred to as Looked After Children (LAC). They are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. No child or young person is the same, they enter the care system for a variety of reasons and at different points in their lives. These can range from family breakdown, abuse or neglect, to voluntary arrangements to support children and young people's welfare whilst work is undertaken to rebuild relationships or parenting capacity.
1.02	As a Corporate Parent our role is to offer 'authoritative parenting' which recognises that children and young people want to be listened to, to be loved, to be supported, to be helped, to be respected, to be safe and often, to be given boundaries. This report provides an overview evaluation of how effective we are at Corporate Parenting within the context of the Social Services and Well-Being Act which comes into force on 6 April 2016.
1.03	<p>The report also draws on the findings of the CSSIW Inspection for Children's Services in 2015 and CSSIW's annual performance evaluation of Flintshire County Council's Social Services for 2014-15 which identified that:</p> <p>"Life chances for looked after children require sustained commitment and determination if they are to improve. Whilst recent outcomes have been good, there are indications that corporate parenting is not as effective as it could be. A significant number of placements are not in the immediate area, school placements are not as stable as they were and health assessments are not routinely undertaken. The council needs to review how to address these issues in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for current looked after children."</p> <p>This report provides positive evidence of improvement in health assessments and outlines work to respond to the issue of placements not in the immediate area.</p>
1.04	<u>LAC POPULATION</u>
1.04.1	Over the last 7 years the number of LAC has increased in Flintshire

Number of LAC as at 31 March							
	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Flintshire	193	196	194	181	208	219	224
On the 31 December 2015 there were 204 children and young people looked after.							
1.04.2	The overall increase in the number of LAC is consistent with the national picture across Wales. It is important to note that whilst our LAC numbers have increased they remain below the Welsh average. The latest available data for comparative purposes is information produced by Stats Wales which provides information about the LAC population on the 31 March 2015. An overview of comparative data is set out in Appendix 1.						
1.04.3	<p>In summary this data shows that:</p> <p>We have a lower rate of looked after children compared to the rest of Wales</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a rate of 69 in Flintshire compared to a rate of 89 in Wales <p>This is relevant as the Minister for Health and Social Services wants to see the Welsh rate of LAC reduce to the rate in England.</p>						
1.04.4	The rate for Flintshire is the 3 rd lowest in North Wales we are closer to the rate of 60 in England than to the rate of 89 in Wales.						
1.04.5	More children are looked after in Flintshire due to abuse or neglect 72% compared to an average of 61% in England (Welsh data not available).						
1.04.6	More children in Flintshire were looked after under care orders 76% compared to an average of 69% in Wales.						
1.04.7	Fewer children were accommodated in Flintshire under Section 20 of the Children Act (voluntary arrangements) 14% compared to 19% in Wales and 29% in England.						
1.04.8	The Minister for Health and Social Services has indicated that he wants to see a concerted effort to appropriately reduce the number of LAC in Wales. Alongside this message the judiciary are clear that they want to see timely permanence planning with voluntary S20 placements being used as a short term arrangement (less than 3 months). Flintshire is well placed to respond to both of these agendas with clear evidence of local working to appropriately reduce our looked after population whilst at the same time making timely decisions to accommodate children and young						

	people through court processes.
1.05	<u>HOW WELL DO WE ENGAGE WITH LAC AND LISTEN TO THEIR VOICE?</u>
1.05.1	Having a strong voice and real control is central to the new Act as this optimises everyone's opportunity to achieve well-being and an appropriate level of independence. The voice of the child is at the heart of what we do, and we need to continuously ensure that we listen to, hear, and act on what children and young people are telling us.
1.05.2	We have a well-established Participation Forum that provides an important opportunity for looked-after children to meet together to share experiences and speak out with a group voice about their care and aspirations.
1.05.3	Over the past 12 months the Participation Forum has grown from strength to strength. The group has actively engaged in various activities; from meeting with the Children's Commissioner for Wales to discuss the future of her role, creating a DVD for Foster Carers to have a better understanding of what being in care is like, to rapping about online safety and reviewing social services documents to make them more child friendly. Elected Members have also been regularly attending and contributing to the Children's Services Forum meetings. Importantly members have shared their thoughts and feelings about their educational experiences which has contributed to a new Welsh Government Strategy document 'Raising the ambitions and educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales'.
1.05.4	<p>The Pride of Flintshire Awards is a big focus point for the Forum, the revamped less formal format for the awards was warmly welcomed for the 2015 event. The members of the Forum make a lot of key decisions from which trophies to award to the winners of the awards, through to which songs to play at the disco.</p> <p>Some quotes from group members about being involved in participation:</p> <p>'It's about changing the perception of people in care' 'Everyone is treated equally' 'We contribute to events and services within FCC involving children in care' 'Raising issues that are important' 'Help to improve people's lives' 'It helps to boost your confidence'</p>
1.05.5	The Participation Group is supported by a Participation Officer who works hard to ensure creative and innovative approaches to engaging looked after children. The Officer meets regularly with LAC and Flintshire's commitment to fund this important role reflects the importance we place on engaging with, and listening to the voice of young people. The Participation Group plays a central role in feeding the views, experiences, concerns and suggestions of LAC into the Children's Forum.

1.05.6	As part of the CSSIW inspection of Children's Services in 2015 a recommendation was made that "The Children's Forum should continue to focus on ensuring ambitious outcomes for looked after children and young people are achieved, and support improved mechanisms to gain the views of service users". In response work is being undertaken to support young people to have a greater role in the Children's Forum both in terms of the focus of the work program and their engagement at the meeting.
1.05.7	Positively recent issues raised by young people through the Children's Forum have helped shape priority actions that are now contained in the Council's draft Improvement plan for 2016/17. Plans for delivering the actions will be developed through the Children's Forum with progress reported and scrutinised at the Forum.
1.05.8	<p>One of the underlying principles of the new Act is that everyone has a right to be heard as an individual and advocacy has an important role to play assisting people with expressing their views and making informed choices. We have entered into a Regional arrangement for advocacy for children and young people. The services is provided across North Wales by Tros Gynnal Plant. The Service began in April 2015 following an open tendering process. Between April and December 2015 Tros Gynnal Plant have supported 35 children and young people in Flintshire. Feedback includes:</p> <p>"Thank you for today, you helped me do good." "Thanks for believing me." "I am quite happy thank you!"</p>
1.05.9	Under the 1989 Children Act, authorities are required to appoint "Independent Visitors" for children and young people in their care who have had little or no contact with their parents for more than a year. The volunteers are expected to make friends with children, visiting them regularly and helping them participate in decisions about their future.
1.05.10	The Independent Visitor service for North Wales is also run by Tros Gynnal Plant who operate a volunteer Independent Visitor scheme. This differs to the Independent Visitor service previously received which employed Independent Visitors. Unfortunately this difference impacted significantly upon the continuity of Independent Visitor matches when the service transferred to Tros Gynnal Plant as none of the staff employed as Independent Visitors via the previous provider were willing to transfer to Tros Gynnal Plant's volunteer model.
1.05.11	Tros Gynnal Plant are in the process recruiting independent visitors but the process is lengthy and we have met with them to seek alternative approaches to ensure that there are sufficient independent visitors for Flintshire LAC. In the meantime we have prioritised the children who need an Independent Visitor. It is also important to note that all of our LAC have an allocated social worker each of whom is in regular contact with the child/young person to ensure their needs are being appropriately met and cases reviewed. All the LAC have access to an advocate if they need it was well as an allocated Independent Reviewing Officer.

1.05.12	Independent Reviewing Officers (IRO) employed by Flintshire oversee the child's care plan, monitor the case and challenge the local authority if the plan is not meeting the child's needs or is not being implemented effectively. The IRO must communicate directly with each child they are responsible for to establish the child's wishes and feelings and ensure that these are taken into account.
1.05.13	The Act strengthens the role of the IRO to enable them to have more effective oversight of the child's case and ensure the plan meets their needs and is understood by the child. The CSSIW inspection of Children's Services in 2015 concluded that "Looked after children reviews seen were well managed and independent reviewing officers (IRO) had the skills and experience to deliver against the expectations of the service".
1.05.14	<u>Future priorities</u> Our aim is to continue to develop our approach to engagement and to deepen our understanding of the experience of looked after children. To do this we will:
1.05.15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Redesign our assessment tools to ensure that children's wishes and feelings are central to our assessment processes. The new assessment will be in place by June 2016
1.05.16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Through our case file audits we will check to ensure that the analysis flowing from the assessment is child focused. We will report our findings in February 2017 as part of our quality assurance report (quarter 3)
1.05.17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will develop the format of our assessments and care plans so they are user friendly and easy to understand should looked after children want a copy. This will be in place by October 2016
1.05.18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By June 2016 we will send a questionnaire to a sample of LAC to help understand their experiences and the outcomes that are being achieved. We will pilot the questionnaire with the Participation Forum
1.05.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We will co-produce the forward work programme for the Children's Services Forum with the Participation Group
1.05.20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop an engagement strategy to expand the way we seek the views of LAC to inform service development and how we evaluate performance. This will be in place by October 2016
1.06	<u>THE HEALTH AND WELL-BEING OF CHILDREN IN CARE</u>
1.06.1	Under the Social Services and Well-Being Act the term 'well-being' means people are healthy, feel good about their life, are safe and protected, and can learn new things. For children well-being also means being able to grow up happily and being looked after well.
1.06.2	We know that looked after children share many of the same health risks

	and problems as their peers, but they frequently enter care with poorer health due to the impact of poverty, abuse and neglect. National research also suggests that looked after children are more likely to have mental health problems.
1.06.3	The last 12 months have seen some important improvements in the way the health and well-being of LAC is supported. Notably: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • following a period of vacancy there is a designated nurse for looked after children • 75% of LAC children's health assessments took place on time between April and December 2015. This is an improvement from 2014/15 where 55% were completed on time • all looked after children have been registered with a GP within 10 working days of coming into care or moving placement
1.06.4	This performance improvement is positive and evidences that we are working with BCU to resolve CSSIW's concern that health assessments for LAC were not routinely undertaken in 2014/15.
1.06.5	Whilst there is good progress we recognise that there is more to be done. Positively looked-after children are a priority group for getting access to therapeutic and psychological services including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). There is a dedicated CAMHS Practitioner who works directly with children and young people. In addition, training and consultation is offered to parents, foster carers and professionals. However, the reality is that waiting times for CAMHS are still too long.
1.06.6	We have had very promising discussions with CAMHS about how we can ensure LAC can have timely access to therapeutic and psychological services. The service are in the process of redesigning their operating model with a view to better targeting resources and reducing waiting times. The aim is to enhance the provision over the following 12 months to ensure improved outcomes for the emotional and wellbeing of looked after children.
1.06.7	Promoting the well-being of a looked after child includes the duty to promote their educational achievement. Education stability is key, and all involved with supporting looked after children should encourage and believe in high aspirations and be committed to helping the child to achieve the highest educational outcomes and ambitions comparable to all children. In line with this aspiration a separate report on the educational attainment of LAC has been developed which should be read in conjunction with this report.
1.07	<u>HOW STABLE AND SECURE ARE THE LIVES OF LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN IN OUR CARE</u>
1.07.1	Where it is necessary to look after a child, the new Act seeks to achieve greater stability for children by increasing the choice of placements locally, supporting continuation of important relationships and school life, and finding the right permanency solution sooner.

1.07.2	Achieving 'permanence' is a key consideration from the time a child becomes looked after, and the Act is clear that care and support plans should include a long term plan for the child's upbringing and how this is to be achieved. Last year's CSSIW inspection was positive about our planning processes for children entering the care process and that all children had a care plan. However, the inspectors found that "the quality of the plan was not consistently forward looking, outcome focused and did not reflect the council's ambition for looked after children."
1.07.3	As part of our preparations for the new Act a comprehensive training plan has been developed for our staff which includes specific training on i) 'Assessing and Meeting the Needs of Children' and ii) 'LAC and Accommodated Children'. Once this phase of training is complete, a series of action learning sets will be organised to embed the principles and details of the Act into practice, and to highlight areas where existing procedures may need changing in response to new expectations.
1.07.4	With any plan for permanence finding an appropriate, stable and supportive placement is crucial to supporting LAC to thrive in care. When children and young people enter care there can be a risk of losing regular contact not only with family members but also with friends and other significant people in their lives.
1.07.5	Careful consideration is given to the appropriateness of placements whether that be through kinship care, fostering, Special Guardianship arrangements or residential care. The quality of the care is central. Whilst our ambition is to support children and young people locally it is not good enough to place a child in a placement within the local authority boundary, if their needs cannot be met, the child is unhappy there, if the placement facilitates unhealthy relationships with people who exert inappropriate influence and behaviours, or if there is an appropriate family member who can appropriate support the child and meeting their needs as part of the extended family network.
1.07.6	In Flintshire we are fortunate that we have a good fostering service that attracts carers from neighbouring authorities who prefer to foster for Flintshire. We currently have 16 children and young people supported by Flintshire foster carers who live outside Flintshire. We also have 13 children and young people who a living with a relative outside the Flintshire boundary. The decision to make placements outside Flintshire is not taken lightly and we work closely with Education to ensure that school and college links can be maintained. As part of an independent review of social services we will requesting that a specific focus is given to our out of county placement arrangements to see whether there can be any learning applied to help us maximise local stable placements whilst at the same time reducing reliance on independent foster agencies. This work will help to inform a refreshed placement strategy.
1.08	<u>THE SUPPORT WE PROVIDE TO YOUNG PEOPLR LEAVING CARE</u>
1.08.1	In Flintshire we have a total of 53 carer leavers up to the age of 25. All of our care leavers have an allocated Personal Advisor (PA) to keep in touch and offer support and advice. We have good performance for keeping in touch with care leavers and are achieving 100% compliance

	<p>with a national performance indicator that measures the percentage of formerly looked after children that we are in contact with when they reach the age of 19.</p>
1.08.2	<p><u>Support Planning</u></p> <p>For many young people leaving care can be a daunting prospect as they move to independence at an earlier age than many of their peers. Preparation and planning for greater independence is integral to care and support planning throughout the child's looked after period. From the age of 16, a pathway plan should be prepared setting out the young person's aspirations and personal goals, as well as actions for all involved to enable a successful transition to adulthood. Positively a pathway plan has been developed for all the young people who have had a plan due this year.</p> <p>A range of support programmes have been developed for the year that will be run by PA's which include 'Cook and Eat', 'Internet Safety', 'Safety in the Home', and 'Sexual Health'. 3 of the PA's, and some social workers, are trained in advising the young people about safe sex.</p> <p>Following feedback from some care leavers our intention is to undertake work with young people to look at the responsibilities placed in the Act on enhancing the well-being and personal resilience of LAC to ensure they are equipped for independent living and the responsibilities this brings. This includes ensuring that care leavers are clear on the financial support that can be offered by the local authority to help support further education. This will help ensure that care leavers understand their entitlements as well as the limitations within the financial climate that we operate.</p>
1.08.3	<p><u>Accommodation</u></p> <p>Flintshire cares leavers are treated as priority cases for the allocation of local accommodation. There is close working between Social Services and Housing to plan the provision of accommodation for Care Leavers.</p> <p>50 of the care leavers are in appropriate accommodation which means they are living with parents, have their own tenancy, or are in supported lodgings. There are 3 young people included in this cohort of 50 that are in hospital detained under the Mental Health Act.</p>
1.08.4	<p>3 young people are in unsuitable accommodation of whom:</p> <p>1 person is in B&B accommodation and has presented homeless as they wish to live with their partner as opposed to remaining with their previous foster parents. Housing and their PA are working together to try and obtain suitable accommodation</p> <p>1 person is in a Guesthouse and is being supported by a neighbouring authority in the area of their choice. The young person will be housed through the local authority housing allocation process.</p>

	<p>1 person is sofa surfing. This person chose to give up their tenancy and move. They then decided to return to Flintshire. They were supported financially to do this and are being supported with meetings with Housing. Hostel accommodation has been offered but this has been refused.</p>
1.08.5	<p><u>Employment, Education and Training</u></p> <p>Of the 53 young people:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 11 young people work full time • 6 young people are on training courses • 17 young people attend college • 3 young people attend University • 1 young person detained in hospital studying for GCSE's • 1 young person detained in hospital • 2 young people claiming ESA so declared unfit for work/college • 3 young people have childcare responsibilities • 9 are Not in Employment, Education or Training
1.08.6	<p><u>When I Am Ready</u></p> <p>The new Act creates a new duty for local authorities for young people in foster care who wish to continue living with their foster parents beyond the age of 18. The scheme is called When I Am Ready. The scheme is particularly valuable to provide stability during the transition to adulthood and to enable young people to remain in care as they complete further education and training.</p> <p>The 6 North Wales Local Authorities have been working together to develop the new policies, fee structure, and communication and training materials to implement the scheme. The Scheme offers a real opportunity to extend foster care and through discussions with foster cares and young people we know that at least 3 young people plan to take advantage of this scheme in 2016/17 with an additional 2 young people/foster carers considering the scheme.</p>
1.08.7	<p><u>Next Steps</u></p> <p>Our proposal is to work with young people and Corporate Parents across the Council, including Elected Members, to refresh our Corporate Parenting Strategy. The refreshed strategy will be developed within the context of the Act and our Improvement Plan priorities for 2016/17.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Corporate Parenting is a core responsibility of everyone. Delivering the commitments contained within the report are within existing human and financial resources.</p>

3.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
3.01	The draws on feedback from children and young people provided to the Participation Officer at the Participation Forum and to Tros Gynnal Plant.

4.00	RISK MANAGEMENT
4.01	There are no specific risks arising from this report.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Comparison of Looked After Children Population at 31 March 2015

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None. Contact Office: Craig Macleod, Senior Manager; Children and Workforce Telephone: 01352 701313 E-mail: craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<u>Care Leaver</u> Any adult who spent time in care as a child (i.e. under the age of 18). This care would have been approved by the state through a court order or on a voluntary basis. Such care could be in foster care, residential care (mainly children's homes) or other arrangements outside the immediate or extended family. The care could have been provided directly by the state (mainly through local authority social services departments) or by voluntary or private sector organisations. It also includes a wide range of accommodation. For example, it would include secure units, approved schools, industrial schools and other institutions that have a more punitive element than mainstream foster or residential care.
7.02	<u>Neglect</u> Neglect means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health).

7.03	<p><u>Permanence</u></p> <p>Achieving ‘permanence’ will be a key consideration from the time a child becomes looked after, and the Part 6 care and support plan should set out from the outset how this is to be achieved. Permanence includes emotional permanence (attachment), physical permanence (stability), and legal permanence (who has parental responsibility for the child). Together these give a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity).</p>
7.04	<p><u>Well-Being</u></p> <p>Reference to well-being in the Act means the well-being of an individual who needs care and support or carer who needs support in relation to any of the following aspects:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Physical and mental health and emotional well-being • Protection from abuse and neglect • Education, training and recreation • Domestic, family and personal relationships • Contribution made to society • Securing rights and entitlements • Social and economic well-being • Suitability of living accommodation <p>In relation to a child, “well-being” also includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • physical, intellectual, emotional social and behavioral development “welfare” as that word is interpreted for the purposes of the Children Act 1989.

Comparison of Looked After Children Population at 31 March 2015

(From published data <https://.statswales.wales.gov.uk>)

The rate of looked after children per 10,000 population under 18 years was 60 in England and 89 in Wales.

The rate for Flintshire was 69; third lowest in North Wales.

	England	Wales	Flintshire	Wrexham	Denbighshire	Conwy	Gwynedd	Angelsey
All children looked after at 31 March 2015	69540	5,615	220	175	160	160	195	90
LAC rate per 10,000 popln. <18	60	89	69	60	83	73	82	65

The breakdown of LAC by age shows that there were a higher percentage of looked after children in the lower age groups in Wales than in England; this trend was more pronounced in Flintshire.

	England		Wales		Flintshire	
Under 1	3,710	5%	290	5%	11	5%
1 to 4	10,120	15%	995	18%	47	21%
5 to 9	14,310	21%	1,350	24%	62	28%
10 to 15	26,140	38%	2,040	36%	78	35%
16 and over	15,270	22%	940	17%	22	10%

The breakdown of category of need was similar in Flintshire to England, with the exception of Flintshire having a significantly bigger percentage of children looked after due to abuse or neglect (data for Wales was not available).

	England		Wales		Flintshire	
Abuse or neglect	42,710	61%			158	72%
Child's disability	2,250	3%			3	1%
Parents illness or disability	2,380	3%			3	1%
Family in acute stress	6,310	9%			13	6%
Family dysfunction	11,000	16%			31	14%
Socially unacceptable behaviour	1,130	2%			0	0%
Low income	140	0%			0	0%
Absent parenting	3,630	5%			12	5%

A significantly higher percentage of children in Flintshire were looked after under care orders, and fewer were accommodated under Section 20.

	England		Wales		Flintshire	
Care Orders	42,030	60%	3,875	69%	167	76%
S20	19,850	29%	1,080	19%	31	14%
Other	7,670	11%	660	12%	22	10%