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To: Cllr Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith, Martin White, David Williams and David Wisinger

10 December 2019

Dear Councillor

You are invited to attend a meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee which will be held at 2.00 pm on Monday, 16th December, 2019 in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold CH7 6NA to consider the following items

A G E N D A

1 APOLOGIES

Purpose: To receive any apologies.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING DECLARATIONS)

Purpose: To receive any Declarations and advise Members accordingly.

3 MINUTES (Pages 3 - 12)

Purpose: To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meeting held on 14 November 2019

4 FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING (Pages 13 - 20)

Report of Social and Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator - Cabinet Member for Social Services

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

5 **NORTH WALES ADOPTION SERVICE ANNUAL REPORT** (Pages 21 - 86)

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

Purpose: To provide an overview of the performance and quality of the work of North Wales Adoption Service in 2018-19. The reports set out the challenges and future objectives for 2019-2020

6 **EXTRA CARE IN FLINTSHIRE** (Pages 87 - 94)

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

Purpose: To provide an update on the existing extra care schemes

7 **SAFEGUARDING ADULTS AND CHILDREN** (Pages 95 - 106)

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

Purpose: To provide Members with statistical information in relation to Safeguarding- Adults and Children

8 **ROTA VISITS**

Purpose: To receive a verbal report from Members of the Committee.

Yours sincerely



Robert Robins
Democratic Services Manager

SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE **14 NOVEMBER 2019**

Minutes of the meeting of the Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee of Flintshire County Council held in the Delyn Committee Room, County Hall, Mold on Thursday, 14 November 2019

PRESENT: Councillor Hilary McGuill (Chair)

Councillors: Mike Allport, Paul Cunningham, Jean Davies, Rob Davies, Andy Dunbobbin, Carol Ellis, Gladys Healey, Cindy Hinds, Mike Lowe, Dave Mackie, Ian Smith, Martin White, and David Wisinger

CONTRIBUTORS: Councillor Christine Jones, Cabinet Member for Social Services; Chief Officer (Social Services), Senior Manager Children and Workforce, Senior Manager, Integrated Services Lead Adults, Strategic Finance Manager, Locality Team Manager, Senior Cluster Co-ordinator and Partnership Lead, Service Manager, Social Services and Marketing and Recruitment Officer.

IN ATTENDANCE: Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator and Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the meeting, the Social & Health Care Facilitator read out a statement on the restrictions over discussions at meetings during the current pre-Election period.

29. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

30. VARIATION IN ORDER OF BUSINESS

The Chair explained that there would be a change in the order of the agenda and the item on Rota Visits would be brought forward.

31. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 3 October 2019 were submitted.

Councillor Dave Mackie moved that the minutes be approved as a correct record and this was seconded by Councillor Andy Dunbobbin.

RESOLVED:

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

32. FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME AND ACTION TRACKING

The Facilitator presented the Forward Work Programme and drew attention to the items to be considered at the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 December (which had been moved from 12 December due to the General Election on the same day). She referred to a presentation on the North East Wales Community Equipment Store (NEWCES) to be provided at the meeting on 30 January 2020, and said that the meeting would be held at NEWCES. The Facilitator also advised that the meeting of the Committee scheduled for 26 March 2020 would be held at Hwb Cyfle. She invited Members to contact her or the Chair with any items they wished to add to the Forward Work Programme.

The Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator presented the progress report on actions arising from previous meetings. She explained that all actions had been completed.

RESOLVED:

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

33. ROTA VISITS

Councillor Mike Allport reported on his visit to Woodlee Learning Disabilities Home. He said the visit had been positive and enjoyable and there were no matters to report.

RESOLVED:

That the information be noted.

34. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY: COUNCIL FUND REVENUE BUDGET 2020/21

The Finance Manager Strategy Accounting and Systems, introduced a report to provide the latest budget position for 2020/21 and any specific proposals for the Portfolio. She advised that the report sets out the current financial forecast and the projected 'gap' in the Council's budget funding requirement for 2020/21. The full gap ahead of the budget solutions outlined in the report, and ahead of the Welsh Government Budget for 2020/21, stands at £16.2m. A summary of the forecast and the changes to the forecast position previously reported was set out in the report.

The Finance Manager Strategy Accounting and Systems continued that the report provided an update on the national position and the Council's strategy to achieve a safe and balanced budget for 2020/21. The Welsh Government (WG) required a much-improved funding Settlement, and Flintshire was dependent on a significant uplift in its annual Revenue Support Grant (RSG) contribution if it was to be in a position to set a safe and legal balanced budget. The report presented all of the proposed budget efficiencies and the costs pressures to be included in the budget for 2020/21. The report highlighted the specific efficiencies and cost pressures for Social Services for consideration by the Committee as part of its portfolio responsibilities. This was an interim budget closure report pending the completion of ongoing work on corporate finance options and resolution of the WG budget.

The Finance Manager Strategy Accounting and Systems referred to the main considerations, as detailed in the report, and drew specific attention to the information provided on Social Care pressures and Social Care efficiencies.

The Cabinet Member for Finance expressed thanks to the Corporate Finance Manager and his Team for their work and comprehensive update ahead of the WG Budget for 2020/21.

Referring to Social Care pressures Members raised questions around the cost of out-of-county placements. Councillor Gladys Healey asked what financial contributions were received from the Health Board. The Senior Manager – Children and Workforce, explained that detailed monitoring was carried out on the financial contributions received from the Health Board.

In response to a question from Councillor Andy Dunbobbin regarding the split budget between Social Services and Education Services for out-of-county placements, it was confirmed as £1.860 million Social Services, £638,000 Education Services.

Councillor Carol Ellis emphasised the need to highlight the out-of-county placements pressure as an area of great concern. The Finance Manager Strategy Accounting and Systems confirmed that the out-of-county placements budget position was monitored on a monthly basis by the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Andy Dunbobbin and seconded by Councillor David Wisinger.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Committee endorses the Social Services efficiency proposals for 2020/21; and
- (b) That the Committee endorses the Social Services cost pressures recommended for inclusion in the budget for 2020/21

35. INNOVATION TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce introduced a report to review the work to reduce reliance on long term residential care for looked after children. He explained that the report provided an overview of the innovation being driven forward to secure transformational change in delivering the Service's Support and Placement Strategy. The work was summarised in the appendix to the report.

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce advised that without investment in innovation and new approaches to service delivery the number of children requiring residential and Independent Fostering Agency placements would continue to grow at an unsustainable rate with untenable financial consequences. He drew attention to the work and initiatives, as detailed in the appendix to the report, to effect change. Referring to the Mockingbird Model of fostering he introduced the Marketing and Recruitment Officer and invited her to give an overview and presentation on the Mockingbird Model. The main points of the presentation were:

- challenges
- 7 year forecast
- keep children in Local Authority care
- Carer retention
- Out of County placements
- prevention of placement breakdown
- themes from disruption meetings
- savings based on minimum targets
- stabilise future out of county placements

The Senior Manager Children and Workforce explained that the ambition was to develop up to 5 hubs over 3 years supporting 80 children. An interest free loan of £1.1m had been made available from the Welsh Government for the Scheme which was to be repaid over 7 years.

Members spoke in support of the Mockingbird model and expressed thanks to the Chief Officer and his team for their work to reduce reliance on out of county placements.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Martin White and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED

That the programme of innovation aimed at reducing reliance on out of county placements be noted.

36. HOSPITAL AVOIDANCE

The Senior Manager, Integrated Services Lead Adults, introduced a report to provide an update on work being undertaken to avoid hospital admittance. She provided background information and invited the Locality Team Manager to present the report.

The Locality Team Manager, explained that all new requests for support from Social Services come via Single Point of Access and are taken from members of the public and any health professional involved with a person or family. She advised that there were a number of teams within Social Services whose aim was to support people to remain living in their own homes and cited social work teams, occupational therapy teams, reablement teams and reviewing teams, as examples. These teams are able to identify people who are experiencing a short term period of illness. Where possible, if safe to do so, and with consent, support services will be put in to enable the person to remain at home. The Locality Team Manager highlighted the work of the Community Resource Team, Reablement Team, and Social Work and Occupational Therapy teams.

The Chair asked if GPs were aware of and promoted the Community Resource Service. The Locality Team Manager confirmed that the service was being well used.

Members spoke in support of the reablement service and thanked the Senior Manager, Integrated Services Lead Adults, and her team for their work to support people at home and avoid the need for hospital admission. . Councillor Dave Mackie suggested that there was a need for greater publicity of the excellent range of support services available.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Carol Ellis and seconded by Councillor Dave Mackie.

RESOLUTION:

That the work undertaken to support people and their families at home, avoiding hospital admissions, be endorsed.

37. SUPPORT BUILDING RESILIENCE IN COMMUNITIES BY DEVELOPING THE SOCIAL PRESCRIBER ROLE WITHIN SINGLE POINT OF ACCESS (SPOA)

The Senior Manager, Integrated Services Lead Adults. introduced a report to provide an update on work being undertaken on a Social Prescribing Service operating from Flintshire's Single Point of Access (SPOA). She introduced the Senior Cluster Co-ordinator and Partnership Lead, and Ann Woods, Chief Officer Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, to the meeting.

The Senior Cluster Co-ordinator and Partnership Lead presented the report. She provided background information and explained that delivered in partnership with the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, the service provides practical and emotional support to individuals so that they can be assisted to

achieve “What Matters” to them where the solutions lie within the community or through development of their own skills or confidence. In addition to the service being available for self-referral, referrals can be made by anyone else who has contact with an individual. A specific area of current and future development is to encourage GPs to refer into the service to support patients presenting to them with concerns which are non-clinical.

The Chief Officer Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, gave an overview of the Social Prescribing Service through the Single Point of Access and explained the role of a Social Prescriber and how the service works in Flintshire.

Members congratulated the Chief Officer and his team on the success of the Service. The Chief Officer commented on the positive feedback on how the quality of life for individuals had been greatly improved by the Service.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Paul Shotton and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the impact that Social Prescribing can have on the promotion of independence and well-being be supported; and
- (b) That Members signpost Flintshire residents to the service.

38. ADAPTATIONS TO FOSTER CARERS HOMES POLICY

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report on proposals to introduce the ‘Adaptation to Foster Carer Homes Policy’ to give Flintshire and the children it is responsible for more choice and options for placements which can offer better value for money for the Authority.

The Chief Officer explained that in some circumstances the home environment of foster carers can limit placement opportunities. The Policy seeks to introduce a grant scheme which offers foster carers financial support to make adaptations to their existing home, or financial assistance towards the purchase of a new larger or more suitable property (up to the value of £36,000 for adaptations or £20,000 for relocation to a new property). The grant would be subject to the terms and conditions outlined in a Financial Assistance Agreement and clawback would be applicable under certain conditions to protect public funding.

The Chair asked if Foster Carers who took up the scheme would be able to buy insurance cover to safeguard repayment costs if necessary. The Senior Manager Children and Workforce drew attention to the information provided on Grant Funding for Adaptation in the proposed Policy which was appended to the report. He advised that Flintshire had the discretion to waiver up to £10,000 of grant funding, dependent on the financial assessment of the foster carer and/or property owner and the proposed child placement arrangements. He said that Foster Carers were encouraged and financially supported to seek independent financial advice before joining the scheme. The Senior Manager

emphasised that the aim of the scheme was to assist Foster Carers with the cost of making adaptations to their home to provide adequate space for children and young people to live and thrive in their care. The funding aimed to complement the range of support services provided to Foster Carers.

Councillor David Mackie suggested that the word 'clawback' be removed from the policy as he felt the word 'repayable' was more appropriate. He also referred to the terms and conditions attached to the provision of funding through Disabled Facility Grants (DFGs) and suggested that consideration be given to applying the same process to grant funding for adaptations.

The Chair referred to DFGs and suggested that members of the Committee be invited to attend a meeting of the Community & Enterprise Overview & Scrutiny Committee. This was agreed by the Committee

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Gladys Healey and seconded by Councillor Dave Mackie.

RESOLVED:

That the Adaptations to Foster Carers Homes be supported.

39. COUNCIL PLAN 2019/20 – MID-YEAR MONITORING REPORT

The Chief Officer (Social Services) introduced the report which presented a summary of performance at the mid-year point of 2019/20 for the Council Plan priorities 'Caring Council', and 'Safe and Clean Council' and 'Safe and Clean Council' relevant to the Committee. He advised that the mid-year monitoring report for the 2019/20 Council Plan was a positive report, with 88% of activities making good progress and 90% likely to achieve their planned outcomes. 77% of the performance indicators had met or exceeded their targets. Risks were being managed with a minority of 14% being assessed as major. The Chief Officer referred to the two major risks identified for the Committee as detailed in the report.

Councillor Dave Mackie drew attention to page 115 (CP1.1.4MO2) and said there was no data on performance indicator trend and page 116 (CP1.2.2MO1) and (CP1.2.2.MO2) and said the period targets were missing. Officers provided an explanation around the analysis presented.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Dave Mackie and seconded by Councillor Paul Cunningham.

RESOLVED:

That the report be noted.

40. **REGULATED SERVICES ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION**

The Senior Manager, Integrated Services Lead Adults, introduced a report to consider the draft consultation. She provided background information and advised that the processes described in the report were co-produced with people who used the services and was designed to be inclusive, robust and sustainable, meet regulatory requirements, and also provide the information needed to ensure that the Authority's services are of high quality and continue to meet the needs of the individuals who are supported.

The engagement processes discussed in the report covered in-house older people's residential care, extra care, domiciliary care and supported living and short-term care for people with learning disabilities. The overall objective was to implement the quality review process across the whole service and share learning across the sector regarding what's worked well and any lessons or reflections on improvements. The Senior Manager invited the Service Manager, Social Services, to present the report.

The Service Manager advised that under the new Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA) there was a requirement of the Responsible Individual to engage and consult with individuals who used the Authority's services in a regular and effective way. Regulation 76 of the RISCA sets out the requirements, as detailed in the report. He referred to the engagement work which had taken place and the methodology underpinning the work which was based on a 'story telling' approach. A communication plan was delivered to underpin the whole process. The Service Manager explained that RISCA placed service quality and improvement at the heart of regulation. This approach would evidence that the Council's care and support services had a culture of quality improvement, using methods of co-production, focusing on outcomes and experience for the individual and by listening introduced positive change.

Members supported the process for engagement and consultation and thanked the Senior Manager and Service Manager for their work.

The recommendations in the report were moved by Councillor Martin White and seconded by Councillor Gladys Healey.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the process for engagement and consultation to meet the needs of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA) be endorsed; and
- (b) That the progress and the upcoming phase 2 of the work which will form part of the responsible individual's annual report, be noted.

41. **MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS IN ATTENDANCE**

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

(The meeting started at 2.00 pm and ended at 4.05 am)

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Chair

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SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 16 December 2019
Report Subject	Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking
Cabinet Member	Not applicable
Report Author	Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Facilitator
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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

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

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

RECOMMENDATION

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

REPORT DETAILS

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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CURRENT FWP

Date of meeting	Subject	Purpose of Report	Scrutiny Focus	Responsible / Contact Officer	Submission Deadline
30 January	Presentation on equipment store To be held at North East Wales Community Equipment Store 3 Hawarden Way, Deeside	To provide members with an update of the work undertaken at the equipment store.	Awareness raising	Chief Officer Social Services	
26 March	Q3 Council Plan Monitoring Report Meeting to be held at HWB Cyfle	To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Performance Monitoring/Assurance	Chief Officer Social Services	
21 May	Comments, Compliments and Complaints	To consider the Annual Report	Assurance	Chief Officer Social Services	
16 July	Year-end Council Plan Monitoring Report	To enable members to fulfil their scrutiny role in relation to performance monitoring.	Performance Monitoring/Assurance	Facilitator	

Regular Items

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

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

Meeting Date	Agenda Item	Action Required	Action Officer(s)	Action taken	Timescale
3.10.19	Progress for Providers	Letter to be sent on behalf of the Chair & Members of the Committee thanking the team for the work being undertaken.	Margaret Parry-Jones	Letter sent	Completed
3.10.19	Childcare Offer for Wales	Letter to be sent on behalf of the Chair & Members to express the Committee's appreciation of the work being undertaken to support families to access the Childcare Offer.	Margaret Parry-Jones	Letter sent	Completed
3.10.19	Regional Learning Disability Service Report on Progress	Further information on the provision of sex education for young people with learning disabilities to be provided to the committee.	Kathryn Whitfield	Information circulated	Completed
14.11.19	Out of County Placements report	Mockingbird presentation to be circulated to members of the Committee	Jill Jones	Information circulated	Completed

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SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW SCRUITNY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	11 November 2019
Report Subject	North Wales Adoption Service progress report (April 2018 – March 2019) & update on Service development.
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report identifies the key activities for the period, April 2018 – March 2019, to update on the re-design/re-structuring of the North Wales Adoption Service (2019/2020) and the introduction of the new service element for post adoption from the spring of 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members receive the Annual Report (April 2018 – March 2019)
2	That progress is noted in relation to the Review of the North Wales Adoption Service (Autumn 2019).

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE NORTH WALES ADOPTION ANNUAL REPORT AND REVIEW OF THE SERVICE (AUTUMN)
1.01	The North Wales Adoption Service has been in operation since April 2010. It provides adoption services to all involved or have been impacted by adoption. This includes children who require adoption, assessment of prospective adopters, support following adoption and to adults effected by adoption. This is a service which responds to children to adults in their late 70's. It is wide ranging and therefore responsive to a very diverse population.

	<p>The diversity of adoption work is further complicated by a very detailed scrutiny panel, the role of an individual officer (called Agency decision makers) with legal and court overview which has intensified with land mark legal rulings from 2014 onwards.</p> <p>There is also the unique challenges associated with wider media interest in Adoption which has generated increased requests and demands for those effected by adoption to access records and receive support when accessing such sensitive family history.</p>
1.02	<p>The Annual Report and Quality of Care Review is a wide ranging document which seeks to capture the work undertaken of the service, to its legal, financial and staffing arrangements.</p> <p>To assist the reader I have attempted to identify a number of the key areas reported on;</p>
1.03	<p>CHILDREN PLACED FOR ADOPTION</p> <p>Children were on average placed within 19.3 months from becoming looked after. The current benchmark/government guidelines is 13 months. These delays are characterized by placing children with complex needs or late, delayed or lengthy assessments of foster carers as adopters.</p>
1.04	<p>WHERE PLACEMENTS ARE BEING MADE</p> <p>NWAS placed 69% of their children within region, a further 5% elsewhere in Wales and 26% outside of Wales (these being neighbouring English/Border Authority areas).</p>
1.05	<p>ADOPTER RECRUITMENT</p> <p>The number of enquiries to NWAS from potential adopter's reduced by 7% to 163 (compared to 2017/18). This was impacted as the Marketing Officer post for most of 2018/19 has remained unoccupied. These figures also indicate that across Wales recruitment is reporting similar levels of recruitment activity.</p>
1.06	<p>ADOPTION ASSESSMENT TIME FRAMES</p> <p>The average time from enquiry to approval for a NWAS adopter is 7.7 months which is close to Welsh Government guidelines and the National Adoption Service benchmark.</p>
1.07	<p>LIFE JOURNEY WORK</p> <p>All children who cannot be cared for by their birth families, need to have an understanding of their family history and their unique journey. Life Journey Work is designed to help a child make sense of their past and understand their current situation in order to help them move into the future.</p> <p>It was reported that 46% of children placed this year had their life journey materials in line with the review process. This compares as the lowest cohort when compared to other regional services (Mid and West Wales at 83%) with the average at 56%. This is a priority area for improvement and work has taken place with an expert to implement the Life Story Framework</p>

1.08	<p>POST ADOPTION SERVICES</p> <p>We received a total of 46 requests to access birth records. A significant increase of 40 on previous year and requests for tracking support increased from 24 to 37. A number of these adults had been adopted in the 1950's and demonstrates the lifelong impact of adoption.</p>
1.09	<p>OVERVIEW</p> <p>The trend indicates that NWAS is placing fewer children and the number of children waiting has increased (48). This compares to 34, 39 and 46 at the end of the last three years. A slight decline in the numbers assessed 28 compared to 31 last year. The Annual Report provides detailed account of annual performance and activity.</p> <p>The service has been subject to significant changes during 2018/19 with the long standing Manager retiring in May 2019, the need to review the service (see below), the introduction of a post adoption support service (from 2020) and a newly redesigned management structure (2020) being the priority of the service for 2020/21.</p> <p>The themes identified (above) indicate the current challenges of the service, to which the second part of this report will address.</p>
1.10	<p>REVIEW OF NORTH WALES ADOPTION SERVICE AUTUMN 2019</p> <p>The needs and challenges faced by children presenting for adoption are changing rapidly and there is an on-going need to respond more consistently and effectively particularly in the areas of recruitment of adopters and ongoing support. We also want to modernise the service to make adoption experience better for children, young people, and their adopters as well as others affected by adoption.</p> <p>To this end we have reviewed the Adoption Service in North Wales and the report for the 'BUSINESS CASE' is attached as an appendices. This provides a detailed analysis of the contemporary state of the service and offers a reason for change rationale, these include the following proposals;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The introduction of a new management re-structure which seeks to respond to national demands, major significant legislative changes and to assist in the implementation of new funds to deliver Post-adoption support services from 2020. • The transfer of seconded staff under a T.U.P.E. arrangement to ensure that staff receive a consistency of support, supervision and management direction as Wrexham employees. <p>The consistency of service seeks to ensure that adopters, adoptees and those effected by adoption will receive a consistency of service delivery and customer focused outcomes.</p>

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Following a comprehensive review of the Service, Flintshire's annual financial contribution towards the cost of the North Wales Adoption Service in 2020/21 will be £116,444. This is an increase of £21,804 on the contribution set in 2010 and a proportion of the sustained financial pressure on the Service and need to deliver the model outlined in the business case (see 1.10)
2.02	In addition to the financial contribution Flintshire will, in line with all other North Wales authorities, continue to meet the costs of existing staff who will have the opportunity to TUPE over to the regional service. As of 06.11.19 all staff have been fully consulted in line with human resources procedures.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	It is imperative that the service meets statutory obligations and the ability to meet Welsh Government and National Adoption guidelines and benchmarks. The proposed change model sets out to mitigate the service not meeting its financial, staff and resourcing challenges. The new model seeks to deliver consistency alongside meeting the challenges of adoption over the next decade.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	This represents two elements, as a regional service all relevant parties have been actively involved in the proposed changes, staff as part of the TUPE have been engaged according to legal and human resources practices. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Annual Report & Quality of Care Review (2018/19) • Business case for the review of North Wales Adoption Service autumn 2019

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	The Annual Report & Quality of Care Review (2018/19)
5.02	Business case for the review of North Wales Adoption Service autumn 2019

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
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Gwasanaeth
Mabwysiadu
Gogledd Cymru



North Wales
Adoption
Service

ANNUAL REPORT AND QUALITY OF CARE REVIEW
APRIL 2018 - MARCH 2019

North Wales Adoption Service
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**North Wales Adoption Service - Adoption Agency Annual Report
and Quality of Care Review
April 2018 – March 2019**

1. Introduction

The Adoption Service (Wales) Regulations 2007, Regulation 22, require all adoption agencies to complete a review of the quality of the service and for this to be completed on an annual basis.

This is set out below.

Review of Quality of Service

- (1) The local authority must make suitable arrangements to establish and maintain a system for monitoring, reviewing and improving the quality of adoption services provided by the local authority.
- (2) The system established under paragraph (1) must make provision by the local authority for:-
 - (a) the quality of service to be reviewed at least annually; and
 - (b) the local authority to obtain the views of:-
 - (i) adoptive and natural parents and children being adopted;
 - (ii) any person receiving services from the local authority or their representatives in relation to adoption;
 - (iii) staff employed by the local authority; and
 - (iv) any local authority,on the quality of care provided, as part of any review undertaken.
- (3) Following a review of the quality of care, the local authority must within 28 working days prepare a report of that review and make a copy of the available report in an appropriate format when requested by —
 - (a) the National Assembly;
 - (b) service users;
 - (c) representatives of service users;
 - (d) staff employed by the local authority.

2. Background

The North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS) has completed its ninth year of activity. We continue to work with our colleagues in the National Adoption Service and regional adoption services in South Wales to improve the services for children and adults involved in adoption in Wales.

NWAS representatives continue their involvement with the sub groups which include:

1. Media & Marketing – attended by Wendy Saunders Recruitment Officer NWAS

- This sub group was attended by the recruitment officer up until she left the service in August 2018. Unfortunately NWAS has been unable to recruit a Welsh speaking candidate for this position and it is now necessary to advertise the post for Welsh desirable. Given the need to change the Job Description via the Job Evaluation Process re advertising the position will be delayed.
- The National Adoption Service has contracted “Cowshed” to undertake recruitment activities across Wales which ran a national radio campaign for one month around the National Adoption Week.

2. Performance Framework – attended by Mandy Humphries NWAS Manager

- A review of the information data collection was undertaken. The introduction of new PI’s will be introduced in 2018-19 and will entail the setting up of new reports and amendments to the CHARMS system in order to collate the information required.
- NAS provides regular updates on the Performance to the Advisory group and Partnership Board members. Accessing information regarding adoption support assessments undertaken by the LA’s continue to be problematic but it is envisaged that will be improve considerably once this service is available in-house..

3. Adoption Support – attended by Stevie Thomas

- Further to the research undertaken by IPC Oxford Brookes In July 2017 required for the development of the NAS business case for developing adoption support across Wales, NAS succeeded in gaining considerable grant funding made available to the regional adoption services for 2019-20.
- NWAS’ application for funding for the development of an in-house adoption support team has been accepted and it is anticipated will be in place during the 2019-20 financial year.

4. Policy Group – recently attended by Mandy Humphries

- Recent meetings have been concentrating on the new regulations regarding the Stage 1 & Stage Adoption Process

3. Current Position

The service continues to be hosted by Wrexham County Borough Council and the main office is located in Lambpit Street, Wrexham. Staff seconded to the service continue to be based in their own local authorities except for some Flintshire social workers who are located in the Wrexham office.

The North Wales Adoption Service in partnership with the six local authorities is responsible for providing the following services:

- Recruitment, Training, Assessment and Supporting prospective and approved adopters
- Matching children to adopters
- S98 Access to records, Search and Intermediary Services for adopted adults and their relatives
- Birth Parent counselling
- Adoption Support– Support Groups, Fun Days and Newsletters.
- Development and management of joint adoption panels
- Partner of Parent Adoptions
- Adoptions with a Foreign Element

ADOPTERS - Under Assessment (as of April 2019)

	Conwy	Denbigh	Flint	Gwyn	Wrexham	Ynys Mon	Other	Total 18/19	Total 17/18
Adopters Currently Under Assessment	4	4	4	1	2	3	0	18	16
Foster Carers wishing to adopt under	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	3	2
Partner of Parent Under Assessment	0	2	0	0	2	0	0	4	7
Total No: of Assessments	4	7	5	1	5	3	0	25	25

ADOPTERS - Available/On hold for Potential Links (as of 3rd April 2019)

	Conwy	Denbigh	Flint	Gwyn	Wrexham	Ynys	Other NWAS	Other Agency	Total
Available	0	1	0	0	1	1	0	0	3
On hold for potential matches	3	2	2	1	0	0	1	4	13

Of the 3 families available, one has expressed an interest for a female child only aged 0-3 years and continues to wait for an appropriate match. The remaining two families are open to either gender 0-2 or a sibling group of two 0-3 years.

There are currently 13 families on hold for potential links these include 2 families for sibling groups of 2 and 11 for single children. 9 families are via NWAS all for single children (2 foster carers approved to adopt child in placement); 4 families are from other agencies matched with 2 sibling groups of two and two single children.

	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Mon	Other	Total
Adopters – waiting or allocated for initial visit	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Partner of Parent allocated/waiting for Initial	1	4	1	1	1	1	0	9
Adopters – waiting/invited for training waiting medicals and DBS	4	2	2	1	4	0	0	13
Partner of Parent checks in progress/application not yet filed	3	1	5	5	5	2	0	21

All initial visits due for general adoption enquiries have been undertaken and approved for training. There are 9 Partner of Parents enquiries allocated for initial visits at this stage.

Of the 13 families waiting for training 9 will be attending pre approval training in May 4 have declined previous offers of training but will be attending future training events.

21 Partner of Parent applications have been received which would suggest that they will be filing applications into court. Given the strict timescales on filing these assessments this will impact on the capacity of the current resources to undertake general adoption assessments required for the increasing number of children on the waiting list. The Partner of Parent cases will not be allocated for assessment until prospective adopters inform us that they are ready to file their papers in court.

CHILDREN (as of April 2019)

	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys	Other	Total
Children On Hold for potential matches or matched but not placed	6	1	3	3	5	3	0	21
Children - no identified match at present	4	7	1	2	7	1	0	22
Total No: of Families Required	4	6	1	2	6	1		20

Of the 21 children with a potential matches 10 are with NWS adopters, 4 are with LA foster carers being assessed by NWS and 7 are with adopters from other agencies (3 (1 sibling group of 2) with Conwy children, one sibling group of 2 for Denbighshire and 2 single children for Wrexham).

Of the 22 children with no identified match at present there are 2 sibling groups of 2 and 18 single children. 9 were referred in the last quarter. Two children are older than 5 years, two of the children are between 3 and 4 years; seven are between 2 and 3 years; five are under 2 years and six are under 12 months.

There are currently 21 families under assessment at present.

3 children have been waiting for a match for over 12 months (1 sibling group of 2)
7 children have been waiting for a match for between 6-12 months
11 children have been waiting between 1 and 6 months (1 sibling group of 2)

All children waiting over 3 months were referred to the Welsh Adoption Register and those with additional needs were referred to Link Maker to be considered for potential links across the UK. Where potential links have been identified, none proceeded to placements due to the needs of the specific children.

4. Staffing

Registered Manager

The registered manager of the Adoption Service is Mandy Humphries who was appointed in June 2009 and has been manager of the service since April 2010. Qualifications include B.ED; Diploma in Social Work; Diploma in Disability; ILM Level 3; Post Graduate Certificate in Managing Practice Quality in Social Care.

Both deputy managers are qualified social workers and have undertaken management training. Trish Welsh (East) appointed on the 1st April 2010 achieved the Post Graduate Certificate in Managing Practice Quality in Social Care. Stevie Thomas (West) appointed on 16/03/16 has Level 5 ILM qualification.

The service consists of staff members directly employed by the host authority and staff seconded to the service from the remaining five local authorities. Additional sessional workers are employed via Wrexham County Council and based across North Wales.

Vacancies:

With regard to permanent posts 3 members of staff left the service:

- **Recruitment Officer** – left in August 2018 continues to be vacant
- **Contact co-ordinator** – left in August 2018 – new social worker start date 20/05/2019
- **Social Worker Ynys Mon** – on long term sick leave the left post in January 2019 – continues to be a vacant post.
- **Conwy** – One social worker vacancy from 24/07/17 to new social worker start date 08/05/2018
- **Flintshire** – one social worker on maternity leave from May 2017 returned to work on a part time basis on the 24/05/2018. Part time position filled on the 17/09/2018.

Where vacancies have occurred this leaves only one social worker for each authority to cover assessments and family finding and can have an impact on the service.

- Interviews were undertaken for all new posts and the Safe Recruitment guidelines were adhered to.

Current number of social workers full time equivalent in post is 10.2, plus one part time (32 hours) training officer. The part time (18 hours) contact co-ordinator post is currently vacant.

Current number of sessional workers available for assessments stands at 2.

Team meetings continue to be held on a monthly basis at Bedford Street, Rhyl. Operational issues are discussed and training/development/discussion issues are undertaken in the afternoon. To date these sessions have included:

Presentations:-

- Life Journey Framework Training by Denise Roberts
- North Wales Advocacy Service - Karen Read
- Siblings and Adoption – Reflection on Research and Experience- Lisa Jenkins
- Universal Credit for Families - Helen Kinney
- Consultation Exercise on new Adoption Agencies Regulations
- Adoption Activity Days Briefing by Sue Osbourne, WAR/ Krista Hardy, Coram
- NAS Post Approval Training Framework - Kathy s'Jacob, AFA Cymru
- Best Practice Guide for Initial Enquiries for Adopters' and recent research carried out by Dr Sarah Meaking.
- National Guidelines for Adoption Register Wales

Staffing List

Authority/Of fice Base	Position	Name	Hours
Host Authority Main Office: Lampbit Street, Wrexham: Wrexham and Flintshire Social Workers	Manager:	Mandy Humphries	30 hours
	Admin:	Larry Groom Sarah Picken	37 hours now 30 hours 28 hours
	Social Worker:	Lesley Davies Shirley Vinney Helen Kinney	Retired 30/10/2018 Start date: 16/10/2018 37 hrs 37 hours
	Training Officer:	Denise Roberts	32 hours
	Recruitment Officer:	Vacancy	37 hours since August 2018
	Contact Coordinator: Contact Admin:	Vacancy Clare Pearce	22 hours weekly since August 2018 30 hours weekly
	Social Workers:	Nicola Kernighan Samantha Humphreys Lesley Davies	37 hours 21 hours 24/05/2018 21 hours from 17/09/2018
	Sessional Social Worker	Pat Fairclough	
	CHARMS IT Admin:	Jon Allen	Left the service March 2018
Rhyl Denbighshire	Social Workers	Tracy Roberts Kathryn Edwards	37 hours 37 hours
Glan-y-Don, Conwy	Deputy Manager East:	Trish Welsh	37 hours
	Social Workers:	Lisa Jenkins Vacant post Marjorie Davis	37 hours 24/07/17 – 08/05/2018 37 hours from 08/05/2018
	Sessional Worker	Morwenna Berry	
	Admin	Susan Abbott	18.5 hours
County Offices, Ynys Môn	Social Workers	Vacant post Carolyn Jones	37 hours 37 hours
Penrallt, Gwynedd	Deputy Manager West	Stevie Thomas	37 hours
	Social Worker	Sara Williams	37 hours
	Admin	Manon Roberts	18.5 hours

Vacant Posts – Social work vacancies totalled 13 months over the year plus the vacant recruitment officer post. Combined with a high level of sickness and delay in recruitment this did have an impact on resources given that NWAS only has two social workers available in each authority (except Gwynedd which has one) to cover all aspects of assessments, family finding and the requirement to undertake the initial visits usually part of the recruitment officer's role.

Staff Sickness: There has been an increase in total days sickness during this financial year. 241 days sickness leave were taken by a total of nine members of staff. The increase accounts for one staff member on long term sickness leave for over 12 months and one other member of staff due to planned operations accounting for a total of 204 of the 241 days.

STAFF SURVEY – *Sent to 17 Members of Social Work Staff, Responses 8*

- 100% of staff who responded to the NWAS staff survey:
 - knew where to access relevant adoption documents i.e adoption minimum standards, Regulations and Statement of Purpose
 - received dated and signed copies of supervision
 - received child protection training in the last 36 months
 - rated the quality of care provided to adopters and children as good or excellent
- Between 75% and 85%
 - Were able to access NWAS Policies and Procedures
 - Felt supported in their role by the management team
 - Have regular supervision and appraisals
 - Access to support, advice and training
- Training undertaken in the last 12 months:
 - Criminal Injuries compensation
 - Assessing and analysing risk
 - New Welsh Adoption Register
 - Working with Attachment
 - Education Masterclass
 - Transgender Awareness Training
 - Data Protection
 - S98 /Access to Records
 - Safeguarding
 - Assessing Emotional Resilience
 - WG Consultation Adoption Agency Regulations
 - DDP 2 Theraplay Diploma in Therapeutic Parenting

Suggestions for development and improvement of the service:

- Development for playgroup support group given the increase in very young children being placed and Adoption Support Group for older children – **Adoption UK will be taking over the role of the After Adoption “Talk Adoption” group and it is anticipated that this service will be introduced in North Wales this and supported financially via the WG grant**
- Consistent service provided to all across all areas
- Consistency in regards to timescales / informing birth parents – **legal advice via NAS has been sought and a process agreed across Wales.**
- Consistency/ in informing adopters of subsequent siblings **(new policy in agreement with Partnership Board will be required)**
- Staff Training: - more adoption specific training opportunities
- Adoption Support Groups:- groups available in all regions – **this is currently being developed**
- Establishment of post adoption support within the service – **new WG Grant agreed will see a significant development of therapeutic support in house for families in this financial year**

RESPONSES FROM CHILD CARE SOCIAL WORKERS AND INDEPENDENT REVIEWING OFFICERS (IRO'S) INVOLVED WITH ADOPTION VIA NWAS –

100% understood the role of NWAS and felt that there is open and honest communication between colleagues. 66% viewed their experience of working with NWAS in seeking placements as excellent or good, where any difficulties raised were addressed and support provided in presenting and attending adoption panels.

33.3% rated the support provided by NWAS to adopters was excellent and 33% satisfactory. One commented that the aftercare support package was limited.

NWAS agree with this statement in relation to therapeutic support as the resources have not been available in-house. However with the recent WG grant it is anticipated that this will improve considerably.

66% of colleagues attended the Moving Children on Training which included foster carers, their support social workers and child care social workers – one social worker stated that the delivery was excellent however felt that the content was levelled at foster carers. **The aim of the training is to ensure all parties involved with moving children on are working to the same principles.**

Other comments:

- Lack of adopters in NWAS is problematic
- My experiences of NWAS as a child care social worker have been really positive and I have successfully placed over 13 children in the last 3 years of adoption.

5. Adoption Panel Membership / Advisors and Training

NWAS continues to be responsible for 3 Joint Adoption Panels which run each month across the region: Flintshire/Wrexham, Conwy/Denbighshire and Gwynedd/Ynys Môn

All panel members have been attending the Joint Panel Business days and appraisals for panel members have been undertaken by the three joint panels. All adoption panels are appropriately resourced with independent members from a good cross section of the community including, adopted adults, adopters, birth parent, foster carers, CAMHS professionals, voluntary agency representatives as well as the statutory required members i.e. medical advisers, social workers and legal advisers with each local authority being represented appropriately.

Recruitment for new members for the Central List needs to be undertaken in the near future as previous Central list members have become full time members as other members' tenures have reached their quota.

Reflections from the Chair of the Wrexham and Flintshire Joint Adoption Panel Report

Wrexham and Flintshire Joint Panel will have been established for ten years in April 2020. During the last 12 months the panel has had a number of changes/challenges to deal with. These have included the unexpected resignation of the chair with the subsequent uncertainties this created, the retirement of the Wrexham legal advisor who had been involved with the joint panel since the beginning and also the retirement of the Wrexham ADM. Despite these changes panel members have continued to show great commitment to the panel task and have dealt with several complex cases. The advice of both medical advisors has been particularly appreciated in a number of these cases. My appointment as chair in February this year has brought a greater degree of certainty but we are still in a period of adjustment, and although all individual reviews have been completed we hope to have a group review in the near future to look at progress and developments. The pending retirement of Mandy Humphries, who has been our panel advisor since the panel was formed, will be a great loss to panel who greatly value her knowledge and experience. It is still unclear who will be taking on either the role of panel advisor or Wrexham ADM and panel hope these roles will be clarified soon. Panel currently has one independent member vacancy and one independent member will have completed her full term in April 2020.

Reflections from the Chair of Conwy and Denbighshire Joint Adoption Panel (Waiting Report)

Attendance was good throughout 2018/2019 and there was never cause to cancel a meeting due to be not being quorate. One member took pre-arranged leave of absence during this

period for personal reasons. All Independent Members achieved over 90% with some reaching 100% attendance. The Panel, Legal and Medical Advisers were represented at every Panel. Panel members were unanimous in thinking that NWAS Development Days are extremely useful and provided a good opportunity to network across the North Wales region.

During the annual reviews held in 2018 Panel Members were positive how members had worked together during the year and how they managed differing view points when a consensus could not be reached. Everyone agreed that the two new members brought valuable knowledge and experience to the discussion of cases. There continued to be positive and constructive feedback about the performance of the Chair, the Panel Adviser and the Legal and Medical Advisers. All members agreed that the documentation presented to them by NWAS social workers is now of a high standard and the Matching Report format is very informative. There remains a good cross section of both professional and personal experience among Panel members including social workers, those who have fostered or adopted or have experience of being adopted and a birth parent that gave a child up for adoption.

Sue Roberts (Chair)

Reflections from the Panel Advisor of the Gwynedd & Ynys Mon Joint Adoption Panel.

Gwynedd and Anglesey Adoption Panel continue to be held 2nd Wednesday of each month with panel being held in Gwynedd October to March and Anglesey April to September. Nine panel meetings were held from April 2018 to March 2019. Three panels was cancelled as there were no cases to be presented. All panel members achieved over 90% attendance with Gwynedd & Anglesey panel being quorate and no meetings had to be postponed or cancelled.

Gwynedd are still to appoint a new elected member of the council to represent Gwynedd on the panel.

Panel group appraisal focused on common themes that often come up in panel discussion. The appraisal also reflected on Cardiff and Vale of Glamorgan Child Practice Review and any lessons learnt as a group. Panel members considered having the opportunity to consider child practice case reviews as a group to be of value. Panel member's value combining panel business meetings across the region as it was felt that panel members could learn from how other Panels operated.

Stevie Thomas – Gwynedd & Ynys Mon Panel Advisor

For detailed list of Panel members, Tenure of office and Appraisal dates see Appendix 1.

Panel Members are familiar with the requirement to attend a minimum of 75% of panel meetings.

Joint Panel Training

A Joint Panel Business and Training Day was provided on the 20th November 2017. There were 49 attendees which included panel members, central list members, child care social workers, adoption social workers and some Heads of Children’s Services from across the region. The day included updates of NWS and NAS activity and legal updates presented by Jenny Dalzell legal adviser from Flintshire County Council. This highlighted the opportunities that birth parents are legally entitled to oppose orders and the issues being raised for adopters during the process. A presentation on the Life Journey Framework was also provided by the NWS training officer which highlighted the responsibility of the adoption panels in identifying what Life Journey work has been undertaken with children presented for matches. A NWS adopter and current panel member also provided a presentation on the process from an adopter’s point of view.

Responses to Quality Assurance Questionnaires from Panel Members

Regarding Panel Activity – Circulated to Panel members responses received; Conwy & Denbighshire 35.5%; Flintshire & Wrexham 35.5%; Gwynedd & Ynys Mon 29%

97% stated they always or mostly received the required documentation from the Adoption Service in a timely manner –one commented that this has improved since becoming electronic.

100% felt appropriately advised by the Panel Advisors as to their responsibilities in the decision-making process and that the knowledge and experience of the adoption staff required to attend Panel to support applications, matching and review of adopters was excellent or good.

93% feel able to express their view to the Adoption Team on improvements / developments of the Adoption Panel and/or Service,

Views on the quality of documentation presented to the Adoption Panel:-

	Excellent	Good	Satisfactory
CAR	35.4%	58.1%	6.5%
PAR	25.8%	67.7%	6.5%
Matching	41.9%	51.6%	6.5%
Support Plan	12.9%	71.0%	16.1%

Responses stating that CAR/PAR and Matching reports as being excellent to good were similar or slightly improved from last year and an improvement in the Support plans from 57% to 83.9 % rating excellent or good.

Additional Comments from Panel Members

- **PAR assessments:** comments were generally positive and complimentary regarding the quality: Concise easy to read clear not too much “story”, Good analysis, The assessment focused on very relevant information i.e. loss in such a way that made the overall assessment a very high standard.
 - **Matching Report:** - matching proforma helpful; gave a detailed description of the child, birth parent and adopters and the expectations of the couple in supporting the child.
 - **CAR/B** – some issues regarding the need for updating the document and ensuring the information is accurate
- General:**
- Some documents need to be summarised/more concise
 - Frustration regarding the move to paperless panels
 - Feel the panel functions well/well run and efficient panel

Feedback of Joint Panels Business Day Training on Transgender Awareness held on 20th November 2018

40 attendees; 35 Responses received

83% felt that the course achieved its stated aims 94% felt the course was valuable and that their confidence and skills had improved as a result of the training.

Comments on the day in general and the training provided:

- More handouts needed – (handouts were sent out to all participants after the training)
- Excellent day especially the training
- Excellent presentation
- Request for a follow up course addressing issues for adoption

6. Adoption Panel Activity

Each Joint Panel plans to conduct a monthly panel and all dates are planned in advance. Both Flintshire/Wrexham and Conwy/Denbighshire Panels ran on twelve occasions and Gwynedd/Ynys Mon on 9 during this period. Availability of members on the Central List continuous to be a valuable resource preventing cancellation of any panels due to quoracy.

Panel Activity April 2018–March 2019

Panels	Flint/Wrex	Conw/Denb	Gwyn/Ynys	TOTAL 2019	TOTAL 2018
Adoption Assessments	7	5	6	18	26
Should Be Adopted	3	0	0	3	0
Matching (no: of children)	11 (14 children)	15 (17 children)	7 (7 children)	33 (38)	32 (42)
Deferred	3	0	2	5	4
Deregistered	0	0	0		0
Review	0	2	0	2	8
Total	24	22	15	61	70

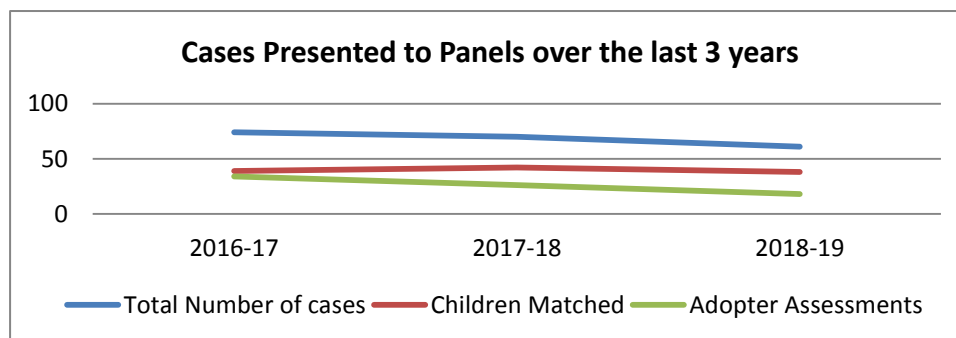
A total of 38 children were recommended for matches at panels compared to 42 last year. This year has seen another decrease in the number of adopters being presented to panel for approval from 26 in 2017-18 to 18. 3 families returned to be approved for a second/third child.

An additional 5 adopters assessments were completed via the Annexe A route making a total of 23 adopters approved.

Flintshire/Wrexham Adoption Panel - 1 approval and 2 should be adopted decisions deferred due to requests for further information by legal adviser and panel members.

Gwynedd/Ynys Adoption Panel – 1 approval and one match deferred due to requests for further information.

No: of Assessments and Matches Presented to Joint Panels over the last 3 Years.



Graph 6.1

The graph shows a slight decrease in the number of children presented to all 3 joint panels for matching (42:42:38) but a significant decrease of adoption assessments (34:26:18). Despite the decrease in number of families coming forward, vacancies in the team including social worker and the crucial role of the recruitment officer NWS has succeeded in placing 38 children only a slight decrease on the previous year. However, given the increasing number of children referred at the end of the financial year this has increased the number of children waiting for adopters, creating pressure on resources to seek adoptive placements outside the NWS area. This

scenario is not restricted to North Wales as NAS has reported a similar trend across Wales and an increasing number of children waiting on the adoption register..

On a more positive note the number of prospective adopters attending pre approval training in the last few months has increased significantly in comparison to the limited number attending courses over the last financial year.

Number of Joint Panels held by year.

Joint Panels	Flint/Wrex		Conw/Denb		Gwyn/Ynys	
	2017-2018	2018-2019	2017-2018	2018-2019	2017-2018	2018-2019
Year						
Number of Panels held	11	12	10	12	10	9
Panels cancelled due to quoracy issues	0	1	0	0	0	0
Panels cancelled for other reasons	2 No cases	0	2 No cases	0	2 No cases	2 No cases

RESPONSES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE QUESTIONNAIRES FROM ADOPTERS ATTENDING N WAS PANELS

As in previous years general comments from adopters were that attending panel had been a positive experience despite being very nervous and that panel members had made them feel at ease. Adopters commented that supporting social workers and the child’s representatives communicated with them to an excellent standard and had prepared them for the experience.

Additional comments included:

- would of liked a chance to thank the whole Panel
- Very well run Panel. Panel Chair was very reassuring through the whole process. Adoption Social Worker was extremely supportive
- I appreciated being given the opportunity to ask the Panel any questions/make any comments to them (I didn’t!) but as a prospective adopter, it felt important to me that I had ‘a voice’ at the Panel
- Positive experience
- I felt I had a very positive experience of attending the Adoption Panel and had great support from my Social Worker, and was explained the Panel process clearly by the Panel Chair

- We appreciated that some of the Panel Members remembered us from our first application –Shows they are invested and interested in the process

Other issues raised which need to be considered in future:

- Where panel approval/matching decision were deferred this caused a level of anxiety to some adopters (however second experience was referred to as being more positive)
- Delay in ADM decision – possible due to annual leave **could this be delegated in these circumstances**
- Pre panel waiting room – **need to ensure that this is appropriate and private where necessary**

7. Advertising and Marketing

Activity undertaken by Recruitment Officer within each Local Authority April 2018– March 2019

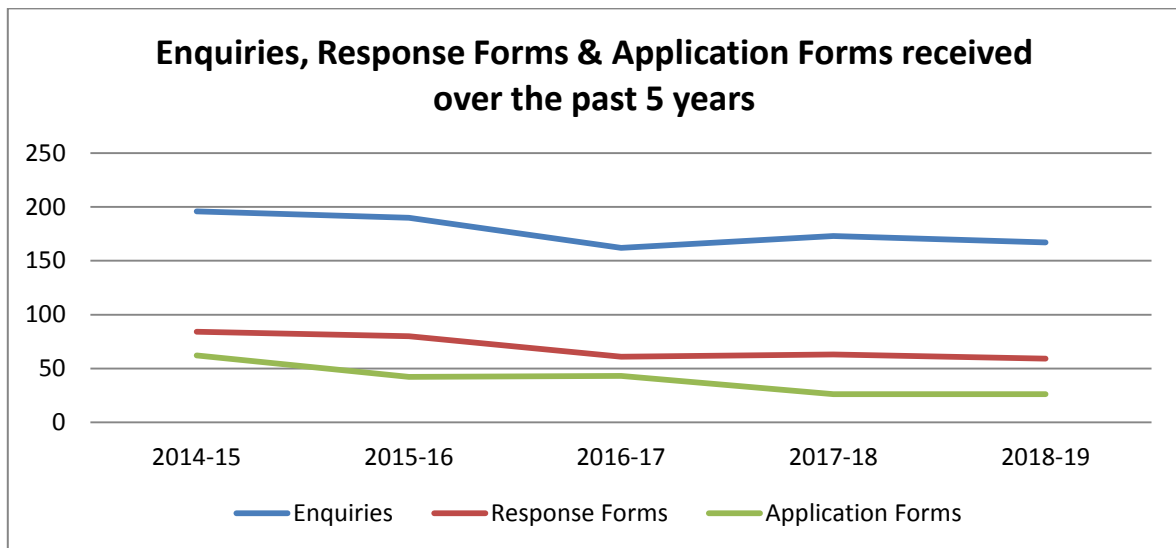
LA	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Môn	Other/ NWAS	2018-2019	2017-2018	2016-2017
Enquires	26	24	42	19	37	12	7	167	173	162
Response Forms	11	12	11	5	12	5	3	59	63	61
Initial Visits Undertaken	9	12	13	4	11	4	2	55	53	62
Application Forms	4	6	7	2	3	3	1	26	26	43

29 prospective adoptive families attended our pre approval training April 2018 – March 2019 and 26 applications were received. This figure is consistent with last year's figures.

The number of enquiries, response forms and initial visits undertaken for general adopters remain fairly stable; however, there has been a significant decrease in the number of applications received over the past two years, a trend seen across Wales. Once again this decrease in potential adopters will have a significant impact on the availability of families in North Wales for the increasing number of children without potential links identified. This will continue to have an impact on timescales and a financial impact on the LA's should adopters outside of the service be required.

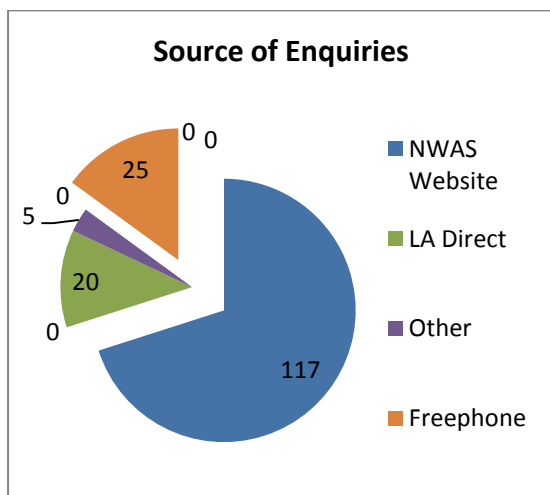
The data has been analysed and findings show that the reasons remain the same for withdrawing i.e. those still considering IVF, not ready emotionally, moving house or

renovating property and counselled out due to concerns regarding medical reasons and further checks.



Graph 7.1

Marketing Source for General Enquiries between April 2018 – March 2019



A total of 167 enquiries were received this year slightly less than the 173 last year.

85% of all enquiries are received via the NWAS website and Freephone service, (70% and 15% respectively).

The website continues to be the main source of enquiries.

Graph 7.2

Performance Indicator – 98% of all enquiries are responded to within 5 working days the majority within 24 hours.

Recruitment Activity April 2018– March 2019

(undertaken by the Recruitment Officer prior to leaving her post in August 2018.)

Information Packs distribution and Information Stalls

- Caernarfon Food Festival - 14 packs given out
- St David's Day Parade in Wrexham – couple of packs given out
- Ty Pawb – Easter Monday – 2 promising potential adopters and 4 additional packs taken.
- Facebook & Twitter Campaign – good response in terms of likes and shares hopefully will develop into applications.
- Update of Children's Book.
- Attend NAS Media & Marketing Subgroup meeting
- Information stall at the Anglesey Agricultural Show

Since the post of the recruitment officer has been vacant recruitment has been limited, however, staff members and manager have undertaken the following activities:

- Advert in the Wrexham Football Family Information brochure – unfortunately this brochure was cancelled by the company and NWAS are currently seeking a refund of the cost.
- Advert on the back of cinema tickets to be distributed across North Wales cinemas when the film about adoption 'Instant Family' was showing across the region.
- Stall at the LBGT group in Rhyl

Partner of Parent Activity (Generally undertaken by the Recruitment Officer)






















Partner of Parent	Conwy	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Môn	Total 2018-19	Total 2017-18
Enquiries	14	15	12	10	27	8	86	85
Initial Visits Undertaken	6	3	5	1	7	2	24	35
Adoption Orders Granted	4	1	1	4	1	1	12	12

The number of Partner of Parent enquiries continues to be significant and has had an impact on resources as social workers have been undertaking the initial visits since the recruitment officer's post became vacant in August 2018. The Wrexham area has had the highest number of enquiries. The number of applications leading

to assessments and adoption orders remains the same as last year with a total of 12 assessments resulting in 12 adoption orders.

8. Training

NWAS Adopter's Training Activity April 2018 – March 2019

	Course	Invited	Attended	Evaluation
Apr May	Preparing to adopt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Group Braveheart - Education FASD 	14 250+ 30 100+	8 20 20 15	   Evaluation form preparing to adopt mHeart form May 2018 FASD May 2018.doc
June	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations for attachment Healing children through therapeutic parenting Friends and relatives supporting adopters 	14 33 44	12 29 38	   Evaluation form foundations for attac children through ther: relatives and friends
July	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving children on to adoption- Ynys Preparing to adopt Support group Assessing emotional capacity Peer mentoring scheme x 3 	30 11 30	15 11 8 30	   evaluation form moving children on to preparing to adopt Ju capacity Evaluation r
Sept	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Preparing to adopt Fun day Parenting Our Children x 2 	12 300+	10 64 families 114 adults 98 children	 Evaluation form preparing to adopt Se
Oct	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting Our Children x 2 Lifestory work and telling difficult stories FASD Internet Safety Stop it Now Wales 	15 15 150+	14 15 10	 Evaluation form FASD October 2018.c
Nov	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parenting Our Children Foundations for attachment Friends and relatives supporting adopters Business Panel Day – Life Journey Work Framework Support group – Colwyn Bay Support group – Wrex/Flint Preparing to Adopt Parenting our children 	100+ 22 22	12 25 48 14 10 20 20	   Evaluation form foundations for attac relatives and friends !Autumn 2018 END OF  Evaluation form preparing to adopt Nc
Dec	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Moving children on to adoption – Conwy Moving children on to adoption – Flintshire/Wrexham 	100+ 100+	15 14	  Evaluation moving children on December children on December
Jan	Preparing to adopt	10	6	 Evaluation form preparing to adopt Ja
Feb	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Foundations for attachment Friends and relatives supporting adopters 	36	33	  Evaluation form foundations for attac relatives and friends
March	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support group – Colwyn Bay Support group – Wrexham/Flintshire Preparing to adopt 	100+ 100+ 16	16 13 10	 Evaluation form preparing to adopt M:

A total of **65** adopters have attended the Pre-approval training over the past year compared to 62 last year. **96** people attended the Friends and Relatives Supporting Adopters course. Feedback on all training provided via NWAS continues to be extremely positive.

The NWAS Training Officer continues to facilitate a comprehensive training programme in addition to the pre-approval course and has also co-ordinated external training in collaboration with various voluntary organisations i.e.

- Parenting our children (adoption uk)
- Healing children through therapeutic parenting (NATP)
- Brave Heart – working with schools with attachment in mind – Adoptive parents
- Internet safety – Stop it now Wales
- Collaborated with Adoption UK training Officer in developing the preapproval training framework that NAS are implementing.

New Developments

Peer Mentoring /Buddy Scheme: the Training Officer has developed the new support service which has been well supported by our approved adopters, 24 of whom came forward to offer support to other adopters and completed the training organised by the training officer.

The governance of the scheme is managed by the training officer, mentors are supervised every six weeks and there are already 18 active links in place. The scheme has been well received by new adopters coming forward and those who require some support with placements.

Support Group in addition to the regional support group held in Old Colwyn the training officer has also worked on introducing more local support groups, the Wrexham Flintshire Group has been established and adopters have already met on two occasions. The Gwynedd/Ynys Group was delayed due to difficulties in identifying a suitable venue but will be in operation before the summer of 2019-20.

Annual Fun Day 2018 – held on Sunday 23rd September 2018, was organised and co-ordinated by the training officer. 64 families (98 adults and 114 children) attended. A very successful day with good feedback from adopters..

Life Story Framework – New training module – incorporating the NAS and NWAS framework the training officer has written and delivered a new module of training on '*Life Story Work and Telling Difficult Stories*' as well as presenting the information to Panel members on the Business Panel Day in May 2018.

Personal Training: The training officer has completed and passed the following therapeutic training courses:

- Level 2 Dyadic Developmental Psychotherapy (DDP)
- Level 2 Theraplay
- Unit 1-4 – Diploma in Therapeutic Parenting.

Information an experience gained through these courses will be shared with adopters though NAWAS training programmes in order to support and provide adopters with the skills to manage challenging situations in their adoption journeys.

Peer Mentoring /Buddy Scheme: the Training Officer has developed the new support service which has been well supported by our approved adopters, 24 of whom came forward to offer support to other adopters and completed the training organised by the training officer.

The governance of the scheme is managed by the training officer, mentors are supervised every six weeks and there are already 18 active links in place. The scheme has been well received by new adopters coming forward and those who require some support with placements. Basic information on the areas raised are collated which will inform NAWAS of the current issues impacting on NAWAS adoptive families and the type of support and training required in the future.

Peer Mentoring Scheme – Quarterly Report Jan – Mar 2019

Number of active Mentors – 18

Number of Mentees – 24

Areas of identified support offered	Number
Assessment issues	8
Attachment difficulties	3
Carer compassion fatigue	1
Controlling behaviour	1
Education issues	1
Introductions	4
LAC reviews	2
Linking process	4
Lying	1
Matching process	4
Panel	3
Professionals – difficult relationships	2
Routine difficulties	1
Settling into placement	3
Sibling rivalry	1
Sleeping & bedtime problems	1
Support groups	4

Support network difficulties	1
Training	2
Other	2
Total	49

Further analysis of these issues will be undertaken as the scheme develops over the new financial year.

9. Children

No: Children Referred /Matched/Placed/Adopted in Each Authority April 2018-March2019

	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys	Total 18-19	Total 17-18
Number of children referred	16	8	9	3	12	3	51	55
Number of children recommended for match at panel	9	8	5	5	9	3	39	41
Number of children placed for adoption	11	6	6	6	7	3	39	41
Number of children adopted	11	10	5	5	2	2	35	39
26 children placed with NWAS Adopters (2 sibling groups) 13 children with other agencies (1 sibling group)								

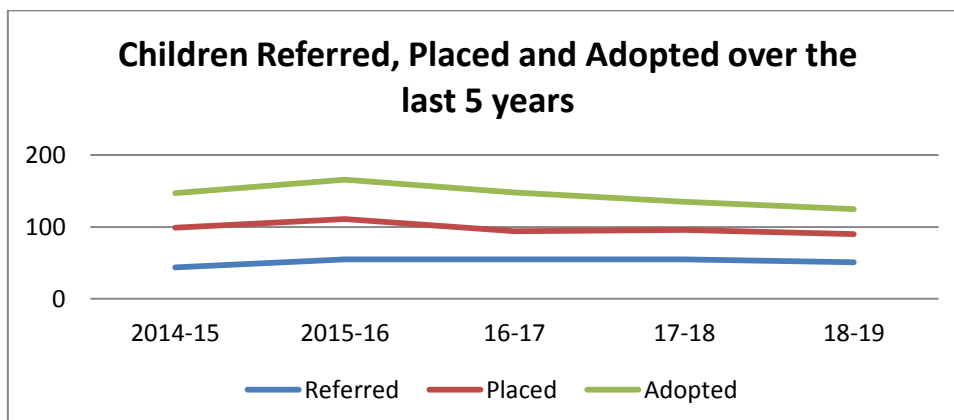
Placement of Children with other agencies outside NWAS

Of the 39 children placed, 33 were single placements and 6 were in sibling groups of 2.

13 children were placed with families not approved by NWAS 1 sibling group of two and 11 single children. Only one family lived in the North Wales area. Two children were placed with adopters identified via the Wales Adoption Register the other 11 were identified through link maker or following up from advertisements received via emails from voluntary organisation and local authorities.

26 children were placed with NWAS adopters; 1 sibling group and 2 single children were placed for adoption with their current foster carers,

1 notification of placement was received regarding a child placed in the Gwynedd area.



Graph 9.1

This year has seen a slight decrease in the total number of children referred to the service compared to last year from 55 to 51. The number of children placed has decreased from 41 to 39 and adoption orders from 39 to 35.

In addition to the 35 children adopted from the 'looked after' system, 12 children were adopted via Partner of Parent applications making a total of 47 adoption orders granted in North Wales between April 2018 and March 2019.

No: of Children Referred, Withdrawn and Reason for Withdrawal over the Past 5 years

Year	Total Referred	Total Withdrawn	Reasons for Withdrawal				
			SGO	Kinship Care	Long Term Fostering	Returned to birth parent	No Placement Orders Granted
2014-15	44	2	0	1	0	1	0
2015-16	55	2	0	1	0	1	0
2016-17	58	9	0	0	6	0	3
2017-18	55	2	0	0	2	0	0
2018-19	51	2	0	0	1	1	0

Two single children were withdrawn, one child returned to live with birth family and a second child will be in long term foster care due to significant disability.

Current Situation of Children Referred April 2018 –March 2019

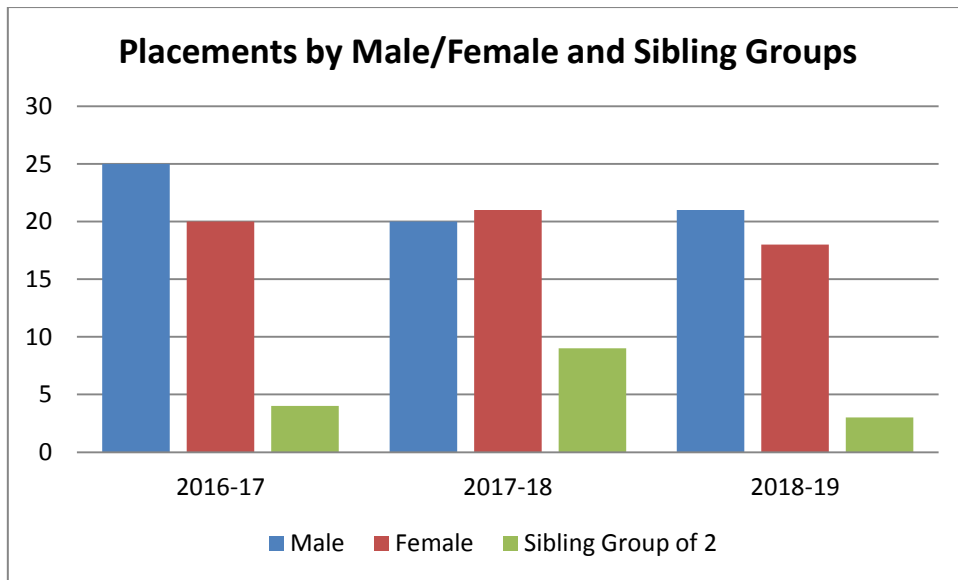
Year	Total Referred	Current Situation						
		Available	On Hold for Link	Matched or Placed	Adopted	Waiting PO	On Hold /Agency	Withdrawn
2016-17	58	12	18	19	1	5	0	3

2017-18	55	18	14	13	1	4	3	2
2018-19	51	21	12	9	2	3	2	2

Of the 51 children referred to the service this year 21 children did not have an identified link at the end of March 2019. A total of 23 children were on hold for potential links, matched, placed or adopted. 3 children were still waiting for placement orders and 2 children were withdrawn. 2 children are on hold due to health issues and foster care being considered.

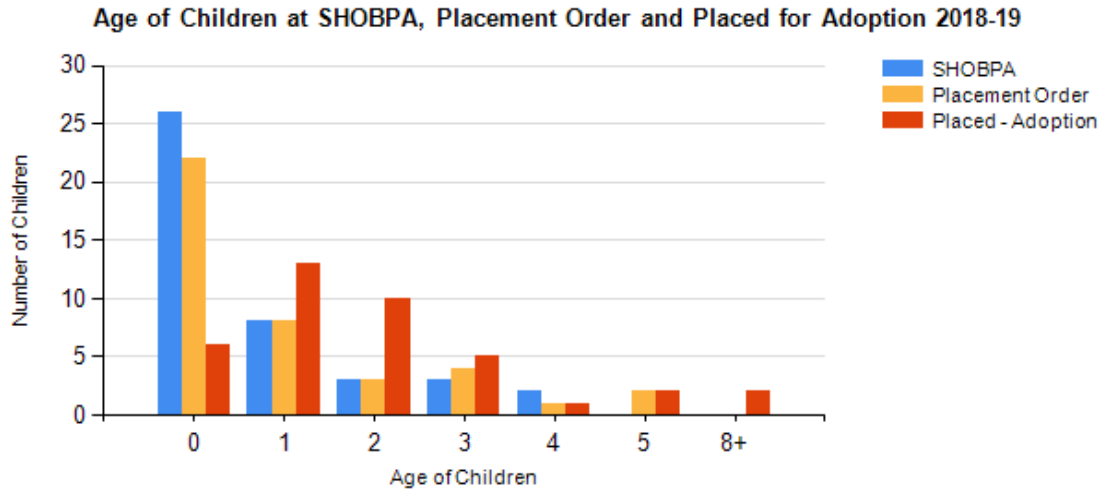
Gender Comparison of Children Placed for Adoption/Children Placed with other agency adopters

2016-17 placed 25 boys 20 girls (44) (5 placements (7 children) outside NWAS)
 2017-18 placed 20 boys 21 girls (41) (2 placements (4 children) outside NWAS)
 2018-19 placed 21 boys 18 girls (39) (12 placements(13 children)outside NWAS)



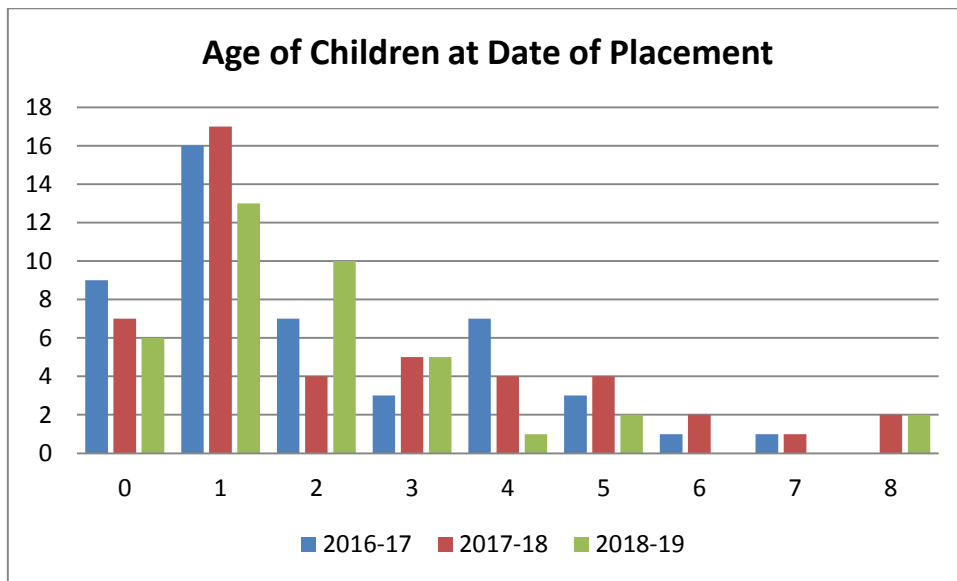
Graph 9.2

There is a significant difference in the total number of referrals for boys (33) and girls (17). The trend for those adopters who state a preference for a specific gender continue to be for girls.



Graph 9.3

A higher percentage of children (26) (50%) having their 'should be adopted' decisions made before 12 months of age continues to be the trend. 43% of children referred this year also had a placement order granted before reaching the age of 12 months.



Graph 9.4

NWAS has succeeded in placing the majority of children prior to their 2nd birthday. 48% of children placed this year were aged between 0 - 2 years. 6 children were placed under the age of 1. This year NWAS was also successful in placing two children over the age of 8 being placed and adopted.

Number of Children Adopted by Former Foster Carers or Outside of NWAS Region

	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
Number of children adopted	55	60	35	35
Number of children adopted by former foster carers.	8	7	3	4
Number of children adopted by Adopters from other agencies	7	9	4	13

The decrease in number of adopters being available in NWAS has resulted in an increase in children being placed outside the NWAS area with the number of placed with NWAS adopters falling from 88% to 62%.

Performance Indicator: Average time from date of Placement Order to Placed for Adoption 6 months:

NWAS – Average 11 months. This includes one child on hold for over two years whilst receiving significant therapeutic input and 2 children with significant special were found placements after two years on the waiting list. The relinquished children were placed within the expected timescales. 8 children were placed within 6 months an additional 6 within 8 months.

10. Adopters

Adopters Activity 01/04/18 to 31/03/19

LA	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Môn	Other/ ONWAS	Total 18-19	Total 17-18
Enquires	27	23	41	19	35	12	4	161	181
Response Forms	11	12	11	5	12	5	3	59	68
Initial Visits Undertaken	9	12	13	4	11	4	2	55	60
Application Forms Received	4	6	7	2	3	3	1	26	33
Adoption Assessments Completed	4	5	3	4	1	6	1	24	29
Adopters Approved	5	4	4	5	1	3	1	23	27
Adoption Foreign Element Enquiries	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	2

Current Situation of Enquiries Received between 01/04/18 and 31/03/19

Number of Enquiries Received	161
No response form received to date	89 (25 of these enquiries received in 2019)
Closed/Withdrawn	33
Waiting for IV	1 (date offered request to rearrange)
Attended Training (May)	7
Under Assessment	14
Approved or waiting approval	3
Approved and on hold for potential links	4
On Hold	5
Application Deferred	1
Waiting for Training	4 (couples declined training to attend at a later date)

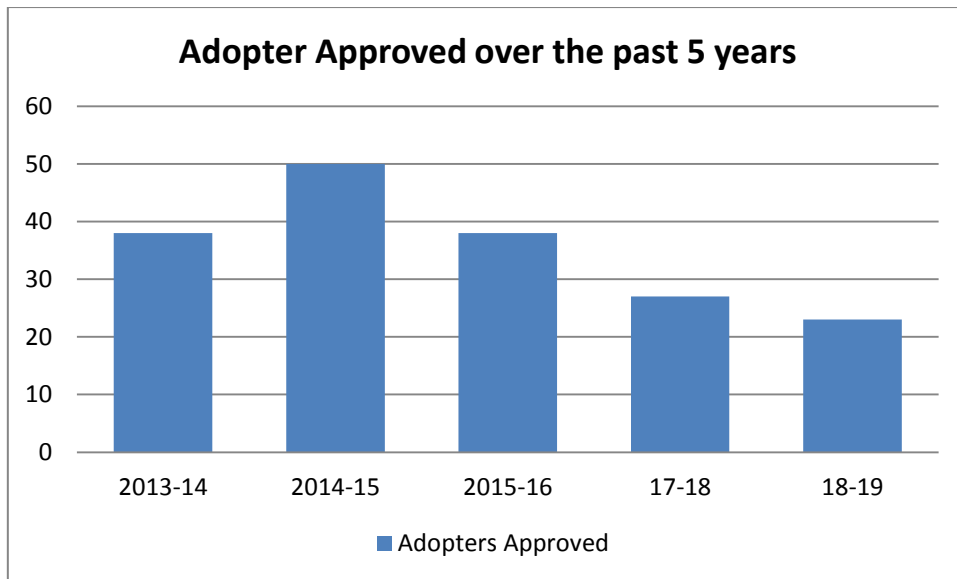
Reasons for cases being withdrawn or closed:

Given the significant drop in application forms from enquiry stage an analysis of the reasons for this was undertaken. Of the cases closed in this financial year:

- 2 families decided to proceed with another agency
- 47 did not return a response form after 1 month or after a follow up telephone call or letter;
- 11 decided not to proceed following initial visit
- 26 were counselled out for various reasons, such as, no spare room, smoking and wanting a young or specific child, medical, , house renovations, pregnancy, still considering IVF
- 11 chose not to proceed as they did not feel ready at the time following initial visits
- 2 enquired on behalf of a friend
- 1 adoption with a foreign element for a country not accepting adoption enquiries.

Some have delayed their applications until further notice and currently there are 33 still at the enquiry stage and waiting their response to information sent.

Adopters Approved April 2014 – March 2019

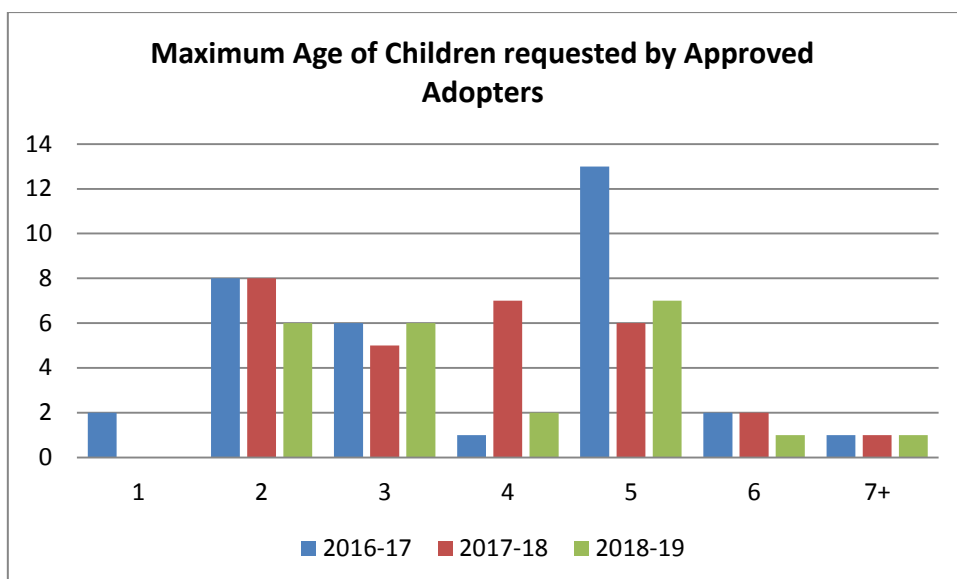


Graph 10.1

The number of families approved this year continues to decrease with only 23 families approved over the year. This had been anticipated given the reducing number of prospective adopters attending training and filing applications. In light of this adoption social workers have been seeking additional placements outside NWAS which tends to incur additional resources due to travel and liaison with other agencies.

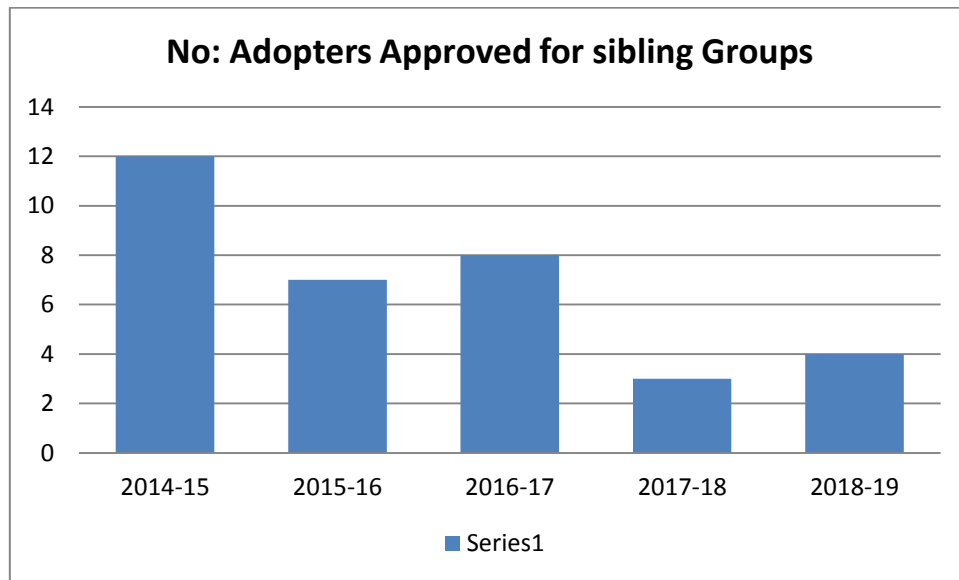
Performance Indicator: (Target 8 months) Average time taken from Response form to ADM Approval is approximately 7.6 months.

Number of Placements Offered by Approved Adopters by Maximum Age of Child in the past 3 years



Graph 10.2

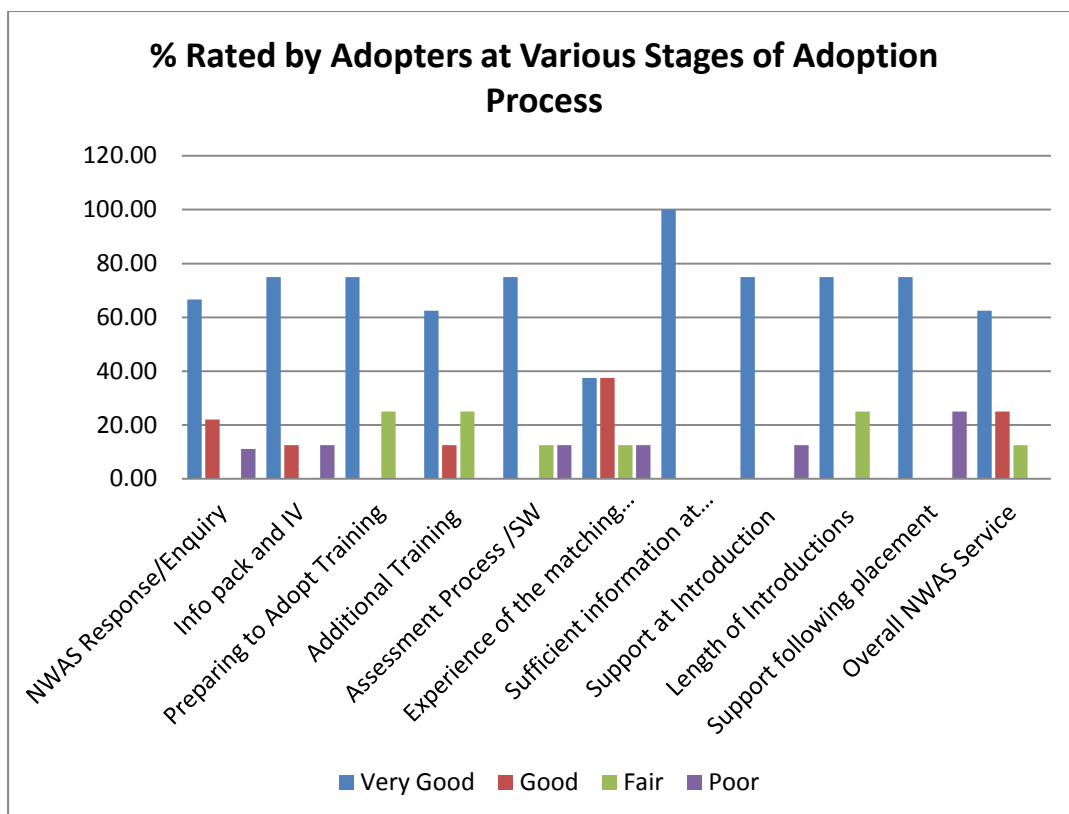
The majority of adopters continue to have a preference for a child under the age of 5 years and often state as young as possible. This has been less of an issue over the last few years given the increased number of very young children being referred. 3 adopters specified their wish for a female child only and one specified male only. 4 were for specific children.



Graph 10.3

The number of prospective adopters willing to consider a sibling group of two children was 4, although more than last year this has been significantly lower than previous years and has had an impact on the number of children waiting. 3 siblings groups were referred to NWAS this year 2 children are placed and the other remain on the waiting list. Family finding activity has been extended outside of NWAS. Focused recruitment by Cowshed for the National Adoption Service has been focused on adopters willing to accept more than one child.

RESPONSES TO QUALITY ASSURANCE QUESTIONNAIRES FROM ADOPTERS WITH CHILD/CHILDREN PLACED OVER THE PAST YEAR – Sent to 26, 9 responses



Additional Information/Comments:

- Request for a Second-Time Adopters Course – **resource implications given limited numbers**
- Request for Theraplay/Attachment – **training is being provided regularly on these issues**
- Local support group required – **additional support groups currently being developed**
Two adopters were unhappy with issues surrounding the match –these were being dealt with by the local authority involved.
- Myself and partner both feel we have been supported throughout the process however I feel matching takes far too long

11. Disruption

Number of disruptions compared to the number of placements (NWAS placements)

	2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	2016-17	2017-18	2018-19
No: of placement disruptions	1 (2 children)	1 (1 child)	4 (4 single children)	0	0	0
No: children placed in same period	57	55	56	44	41	39

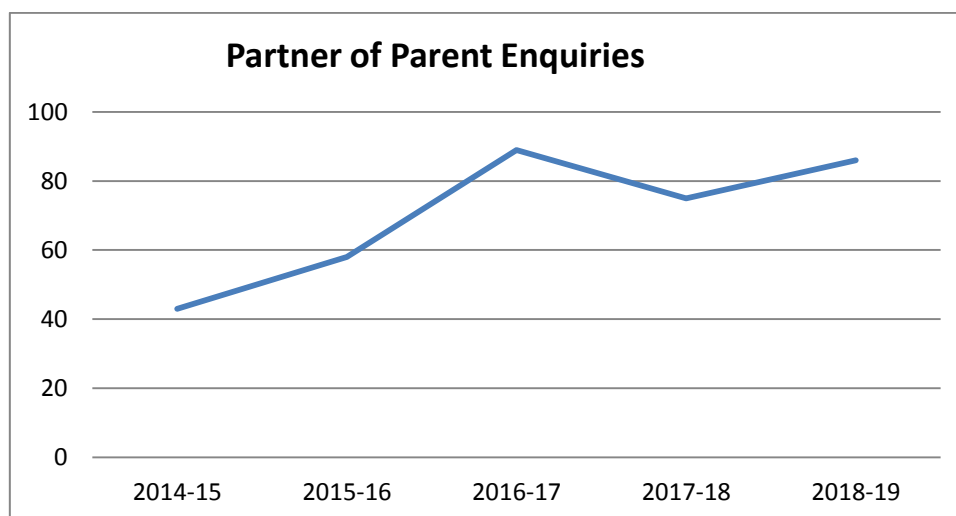
There have been no disruptions of children placed via NWAS during the last 3 years.

No historical disruptions have been reported to NWAS from the Local Authorities.

12. Non Agency Adoption Activity

Partner of Parent Activity April 2018-March 2019

	Conwy	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Môn	Total 2018-19	Total 2017-18	Total 2016-17
Partner of Parent Enquiries	14	15	12	10	27	8	86	75	96
Partner of Parent Initial Visits	6	3	5	1	7	2	24	34	76
Partner of Parent checks in progress /Waiting Allocation	3	1	5	5	5	2	21	20	15
Partner of Parent Currently Under Assessment	0	2	0	0	2	0	4	7	6
Partner of Parent Adoption Orders Granted	4	1	1	4	1	1	12	12	9



Graph 12.1

The number of Partner of Parent enquiries remain consistently high and this has had a particular impact on resources during 2018-19 particularly with the vacant recruitment officer post as current social workers have had to undertake all the initial visits. Consideration needs to be given by the Partnership Board regarding additional resources for the assessment of these complicated adoption applications in order to comply with court timescales. This is particularly significant in light of the

introduction of Stage 1 and Stage 2 of general assessments introducing tighter timescales in the new financial year.

13. Management information and development work

- Final decisions related to recommendations put forward in the review of the service undertaken by Jane Moore in 2017 continue to be under discussion by the Partnership Management Board.
- NWAS continue to promote the development of the NAS and NWAS Life Journey Framework. Additional funding has been provided via the National Adoption Service to further develop this work and additional training has been identified for all involved in the adoption process during the next financial year.
- Additional ICF and TESSA funding has been agreed and a development plan for an in-house adoption support team has been submitted and accepted. It is anticipated that the recruitment of appropriate staff will commence in the new financial year. The availability of an in-house therapeutic team should provide a significantly improved and more streamlined service for adoptive families requiring additional post adoption support, particularly therapeutic input where required.
- NAS continues to provide information and data for the National Adoption Service in relation to performance indicators additional reports will be required in order to provide data on the new PI's and in line with the new Stage 1 and Stage 2 process of assessments due to begin in July 2019. Current information suggests that the waiting list for children is increasing across Wales.
- NWAS has now launched a more formal buddying scheme for additional support to adopters and has 10 active supporting adopters.

14. Legal Issues

For both local authority adoption agencies and voluntary adoption agencies, the Adoption Agencies (Wales) Regulations 2005 are being amended by the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendments) Regulations 2019. These regulations are due to come into force on 1 July 2019. AFA is in the process of amending the Coram BAAF PAR and accompanying documents in readiness for July.

The amendments include the introduction of the Stage 1 and Stage 2 process for adoption assessments.

15. Adoption Support

15.1 Individual Adoption Support

Referrals for Adoption Support for adopted children continued to be referred to the relevant local authority Duty and Assessment Teams for initial assessment and

referred or signposted to appropriate services. Where appropriate NWAS offered places on training and invites to the support groups.

A total of 8 referrals were received by NWAS, NWAS social workers, provided general support and supported adopters in referring several to the local authority or CAMHS for assessment. The issues continued to reflect the need for therapeutic support and support in managing contact via Facebook and issues around Life Story work.

New Development – NWAS has been allocated a significant grant from Welsh Government via the National Adoption Service in order to develop in-house adoption support services. It is anticipated that this will include the recruitment of a team of staff members with therapeutic experience and training and the ability to undertake these assessments in-house without delay.

15.2 Adoption Support Groups in North Wales

The NWAS Regional Adoption Support Group which was started in March 2016 is held on a quarterly basis and continuous to be well attended to date. A total of 6 groups met over the past twelve months with numbers varying from 20 to 11 in attendance. The regional group continues to be held in the Colwyn Bay area and the new Flintshire/Wrexham group has taken place on two occasions. An additional Group in the Gwynedd/Ynys area is expected to hold their first meeting early in the new financial year. Due to limited staffing/resources approved adopters are taking the lead in organising the meetings supported by the training officer in booking venues and sending out invites.

NWAS Support Groups include:

- NWAS Support Group available to all adopters across North Wales
- Flintshire/Wrexham Adoption Support Group run by adopters
- Current development of an additional support group for adopters from the Gwynedd and Ynys Mon areas.

Birth Parent Support Groups:

The service provided by After Adoption is no longer available as the organisation went into administration at the end of March and no other organisations had responded to NWAS' request for alternative tenders. Decisions regarding the service need to be considered as to whether it is appropriate for this to be undertaken in house or whether an additional tender is required for this specific service alone.

The additional group set up by the NWAS contact co-ordinator has not been further developed as the post became vacant in September 2018. Interviews were

undertaken and the post is due to be filled in May 2019. In addition funding provided via the WG grant will provide additional support to the contact service given the significant rise in numbers of contact arrangements. It is anticipated that this may also provide an opportunity to develop the birth parent support groups given the contact coordinator's ongoing liaison with birth parents through letterbox arrangements.

15.4 Letterbox Contact and Direct Contact – Support to adopted children, birth and adopted families.

Post Adoption letterbox contact has continued to increase with many new referrals over the past twelve months. The number of referrals reflects the number of children adopted in the last 12 months.

Facebook continues to be problematic with birth relatives looking for children and children looking for birth relatives. Our role has then been to liaise with both parties and to discourage any form of contact through social media and to go through ourselves.

Home and office visits are still conducted to provide support with letter writing. This is usually accessed by birth parents. Support with letter writing is also provided over the telephone to birth parents who have moved outside of North Wales but whose letterbox contact we co-ordinate as requested by them. Our process for receiving referrals once a child has been adopted has been in place since January 2017 and this is now working well.

One issue was raised during the court process regarding letterbox arrangements being introduced following the adoption order and not at the time of placement. The case involved a significant period of time between the child being placed and the adoption order being granted, In these cases it was felt that contact should be supervised/coordinated by the child care social workers who continue to have contact with all parties until the adoption is granted.

Home and Office Visits:

In addition to telephone contact to support adopters and birth parents a total of 54 office visits were undertaken over the past year. This included 16 home visits and 38 meetings in the office. Several of these visits had to be undertaken by the assessing social workers following the coordinator's post becoming vacant in September 2019 which has continuous to stretch current resources.

Due to the difficulties in filling the vacancy the Contact administrator has had to manage the service and needs to be commended for her additional support in maintaining the service and ensuring that the majority of contact arrangements have

been fulfilled within reasonable timescales, although this situation can not be sustained. A new contact coordinator is due to take up the post in May 2019.

Active agreements:

	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Mon	Other	Total
2013-14	82	136	41	53	77	43	-	432
2014-15	102	152	45	61	107	56	-	523
2015-16	115	165	71	78	130	63	2	624
2016-17	100	189	82	88	145	68	2	674
2017-18	107	187	89	90	158	66	2	699
2018-19	121	205	100	105	159	70	2	762

Total Number of contacts

	Conw	Denb	Flint	Gwyn	Wrex	Ynys Mon	Other	Total
2015-16	163	252	95	109	191	88	2	900
2016-17	143	286	108	122	202	93	2	956
2017-18	152	288	119	124	220	88	2	993
2018-19	170	309	130	140	220	93	2	1064

15.5 Birth Record Referrals – Access to files, Counselling and Intermediary Service.

Birth record Referrals received and transferred to After Adoption 2018-19 and previous 2 years:-

	2018/19			2017/18			2016/17		
	Birth Parent Counselling	Section 98 Pre 75	Section 98 Post 75	Birth Parent Counselling	Section 98 Pre 75	Section 98 Post 75	Birth Parent Counselling	Section 98 Pre 75	Section 98 Post 75
Ynys Mon	1	3	2	2	4	2	2	6	2
Gwynedd	0	5	2	1	11	4	1	8	0
Conwy	1	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3
Denbighshire	1	4	0	5	11	2	5	5	5
Flintshire	1	9	0	7	8	4	2	8	3
Wrexham	1	11	2	6	5	10	6	6	3
Other	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	0
TOTAL	5	35	10	24	43	25	19	37	16
Total Referrals for After Adoption	50*			68			72		

* After Adoption gave notice to NWS in a letter dated 07/11/2018 that their Trustee Board had taken the decision to withdraw from service provision in Wales, effective from 01/04/2019. As a result NWS have been unable to make any new referrals to After Adoption since 01/12/2018. As at 31/03/2019 there are 7 Birth Parents and 16 Section 98 cases on a waiting list.

RESPONSES TO QUALITY OF CARE QUESTIONNAIRE TO CASES CLOSED BY AFTER ADOPTION ONCE WORK HAS BEEN COMPLETED - 5 Responses

80% of the responses received rated the service as excellent or very good.

Birth Parent Referrals

QUARTERS 3 & 4 2018/19

Birth Parent Referrals

<u>County</u>	<u>Number</u>	<u>Comment</u>
Ynys Mon	1	Received Q3, historic adoption – child placed approx 2007
Gwynedd	3	Referrals currently held on Waiting List as unable to forward to After Adoption
Conwy	1	Referral currently held on Waiting List as unable to forward to After Adoption
Denbighshire	2	Referrals currently held on Waiting List as unable to forward to After Adoption
Flintshire	0	
Wrexham	1	Referral currently held on Waiting List as unable to forward to After Adoption
TOTAL	8	

*Of the 8 cases, 7 are currently held on a Waiting List as unable to forward to After Adoption

Section 98

<u>County</u>		
	Access to Records	Intermediary
Ynys Mon	2	0
Gwynedd	2	1

Conwy	1	1
Denbighshire	3	3
Flintshire	2	6
Wrexham	1	5
Other	1	0
Sub-Total	12	16
TOTAL	28*	

* Of the 28 cases, 17 are currently held on a Waiting List while the issues around bringing the service in house are resolved.

16. Development of Adoption Service

Developments for the coming financial year include the following:

- Recommendation from the review of service regarding regional budgets, funding formula, management structure and the current employment status of NNAS staff. to be agreed and put in place
- Development of the In-house adoption support services
- Additional support for the contact service
- Agreed budgets for training and recruitment
- NNAS Life Journey Framework and training delivered and staff member to be recruited to develop the work required.

The day to day challenges remain as follows:

- Increase the number of adopters being approved and particularly encourage those to consider sibling groups, older children and those with disability.
- Continue to improve timescales for both adopters and children

17. Policies and Procedures

A new policy and procedure will be required to comply with the new legislation regarding the change to a Stage 1 and Stage 2 process of assessment for adopters in line with the Adoption Agencies (Wales) (Amendment) Regulations 2019. Work on a shared policy framework is being concluded through the NAS Adoption Support sub-group due to be completed prior to the introduction of the new process in July 2019.

A new policy and procedure is also required to comply with the change in regulations regarding the requirement to register adopters and children on the new Adoption Wales Register within specified timescales.

18. CIW

No inspections on the adoption services across North Wales were undertaken in the last financial year.

The NWAS Team manager and other NWAS staff members took part in the consultation regarding changes RISCA (The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 which came into force on the 2nd April 2018. To date only one regional service has been inspected under the new regulations.

19. Consultations

All feedback on the quality of the services provided by NWAS is collated following consultation exercises, via questionnaire undertaken with the following stakeholders:

- Staff members (annual questionnaire)
- LA Child Care Social Workers (annual questionnaire)
- Panel Members (annual questionnaire and monthly comment sheet provided for each case presented to panel).
- Adopters attending Panel
- Adopters who have had a child placed within the stated period (April 2018 – March 2019).
- Attendees for all training events provided by NWAS (See Training Section)
- Adoptees, birth parents and relatives of adoptees accessing the After Adoption services contracted by NWAS.
- Adopters attending NWAS Family Fun Day.
- Adopters attending meetings with the Medical Advisers at matching stage.

Responses to the consultations are included within this report.

20. Compliments, comments, complaints and representations

Complaints

One formal complaint was received by NWAS and Local Authority related to decisions regarding matching, This has been dealt with by both services at the Stage 1 level. Other issues were raised regarding the provision of Life Story Information, and difficulties via the matching process which were being dealt with by the relevant local authorities.

COMPLIMENTS

A total of 3 specific compliments were received by NWAS over the past year. These do not include compliments included in the questionnaires, evaluation feedback on training events or personal cards sent to staff members from adopters. Extracts:-

- Just wanted to say a huge thank you to you for today. Our families have come away with a lot of information that they wouldn't of been able to get from us. We have obviously spoken to them lots, but we can't portray the information as well as you have. They all said it was interesting, intense, yet inspiring all at the same time. This course is a fantastic idea and we can't praise NWAS and yourself enough. Feeling very emotional tonight, so happy that we have the support from our families and also that they are aware of the challenges that are yet to come, and that's down to you.
- It was so great to see you again, even fleetingly! The event was terrific, X was ecstatic and meeting Peppa Pig was the highlight of her life so far! Thanks for everything.
- There aren't enough words to express our gratitude for all your support. You have been there for us since the very beginning, anchored and kept on track. There have been difficult times along the way but we are delighted that we have now reached our goal – that is because of your care and encouragement. You do a really important job and you are very skilled in your role. We are a happy little family who are very grateful to you for your important part in bringing us together.

21. Reporting Mechanisms to Senior Management, Scrutiny & Members

Quarterly reports and the annual report on service activity are provided to the Partnership Board. The manager also presents these reports to Panel members and other professionals involved in panel business days throughout the year. Service managers in each authority present the reports to their respective Scrutiny Committees and Executive Boards.

Performance Indicators are reported to the National Adoption Central Team on a quarterly basis and this information is collated and shared with the Advisory Group and Governance Board of the National Adoption Service. It has been agreed that these should be presented at the Partnership Board meetings and any issues raised with the data collated by them will dealt with within the region.

22. Conclusion

In line with the national trend there has been a decrease in the number of adopters being approved and children placed in this financial year. NWAS will need to consider additional methods of advertising and recruitment activity, should the budget allow for this dependent on the decisions regarding funding the service following the review. Further liaison with 'Cowshed' the marketing company undertaking advertising for the National Service needs to be developed once the recruitment officer post is filled.

NWAS look forward to the new developments planned for the in-house adoption support service for adoptive families which should support adopters through the

matching and placement of children processes from an early stage and in time prevent adoption breakdowns wherever possible.

This report will fulfil the requirements of Regulation 22 but could also be used for distribution to senior managers, cabinet, scrutiny etc. Circulation of this report will be determined by each local authority area.

Date completed: 09th May 2018
Author: Mandy Humphries
Title: Manager North Wales Adoption

APPENDIX 1 Joint Adoption Panel Membership and Advisors April 2018 – March 2019

		Flintshire /Wrexham			Conwy/Denbighshire			Gwynedd/Ynys Môn		
	Panel Role	Name	End Date	Review	Name	End Date	Review	Name	End Date	Review
1	Panel Chair	Emyr Owen/ Linda Vickery	24/02/19	N/A 12/04/19	Sue Roberts	26/01/22	17/10/17	Non Davies	20/12/22	09/05/18
2	Medical Advisor	Dr Ewoud Bos	N/A	01/04/19	Dr Sue Roberts	N/A	27/11/17	Dr Teyrnon Powell	N/A	On sick leave
3	Medical Advisor	Dr Anil Ninan	N/A	18/02/19	Dr Lindsay Groves	N/A	27/11/17	Gwyneth Hughes Education	20/01/22	9/5/18
4	Independent Member	Joy Dymant	26/09/20	01/04/19	Kate Dyke	26/01/22	17/10/17	John Peake	20/12/22	9/5/18
5	Independent Member	Denise Nicholls	26/09/20	28/01/19	Megan Meeke	01/11/20	17/10/17	Eirian Hughes	11/11/20	9/5/18
6	Independent Member	Lucy Hay	24/01/21	18/02/19	Rod Bowden	26/01/22	27/11/17	Dewi Rhys Jones	20/12/22	Due
7	Independent Member	Linda Vickery /Vacant	26/09/20	12/04/19	Leanne Owen			Hazel Liptrot	11/11/20	9/5/18
8	Elected Member	Cllr Paul Cunningham	19/03/23	28/01/19	Cllr Jeanette Chamberlain Jones	26/01/22	17/12/17	Cllr Llinos Hughes	20/12/22	9/5/18
9	Elected Member –	Cllr Beverley Parry-Jones	23/04/23	24/01/19	Cllr Cheryl Carlisle	26/01/22	27/11/17	Cllr Anwen Hughes	08/03/17	Term finished 08/03/17.
10	Social Worker	Abigail Rogers	25/09/22	24/01/19	Sarah Halley	26/01/22	17/10/17	Ann Taylor	13/01/21	9/5/18
11	Social Worker	Helen Smith	21/01/23	26/02/19	Helen Fenner	20/02/20	27/11/17	Nia Hardaker Gwyneth Hughes	09/09/20 10/01/22	9/5/18
	Legal Advisors	Glenda Jones (Wrex) Jenny (Flint) Sally Williams (Flint)			Wayne Cooper; Ceri Williams (Conw) Heidi Roberts; Jane Griffiths (Denb)			Rhian Brown (Gwyn) Sioned (Ynys)		
	Panel Advisor	Mandy Humphries			Trish Welsh			Stevie Thomas		
	Admin/Minute Taker	Sarah Picken			Minute Taker – Sue Abbott			Manon Roberts		

MEDICAL ADVISER QUESTIONNAIRES

1. Number of miles travelled to meet with the Medical Advisor and mode of travel:-
On average 124.4 miles were travelled by car/train for this meeting
2. Of the 12 adopters who responded, 8 indicated they were able to combine this trip with other activity relating to the adoption, such as a meeting with Social Worker, Foster Carer, Play Therapist, CAMHS, etc
3. By meeting with the Medical Advisor adopters were asked if they learnt anything new about the health or development needs of the child/ren which they did not know already.
Responses:-
 - We got a much better understanding of development needs and his experience in similar cases
 - Reassuring to see a Doctor, although very brief
 - However as 'B' had been visiting the practice for a couple of years, he could see his progress
 - We just received much more comprehension and reassurance
 - All our questions were answered and she explained everything very clearly
 - Although confirmed clear of issues unknown about
 - More than anything she allayed some of my fears
 - Children with me too long so I knew more really. Just wanted to make sure there wasn't any more information that could be passed on.
 - Really great chat with Doctor – this was so useful. He spent a good amount of time with us and explained things simply. Thank you!
 - The details were all in the report. I'm sure these meetings are very informative and useful when adopting children who have experienced multiple moves/trauma.
4. Of the 12 respondents, 1 found it partially useful and 9 useful. Comments made:-
 - The meeting was very useful to us as adopters as the level of detail cannot be obtained from a report and there is a natural questioning interaction
 - Not informative – reassuring to feel health is considered as part of process
 - It was great to get further information on health and re-assurance re questions we had
 - Doctor was a valuable resource in our final decision
 - The Medical Advisor was very reassuring, friendly and helpful
 - Very thorough, vital part of the process
 - Nothing was going to change our minds. The information was all in the child's profile
 - We didn't get the opportunity in our first adoption and even though we didn't learn any more we aren't wondering now like we are with our first – was there more to know, etc
 - Clearer understanding of his pre-natal and ante-natal care. Comprehensive, helpful meeting
 - The Paediatrician was reassuring and interesting to note he had dealing with birth father as a LAC
5. When adopters were asked if they felt anything would improve this service, the following points were made:-
 - Appointment was the right length and we were given contact details of the medical advisor in case we had any further questions. We have also received a follow-up letter outlining everything we discussed
 - It is a really important and valuable service to offer – please keep offering it to other adopters!
 - Ideas – book appointments quicker, we totally missed out on Panel and had to wait another month. Thankfully work were flexible
 - I think it needs to be provided. It's really important to the children and will help the new adopters care for them with greater knowledge of medical background
 - To speed up the process perhaps telephone (conference) call would be sufficient – particularly for a child with no identified needs

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Business Case for Review of North Wales Adoption Service Autumn 2019

1. Background about Service

The North Wales Adoption Service (NWAS) became operational on 1st April 2010. NWAS provides a regional adoption service on behalf of the local authority areas of Wrexham, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey.

Wrexham has been the host authority since NWAS was created, and has responsibility for managing the service. NWAS was set up to increase the number and range of adoptive placements for relinquished and Looked After Children within the North Wales area by establishing and maintaining a pool of approved prospective adopters who also reside in the North Wales area.

From the outset a Partnership Agreement has been in place which sets out the duties and responsibilities of the host authority and the other participating local authorities. The NWAS is overseen by a Partnership Management Board which is made up of a Head of Children's Services from each North Wales Authority.

Since its inception NWAS has been innovative and progressive. Directors and Heads of Service shared a vision that became an operational reality and the regional service has delivered an improved service for children needing adoptive families and adoptive parents for the past 10 years.

The operational management of NWAS is overseen by a Team Manager located in Wrexham and two Deputy Managers, one based in Conwy and the other in Gwynedd. Senior managers from the host authority have provided strategic oversight of the service, representation at regional and national level and management of the Team Manager to support service delivery in line with regulation and legislation.

Whilst the staffing complement in the service has remained unchanged since it was established in 2010, the demands on the NWAS have grown with a 26% increase in the numbers of children looked after across the region and more children each year requiring adoptive placements. In addition, the creation of the National Adoption Service in November 2014, bringing all local authorities in Wales together to form five regional collaborative areas, NWAS being one of them, has resulted in an additional set of reporting arrangements and responsibilities for the service.

Consequently, the Operational Manager and the two Deputy Managers have become increasingly stretched, so much so, that it has required Heads of Service employed in Wrexham, to devote increasing amounts of time to support the service. The time spent now far exceeds the 2.7 hours a week the service is funded for and cannot be sustained, given the considerable strategic responsibilities and heavy workloads attached to these Heads of Service roles.

In addition, earlier this year it was announced that the Welsh Government is going to provide £2.3 million additional funding for the development of post adoption services across Wales. The NWAS share of this funding is approximately £378K which will be devoted entirely to developing a post adoptive support element within the service for adoptive families and adoptive children. This funding will be a recurring grant, and whilst a good news story will create additional pressures on an already stretched service if it continues with its current structure and headcount. (See Section 3.1 below).

The conclusion to be drawn from the information outlined above is that there is insufficient management capacity, both at strategic and operational level to manage and develop the service. Further, it is not possible to deliver the Post Adoption Support element with the existing staffing complement.

Lead Authority Model

As NWAS started as a pilot project, with no certainty it would endure, employees were seconded by their employing local authority with the intention, over time, once proof of concept was established that there would be a move for the lead authority to directly employ the workforce.

2. Proposed Changes

This business case sets out 2 separate proposals for change for the North Wales Adoption Service, one aimed at delivering a revised structure for the service and the 2nd to ensure a more effective lead authority model of delivery. Each proposal will have separate work streams and consultation plans to be followed as outlined below.

2.1 NWAS Structure:

To restructure the existing management arrangements in NWAS to create a Lead Service Manager role and revised Operational Team Manager roles, with an additional team manager role to update, refocus and increase operational management capacity. This will involve deletion of the current Operational Manager post and 2 x Deputy Manager roles. All other existing posts within the structure will remain unchanged.

Expansion of the team to create nine new permanent roles, to include 1 Operational Manager as referred to above) to develop and manage the new Post Adoption Support element of the service, in line with the Welsh Government grant conditions. This is proposed to include a specialist TESSA role, coordinator roles and therapeutic Family support workers roles.

2.2 Fully Managed Lead Authority

To implement a fully managed lead authority model of delivery with an updated and supporting Partnership agreement with all 6 authorities to reflect the proposed change. This proposal would require TUPE transfer of employees currently carrying out the NWAS work as their principle purpose from the five partner authorities, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Conwy, Gwynedd and Anglesey to the proposed employing lead authority, Wrexham County Borough Council (WCBC).

Current vacancies in the service would transfer to WCBC to be recruited to on WCBC's terms and conditions but continuing to operate in their current locations in other counties. There is no plan to change the location of staff working in the NWAS as current arrangements continue to meet the needs of the service. All members of staff are able to work remotely, using the CHARMS IT System which all the authorities are signed up to have access to.

To revise the Partnership Agreement to incorporate the planned changes in the service and ensure all future liabilities are covered. *E.g.*: potential redundancies, dissolution of the partnership, or withdrawal of one of the partners.

3. Reason for Change.

3.1 NWAS Structure: Currently there is insufficient strategic and operational management capacity to meet the needs of the service, which includes establishing a vision for the future and developing and implementing a business plan that sets out clear objectives and goals.

Since the establishment of the National Adoption Service (NAS) in 2014, there has been a requirement for managers of all five adoption consortiums in Wales to represent their regions at a national level, and contribute to the development of a truly National Adoption Service and a new policy agenda. This has included the establishment of a NAS Performance Framework, with the range of measures increasing year on year, requiring more comprehensive recording and reporting requirements for the service.

Three of the other consortiums are managed by full-time Regional Adoption Service Managers, supported by operational managers. Therefore they have the time and strategic experience to contribute to the national policy agenda as well as develop specific business plans to drive their services forward. Whilst it is acknowledged that some of these activities have taken place in North Wales, they have been on a more ad hoc basis. This is because NWAS has always been managed by one Team Manager, supported by two deputies who have significant operational responsibilities and therefore lack the capacity to develop the service strategically, plan for the future and contribute to the national adoption agenda

During recent years in order to meet national and legislative obligations senior managers from Wrexham, have had to devote increasing amounts of time to support NWAS. However, continuing to attend monthly meetings in Cardiff and provide significant support to maintain operational activities is no longer sustainable. At the same time we have recently received WG funding to develop post adoption services but lack the management and staffing capacity to drive this agenda forward.

Therefore the creation of a full-time Service Manager post will put the North Wales region on an equal footing with the other regional services and enable the post-holder to attend regional and national meetings. This will also ensure the region retains its influence and will be well placed to shape both regional and national priorities going forward. Locally, it will allow the post-holder to be pro-active rather than reactive in planning for the future. Setting strategic goals for the development of the regional service, underpinned by a detailed business plan with measurable

milestones will provide focus for employees and reassurance to members of the Partnership Board that the Service is set on a journey of improvement.

In addition, creating three Operational Team Manager posts will allow the post holders to focus entirely on operational activities and create the additional capacity to develop and manage the Post Adoption Support element of the service funded by the WG grant. Whilst the Operational Team Managers will have generic job descriptions, they will each take a lead in driving performance in three specialist/ key areas; Marketing, recruitment and Training; Assessment and Performance; Post Adoption Support. This will ensure the quality and range of services on offer are broadened and improved and delivered consistently across the region.

Other benefits of increased operational management capacity will allow for each Team Manager to link and act as a professional advisor to one of the three established Joint Adoption Panels for Conwy/Denbighshire, Anglesey and Gwynedd and Flintshire and Wrexham. The plan is for each Team Manager to be deployed across two county areas and be a point of contact and increased support for frontline staff and linked staff working in frontline childcare teams based in their areas.

To create capacity to deliver the Post Adoption Support element of the service we intend to use the 378K Welsh Government funding to create and recruit nine additional posts. Some of the new posts will require different knowledge and skill sets and will enable NWAS to provide an improved and expanded range of services to Adopters and their Adoptive children and also meet legislative requirements.

3.2 Fully Managed Lead Authority

Employees in the NWAS are seconded to the service by their employing local authority and this has been the situation since the regional service was established. Whilst secondment in the short-term can be beneficial for employees it can also create uncertainty about long-term job security when there is no defined end date for the arrangement. Since the service was set up some experienced employees have ended their secondment because of uncertainty about their future. This was linked to periods of budget cuts and fears that they may not have a job to return to in their employing authority if the service changed/ ended.

Secondment has also created some difficulties that impact on the operational effectiveness of managing the service. Sickness, capability and disciplinary matters are managed slightly differently in each North Wales Local Authority. This has created some operational difficulties and made it more challenging and cumbersome to manage the service on a day to day basis when the managers have to deal with six separate HR and Corporate departments who have slightly different ways of doing things. For example, policies and processes to adhere to, recruitment and legal procedures, and performance management etc.

Other difficulties have arisen in negotiating like for like backfill, when employees have been on long-term sickness or maternity leave and their respective employer did not provide a backup employee/ cover or delays in getting vacancies advertised. When this has happened it has created a major gap in service and had a detrimental impact on operational activities and other employees trying to provide cover, resulting in a decline in performance, resulting in fewer adopters being assessed and approved,

leading to a decrease in available adopters and an increase in the numbers of children waiting for adoptive placements. Lack of sufficient adopters has also had a significant financial impact on participating local authorities, with an almost 200% increase in the use of private adoptive placements in the year 2018/19 when compared with 2017/18.

Equally, it has proved problematic for the financial management of the service due to the additional activity required to calculate amounts owing to the lead authority when vacancies are not covered or for payment applied to administrative support that leave or are on long-term sick leave. Therefore WCBC as the lead authority has not been able to fully cost recover from other council's elements of overheads etc

In order to achieve a far more efficient lead authority model of delivery it is proposed that employees carrying out NWAS duties as their principal purpose are transferred to WCBC as the lead authority. This would enable the lead authority to manage the service on one set of policies and procedures and only have to deal with one HR, legal and Finance department instead of six. It would also reduce silo working and enable consistency of performance and practice and flexibility across the region when working to one set of policies and procedures, as well as clarity of management structure and cover for continuity of service.

This model will enable managers to take swift action to fill any vacancies and arrange cover for long-term sickness and maternity leave. This would be beneficial for the service and employees working in the NWAS. It is hoped that employees would feel more secure, as they would no longer have the worry of secondments ending. Addressing any performance issues would also be far more straightforward and remove any ambiguity employees and managers may have with the current arrangements. It will enable a more accurate and cost effective service partnership agreement to be developed for the service.

4. Major Deliverables –

4.1 NWAS Structure:

The proposed changes will introduce improved management of the service and enable the NWAS to meet all of its regional, national and legislative obligations. Increasing the management capability will also enable the NWAS to expand and deliver an enhanced Post Adoption Service as directed by the Welsh Government. Staff working in the Service will also benefit from improved access to management support.

Potential adopters, Adopters and adopted children will also be beneficiaries or an improvement in all aspects of the Service and the creation of a Post Adoption Support element of the Service.

4.2 Fully Managed Lead Authority

- Increased efficiencies in ways of working, with the full management of the service under one lead authority.

- Improved management of vacant posts and covering long-term sickness and maternity leave as managers will be able to take immediate action to remedy the situation.
- Performance and practice will be aligned across the region offering potential adopters, adopters and adopted children consistency of service delivery.
- Improved financial cost recovery.
- Staff will be secure in the knowledge that they will have permanent long term contracts with NWAS.

5. Scope

5.1 NWAS Structure

Currently there are two deputy managers who will be directly affected by the proposed change in the management structure and include:

1 FTE employed by Gwynedd
1 0.6 employed by Conwy

The remaining posts will be unaffected by the proposed changes.

5.2 Fully Managed Lead Authority

Initial assessment has found 11 employees potentially in scope of a TUPE transfer as NWAS is their principle purpose. This includes:

1 Deputy Manager employed by Gwynedd – 1 x WTE
1 Deputy Manager employed by Conwy – 1 x 0.6
3 Social workers employed by Flintshire County Council - 1 x FTE & 2 x 0.6
2 Social workers employed by Denbighshire County Council – 2 x FTE
2 Social workers employed by Conwy County Council – 2 FTE
1 Administrative worker employed by Conwy County Council – 1 x 0.6
1 Social worker employed by Gwynedd County Council 1x FTE

6. Dependencies – The Partnership Agreement is currently being revised to take account of the proposed changes and should be completed by the end of August 2019. On completion it will be circulated to other members of the NWAS Partnership Board for consultation and endorsement.

7. Constraints –

- The Job descriptions and person specs for the new posts will need to be designed and subject to the job evaluation process.
- Engagement and reaction of recognised Trade Unions at a regional level on behalf of the 6 local authorities on the proposed changes.

- Engagement and reaction of employees to the proposed changes and potential for individuals to object to the transfer.
- In the short-term there may be some difficulties with recruitment into posts that are advertised on WCBC terms and conditions, but will operationally be based in other Counties and therefore competing with different pay rates that may apply locally.
- Reaction of employees who would have the same employer but on differing pay and terms and conditions which are protected by TUPE legislation. This is already a factor that exists within the service.
- Legal Resource to develop the Partnership Agreement.

8.Organisation Structure:-

The current structure chart is attached (appendix 1) and the proposed structure chart (appendix 2)

There will be 42 posts in the new structure, which is an increase of 9 permanent post

An estimated 11 posts will transfer to WCBC as the lead authority for the NWAS

It is proposed to delete the following posts	Number FTE
Operational Manager	One
Deputy Manager	Two

It is proposed to introduce the following posts	Number FTE
NWAS Service Lead	One
Operational Manager	Three
Tessa Co-ordinator	One
Young Person Co-ordinator	0.5
Contact Co-ordinator	0.8
Post Adoption Co-ordinator	One
Therapeutic Support Workers	Four

It is proposed to retain the following posts	Number FTE
Social workers	2 x 0.6
Social Workers	10 FTE
Recruitment Officer	One
Training Officer	32 hours
Administrator	30 hours

Administrator	30 hours
Administrator	2 x 18.5
Contact Co-ordinator	0.6
Contact Administrator	0.8

9 Approach

9.1 NWAS structure

The intention is to delete the existing Team Manager and two Deputy Manager posts and replace with one Service Lead Manager Post (to be based at WCBC) and three new Operational Team Manager posts.

It is proposed to recruit to the NWAS Service lead Manager post which has been evaluated at G13.

There is currently 1 operational manager post that is vacant and can be deleted. There are 2 Deputy Managers in post who would be at risk by the deletion of their current roles and replacement with new operational manager posts. It is proposed that consultation will take place with the directly affected Deputy Manager group about the proposed 3 x Operational Manager roles on a ring-fenced basis, in line with the Managers Guide to Implementing Organisational Structure change. Should there be more expressions of interest/ matching to a specific post a 'select in' approach would be used.

For the new element of service for Post Adoption Support it is proposed to create nine new posts, including one team manager referred to above. This will require job evaluation and then a recruitment campaign to fill the roles. No current employees are directly affected by this element of change.

The next step is to consult regionally with the union representatives and directly with the two affected members of staff regarding the proposed changes.

9.2 Fully Managed Lead Authority

Consultation with recognised trade unions followed by consultation with in-scope employees will be required to take place in line with Transfer of Undertakings (protection of employment) regulations (TUPE).

A process will be followed to share employee liability information with WCBC by the current employees to enable an assessment of any issues and to inform any measure that may be required to be undertaken due to the Transfer. It is understood that there is likely to be as a minimum the required measure to amend the payroll deadline to be the 15th day of the month and a transfer into the Clwyd Local Government Pension scheme for those whose pension is not currently administered by Clwyd Pension.

It is anticipated that contractual pay and terms and conditions will be protected in line with TUPE legislation.

As part of the consultation process employees will have the opportunity to consider what the proposals mean for them and whether they intend / wish to object to the transfer.

Current vacancies in the service for social workers/ roles that are not affected by the NWAS structure project will be recruited to on WCBC terms and conditions but continue to be based in their current location.

10. Implementation & Consultation Plan

It is proposed to start consultation on these proposals as soon as possible through a briefing with regional recognised trade union representatives on [TBC DATE] and a meeting with the team at the team meeting scheduled for [TBC DATE]

10.1 NWAS Structure

Action	Resp	Target Date
1. Trade Union pre- consultation briefing		
Email to the Regional Trade Unions – to provide business cases x 2 re restructure and explain intention to bring in regional Adoption service into WCBC as lead authority, the staff affected and potential measures intend to take, offer a date to meet to consult and receive feedback.	CW / HR reps from all 6 authorities	End of Early August
Senior Manager will inform the relevant trade unions of the contents of this proposal sharing a detailed business case	Senior Manager	Earl September
2. Employee Consultation – sharing proposals		
Senior Manager to hold a Group Consultation meeting with Deputy Managers as directly affected by the proposals to explain what it means for them and to share the consultation plan.	Senior Manager	Mid-September t 1 week after sharing details with TUs
Senior Manager to hold group briefings with wider teams not directly affected by the structure proposal.		
Individual Consultation meeting – with Deputy Managers to discuss feedback on the structure proposals and suggestions for draft Operational Manager Job description.	Senior Manager/ Deputies	Couple of days after Group meeting (Mid-Sept)
Feedback on the proposals and suggestions for draft Job description is required from employees and their representatives and considered during the period of consultation.	Employees /Unions	2 week window from group meeting late
Advertise NWAS Service Lead Manager vacancy		Late September/ Early Oct
Review of Operational Team Manager JD to confirm final version and respond to employee feedback		Early Oct
Submission of JD for evaluation	Chief Officer	Early Oct
Confirmation of JE Outcome	Job Evaluation	Takes 4 – 6 weeks –
Chief Officer confirms acceptance of grade by		Early

completing/returning the JE Memo.		November
Chief Officer has right to appeal against grade outcome – 10 days from notification of the JE Outcome.		
Individual Consultation Meeting – with Deputies to confirm outcome and next steps re slotting and matching/ select in activity that may be required.		Can only happen after a TUPE Transfer taken place (see below draft timescale).
Letter to confirm appointment into alternative roles	HR Service Centre	

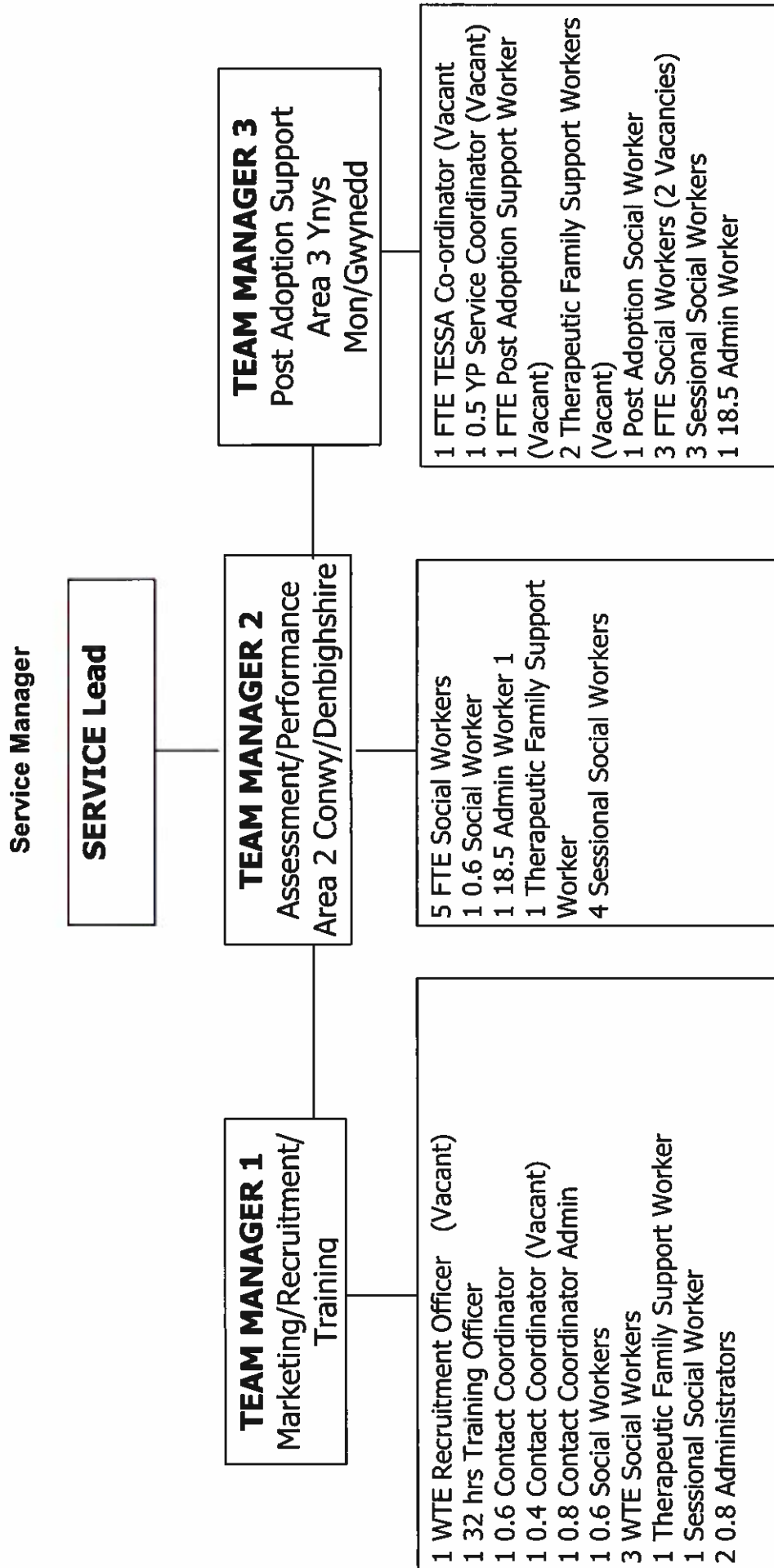
10.2 Fully Managed Lead Authority

Activity	Who	By
Email to the Regional Trade Unions – to provide business cases x 2 re restructure and explain intention to bring in regional Adoption service into WCBC as lead authority, the staff affected and potential measures intend to take, offer a date to meet to consult and receive feedback.	CW / HR reps from all 6 authorities	Late July/ Early August
Regional TU Consultation Meeting	CW / HR reps from all 6 authorities	First week of September
Feedback on proposals – From TU		End of 2 nd week of Sept
TUPE Triggered and Measures to Take Letter WCBC to write to 4 authorities to formally set out key issues: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Believe TUPE is triggered as service remains the same • Expectations current staff will transfer with service • Outline of potential measures to take • Request key information to help assess potential staffing issues/measures that may need to be taken 	WCBC Social Care Service	Mid Sept
Preparation of information about the Council (i.e. type of induction) - to share with incoming employees via their current employer	Social Care Manager (WCBC)	Mid Sept
Employing Authorities to Start Consultation with their employees – including right to object / feedback on the proposed measures to take etc. WCBC manager can attend if appropriate	4 Outgoing Authorities – HR Rep and local Head of Service/	Mid to late September

	Chief Officers/ WCBC contact	
TUPE – receive all finalised employee liability information from outgoing employer (28 days before date of change).	4 Outgoing Authorities	Late September (or at least a Minimum 28 days prior to implementation date)
Assessment of terms and conditions – To identify the issues to manage	WCBC / input from 5 authorities HR team	Sept/ early Oct
2nd Employee Consultation meetings	4 Outgoing authorities	Early October
Considerations Objections to Transfer– May not be applicable	Employees/ 4 Outgoing Authorities	Mid Oct
Current Employer’s Final letter – to employees to confirm transfer and new employer details etc	5 Outgoing Authorities	End of Oct
WCBC’s Welcome letter to Incoming Employees - confirming TUPE Transfer and welcome	WCBC’ Chief Officer – Social Care	Early-November
Transfer to take place in line with recruitment of Service Lead and is subject to change		Early / Mid November
New Joiner processes to be completed – Receive P45 bank details etc for payroll etc.	Service manager/ employees	Mid November
Implementation of changes –Transfer staff files to Council system	HR reps	Mid November
Employees complete Council Induction processes	Employee/ their manager	November/ December

Appendix 1. Proposed North Wales Adoption Service Organisation Structure

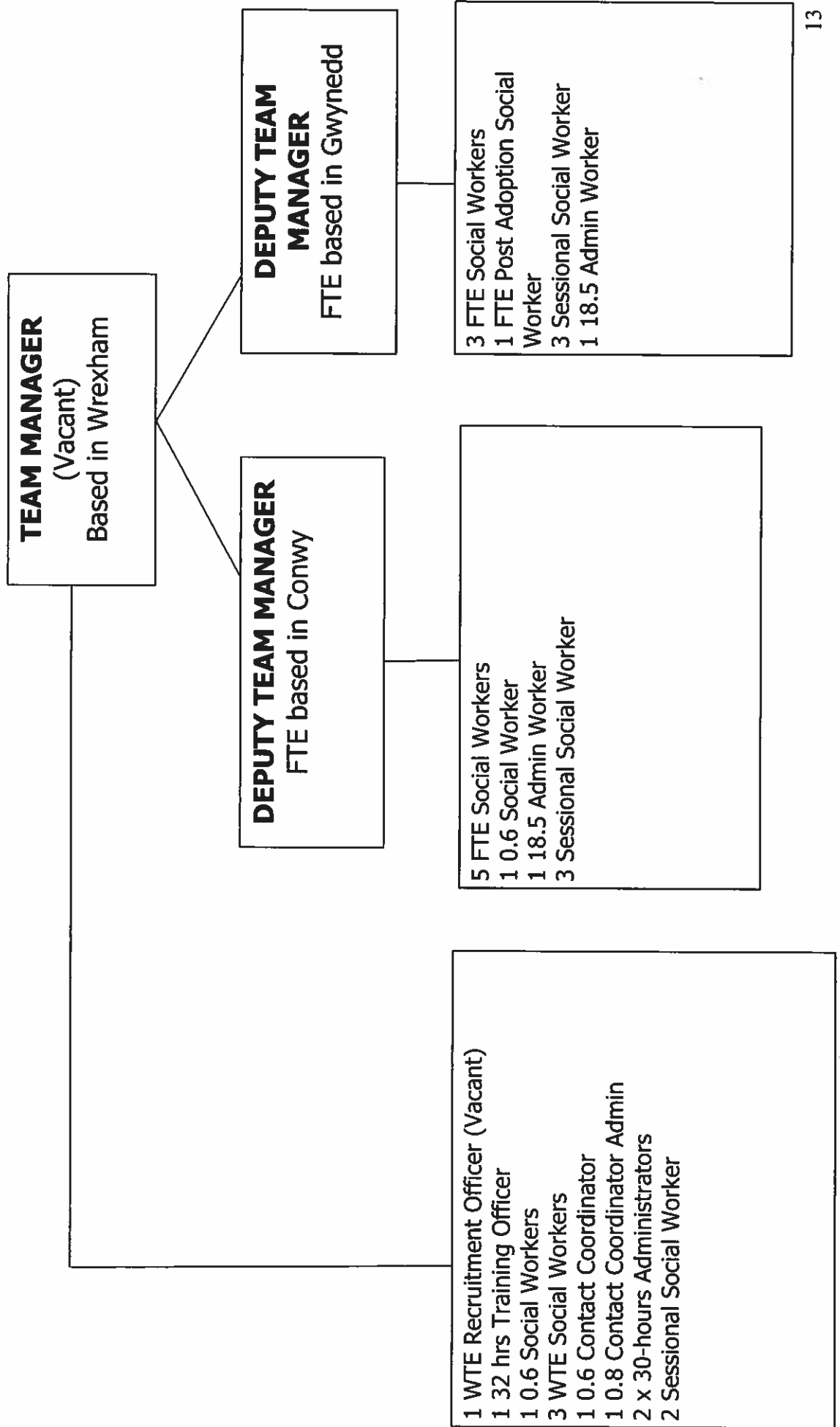
Proposed structure Total posts = 42



* 2 System administrators report on a daily basis to Team Manager 1, but receive their appraisal from the Business Support Manager based in Social Care Wrexham CBC

Appendix 2 Current NWAS Organisation Structure

Structure Total posts = 33





SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	16 th December 2019
Report Subject	Extra Care in Flintshire
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Services)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide an update on the three operational extra care schemes and the fourth scheme which is due to open in mid-February 2020.

The development of extra care schemes in the county has been an explicit priority in Flintshire's Improvement Plan and Housing Strategy.

Extra care housing is a popular choice for older people as it provides independent living with the added benefits of onsite care and support which is flexible around the individuals care and support needs; this housing choice, for some people, is a real alternative to residential care. Supporting an individual in extra care is more cost efficient than residential care for the Social Services department, which is responsible for ensuring an individual's care needs are met.

The local authority has three successfully operational schemes: Llys Eleanor shotton, Llys Jasmine in Mold and recently opened Llys Raddington in Flint. The fourth scheme, Plas yr Ywen, is scheduled to open its doors on the 24th February 2020.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Members note the updates from the four extra care schemes and continue to support the Extra Care strategy in Flintshire.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING EXTRA CARE IN FLINTSHIRE
1.01	As part of our demand management for an aging population with care and support needs Flintshire embarked on an extra care strategy, through partnership working with local Registered Social Landlords (RSL).
1.02	<p>Extra care provides independent living and greater housing choices for older people in Flintshire; apartments can be rented (and in some cases purchased) to people typically aged 60 years plus, who have care and support needs. Facilities within extra care schemes usually include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mix of one and two bedroom apartments, with contemporary fitted kitchens, walk-in shower rooms, lounge, dining room and balconies/ Juliette balconies. • Dementia friendly design • On-site care and support team • Restaurant • Lounge/ library, seating areas and activity rooms • Assisted bathrooms • Telecare and assistive technology • Guest and staff accommodation • Office and reception areas • Electric buggy store and laundry room • Parking and ambulance drop-offs • Courtyards and garden areas <p>Flintshire's extra care model is very successful as it promotes a person's independence but is flexible if the individual's needs change.</p>
1.03	Flintshire Social Services' Extra Care Team delivers the on-site care and support for all extra care schemes in Flintshire. The team includes a core staff team for the daytime shifts along with a waking night care model. The care and support staff are professional, qualified and have received relevant training such as dementia, reablement and telecare training. The care and support provided by staff follows the Progress for Providers model, which aims to raise the quality of life of individuals by delivering person-centred and outcomes focused care and support.
1.04	In addition to the care and support staff, Flintshire Social Services employs a Manager, Senior, Administrator and Activities Co-ordinator for each scheme to manage the delivery of the care and support within each scheme.
1.05	The RSL are responsible for the maintenance and operation of the building and they employ the Housing Manager, catering, cleaning and maintenance teams.
1.06	The current extra care schemes have all been very successful. They remain oversubscribed and are immensely popular by older people in Flintshire. They are seen to provide a supported accommodation solution that exceeds other forms of provision.
1.07	Here is an overview of the current schemes in Flintshire:

1.08	<u>Llys Eleanor, Shotton Extra Care</u>
1.09	<p>Llys Eleanor was Flintshire's first extra care scheme, which was opened in February 2009, developed by Clwyd Alyn in partnership with Flintshire Social Services. The scheme has the following specific facilities in addition to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 50 one and two bedroom apartments – with a purchase option available • Cinema room, fully equipped gym • Hair salon
1.10	Currently, there are 55 individual's living in Llys Eleanor with 210 hours of care and support being provided each week.
1.11	<u>Llys Jasmine, Mold Extra Care</u>
1.12	<p>Llys Jasmine, our second innovative extra care scheme, opened its doors in October 2013. It was developed by Wales & West Housing in partnership with Flintshire Social Services for individuals 65 years old plus with a care and support need. The scheme provides the following specific facilities in addition to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 63 one and two bedroom apartments and bungalows, including; • 15 apartments are specifically designed for people with dementia/ memory loss – located on the memory floor. • Close to the town centre of Mold • Hair salon
1.13	Currently, there are 73 number of individual's living in Llys Jasmine with 300 hours of care and support being provided each week.
1.14	<u>Llys Raddington, Flint Extra Care</u>
1.15	The £9 million Llys Raddington scheme is the most recent scheme to open in November 2018. It is another partnership between Clwyd Alyn and Flintshire Social Services.
1.16	<p>The scheme provides the following specific facilities in addition to the above:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 73 one and two bedroom apartments, including; • 15 apartments are specifically designed for people with dementia/ memory loss, located on the memory floor. • Central town centre location, close to Jade Jones Pavilion, newly opened Health Centre and Flint Library
1.17	Currently, there are 81 number of individual's living in Llys Raddington with 515 hours of care and support being provided each week.
1.18	Flintshire, with partners recently held the official opening of the scheme, on the 1 st November 2019, which was opened by Hannah Blythyn AM and Deputy Minister for Housing; she was joined by tenants, their families, staff, colleagues involved in the development of the scheme and key local members of the community for an afternoon of celebrations to mark the occasion.

1.19	<u>Plas yr Ywen, Holywell Extra Care</u>
1.20	Plas yr Ywen is the next scheme to be developed in Flintshire; the construction commenced in summer 2018 and is scheduled to be completed in January 2020. The move-in of tenants is planned to begin on the 24 th February 2020.
1.21	This £10m development is a partnership between Wales and West Housing Association and Flintshire Social Services for individuals 50 years old plus with a care and support need. The scheme provides the following specific facilities in addition to the above: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 55 one and two bedroom apartments • 7 apartments are specifically designed for people with dementia/memory loss, located on the memory floor. • Central town centre location, close to the Holywell Community Hospital, a GP practice and pharmacy. • Private gardens and woodland walks • Multi-purpose communal space
1.22	Almost 200 enquiries were received for the scheme and to date there have been 33 apartments provisionally allocated from 55 approved individuals, with further allocation panels arranged.
1.23	Recruitment for this scheme has been successful, with in excess of 50 applications for the care and support team in the first round we are currently finalising all offers of employment.
1.24	<u>Further developments</u>
1.25	Based on the success of extra care to date coupled with the projected needs of an aging population, Flintshire could accommodate a further scheme at some point in the future if the right location was to become available for development.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	Both RSLs have utilised Intermediate Care Funding (ICF) and other Social Housing Grants, Housing Finance Grants and self-financing models to implementation of all our existing schemes.
2.02	The RSL and Flintshire Social Services is responsible for its own operational costs, as highlighted above. The delivery of the care and support in all 3 operational schemes is funded by base budget with in Social Services.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	All schemes have a governance structure in place. Risks are managed by operational colleagues and escalated to Senior Managers when and if required.

The delivery of extra care schemes in Flintshire needs to respond to the changing needs of individuals, from assessment to move-in and ongoing. This is managed by the Community Support Team but does result in the care and support hours being responsive and adjusted accordingly. This can and does impact on the capacity of the in-house Community Support Team; however, one of the advantages of Flintshire delivering the care and support is that it can draw on support from the wider community support staff in times of need so that we maintain flexibility to support everyone in extra care.

The recruitment of care and support staff, has historically been problematic due to the small workforce pool, lack of awareness or recognition of the roles and the risk of destabilising the private market. However, following a review of our recruitment and the launch of new initiatives such as, WeCare campaign and the values based recruitment work, we have seen an increase in the number of new and returning candidates to the profession.

Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact

Long-term	<u>Positive impact</u> To help individual's live their best lives.
Prevention	<u>Positive impact</u> To promote and maintain independence of older people living in Flintshire, making them more resilient and supported by the wider community.
Integration	<u>Positive impact</u> All tenants are welcomed into the scheme with the strong ethos of inclusion.
Collaboration	<u>Positive impact</u> Flintshire Social Services works collaboratively with its RSLs to deliver extra care at an operational and strategic level.
Involvement	<u>Positive impact</u> Tenants, their families, the wider community and other stakeholder partners are involved in the planning and development of extra care in Flintshire, as well as the ongoing service development.

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	<u>Positive impact</u>
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	Staff are trained and aware of the environmental impacts of the scheme, know how to reduce the schemes impact and encourages tenants and families/ visitors too.
Resilient Wales	<i>No impact</i>
Healthier Wales	<u>Positive impact</u> An individual's physical and mental well-being is maximised so that tenants can live independent and happy lives within extra care.
More equal Wales	<u>Positive impact</u> Tenants are assessed and supported to achieve their potential, including facilitates that maximises independence.
Cohesive Wales	<u>Positive impact</u> Extra care schemes are well-connected with their local communities and facilities which promotes inclusion and community networks.
Vibrant Wales	<u>Positive impact</u> Individuals are support which respects their heritage, culture and language of choice. The Welsh language is promoted within the schemes and individuals are encouraged to utilise their choice.
Globally responsible Wales	<i>No impact</i>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	All extra care developments included thorough consultations as part of their development and implementation. Local community, Town Councils, local Members, potential tenants and specialist experts such as engineers were listened to and informed the design of every scheme.
4.02	All scheme utilised a marketing plan for the promotion of the scheme and to generate interest from potential tenants. However, due to word of mouth and greater knowledge and understanding of extra care facilities in Flintshire, the schemes self-market which is evidenced by a continuous waiting list for all schemes.
4.03	Flintshire Social Services continuously seeks feedback from tenants on their care and support, with a view to support individual's to live their best life; all feedback is used to inform future service developments.

	<p>Feedback to date from tenants and families in all scheme have been really positive on the whole; compliments include the quality of accommodation and facilities, partnership working and care and support provided. Here are a couple of compliments to illustrate feedback being received:</p> <p><i>“I couldn't be happier with your care at Llys Raddington everything has surpassed my expectations and I know mum is going to be safe and happy there... Mum seems to have improved physically in the one week I was there with her, she is walking more and standing more upright, she is ready to try anything again and is thriving on the company, these are all the things I was hoping for but had not expected such immediate results”</i></p> <p><i>“I can't tell you how much you have done for my Aunt and myself. It goes far beyond anything we expected. The staff are so lovely and friendly, it has made a hard move feel so much like the perfect one. A big weight has been lifted from my shoulders and I know the care you give is wonderful”</i></p> <p><i>One gentleman has invited staff for nibbles and drinks in his (and his wife's apartment), he's invited many people that live here over a couple of days. He said he's had a new lease of life since living in Llys Raddington; he has even been out on his push bike (something he hasn't done for over 40 years).</i></p>
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5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Susie Lunt, Senior Manager: Integrated Services, Adults Lead</p> <p>Telephone: 01352 701407 E-mail: susie.lunt@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	Extra Care Scheme – extra care schemes provide independent living and greater housing choices for older people in Flintshire; apartments can be rented (and rented in some cases) to people aged typically aged 60+ who have care and accommodation needs. Schemes have a range of apartments and facilities that promote independent and social interactions.
8.02	Housing Finance Grants: repayable funding made available by the Welsh Government to assist RSL in financing the development of projects

	delivering affordable housing across Wales, including extra care housing for older people.
8.03	Intermediate Care Funding: The aim of the 2016-17 intermediate care fund (ICF) is to drive and enable integrated working between social services, health and housing and the third and independent sectors. The focus of the intermediate care fund in 2014-15 and 2015-16 has been on integrated working to help avoid unnecessary hospital admissions, or inappropriate admission to residential care, as well as preventing delayed discharges from hospital.
8.04	Registered Social Landlord (RSL): The vast majority of Registered Social Landlords are also known as Housing associations. Housing associations are independent, not-for-profit organisations that are registered with the government to provide homes for people in housing need.
8.05	Social Housing Grants: funds housing schemes that meet local needs and priorities as identified by local authorities.
8.06	Supported Living - Housing and support that is built around a person, allowing them to choose where they live, with whom and how they are supported.



SOCIAL SERVICES AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 12 th December 2019
Report Subject	Safeguarding Adults and Children
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer Social Services
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide members with information in relation to the Joint Adults and Children's Safeguarding provision within the county boundaries.

In line with the Council's strategy for developing a systematic Performance Management Framework, Social Services routinely collate safeguarding activity for all aspects of safeguarding. This report is to inform Members of key statistical and performance related information about children and adults at risk for whom the Authority has significant safeguarding and corporate safeguarding responsibilities.

This report is also to highlight the variety of work covered by the Safeguarding Unit and the activity it undertakes.

This report will also summarise some key learning from Child and Adult Practice reviews and Domestic Homicide Reviews.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That members accept this report as relevant information in relation to Flintshire Safeguarding for the period 1 st April 2018 to 31 st March 2019 and additional information provided.
2	That members take due regard to the variety of activity across the Safeguarding Unit and the continuing development and improvement in service provision.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE ACTIVITY OF THE SAFEGUARDING UNIT
1.01	<p>The Flintshire Safeguarding Unit has been a single unified team since early 2016. The Safeguarding Unit Service Manager reports directly to the Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Commissioning. The team currently comprises 22 people and is based in County Offices Flint. They have close working relationships with Children and Adult Social Care and key partner agencies.</p>
1.02	<p>The Safeguarding Unit oversees all aspects of work related to their core responsibilities which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Child Protection (CP) • Adult Safeguarding • Adults at Risk • Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS) • Looked After Children (LAC) <p>The Safeguarding Unit team are also involved in regional groups; delivery groups, policy and procedures, performance and quality audit groups, delivery of training for both adults and children, child practice review and adult practice reviews when required and investigations.</p> <p>Key messages from the last quarter Regional Board meetings are available in the appendices.</p> <p>Since September 2018, in addition to our own internal case file audits, partnership audits for children have been completed on Repeat registrations, the quality of our support to children and young people at risk from domestic abuse, outcomes for children who are deregistered, and quality of pre-birth assessments.</p> <p>Partnership audits for adults have been completed on quality of the multi-agency safeguarding reports, the effectiveness of the our response up to the end of the Enquiry stage, the effectiveness of our response from Strategy Discussion to Case Conference, how well we engage with individuals during the Safeguarding process, and the effectiveness of joint working with individuals who self-neglect.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Unit has also had two successful CIW thematic inspections this year in February and October. The Adult and Children's Safeguarding Service was inspected in February and the Looked After Service in October along with other areas of Children's Services.</p>
1.03	<p>New National Safeguarding Procedures</p> <p>Wales has become the first part of the UK to introduce a single set of safeguarding guidelines to help protect children and adults at risk with the launch of the new Wales Safeguarding Procedures mobile app. Launched at the start of National Safeguarding Week, November 11th – 15th 2019, the Wales Safeguarding Procedures will standardise safeguarding practice across Wales and between agencies and sectors.</p> <p>The procedures will set out what to do if anyone working with children or</p>

	<p>adults suspect an individual is experiencing, or at risk of, abuse, neglect or other kinds of harm.</p> <p>Uniquely there will be no printed copies of the procedures. Instead they will be available to everyone online, either via the dedicated Wales Safeguarding Procedures website or a mobile app. This means that there will always be a single up-to-date version available to all practitioners. It will also make finding information quick and easy.</p> <p>'Pointers for practice' are featured throughout both the web and app versions of the procedures and provide simple 'how to' guidance for practitioners. These draw on the latest research and practice developments.</p> <p>Both platforms will also feature a searchable glossary. This will make it easier for people to work in partnership by ensuring that every practitioner is using the same terminology in the same way, irrespective of their sector or professional discipline.</p> <p>Training on the key changes in the procedures is commencing in the New Year across Wales with regional and local implementation expected from 1st April 2020.</p>
1.04	<p>Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards (DOLS)</p> <p>The Safeguarding Unit has two full-time Best Interest Assessors (BIAs) and a part time BIA who between them are responsible for undertaking Best Interest Assessments for individuals who meet criteria in accordance with the Mental Capacity Act Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards. The Safeguards apply to people in care homes and hospitals, and the local authority is responsible for assessing Flintshire residents in care homes. A person is deprived of their liberty if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack mental capacity to agree to live in the care home and • Are under continuous supervision and control and • Would be prevented from leaving the care home if they were to try to do so. <p>Deprivations of Liberty in Flintshire care homes are assessed by a BIA and by a specialist doctor. Numbers of applications have increased year on year from thirteen applications in 2013-2014 (before a significant new judgement, known as Cheshire West, widened the scope of DoLS) to a total of 447 new applications being received between April 1st 2018 and March 31st 2019. 183 applications have been made for the six months between 1st April, 2019 and 30th September, 2019. The number of referrals received means that careful prioritisation is needed to ensure that those most in need receive assessments.</p>
1.05	<p>New Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS)</p> <p>It has been recognised nationally that DoLS is "not fit for purpose", as the numbers of people deprived of their liberty exceed the resources available to manage the assessments required. In 2018 the UK Government published a Mental Capacity (Amendment) Bill which became law in April 2019 and will be implemented in October 2020. The Bill set out a new model, the Liberty Protection Safeguards, which will replace DoLS in England and Wales.</p>
1.06	<p>The Liberty Protection Safeguards will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover people of sixteen years and over (DoLS applied to people of eighteen and over)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Apply to people living in the community as well as to people in care homes and hospitals • Put more responsibility on the providers and commissioners of care to gather together the assessments required and to send them into the responsible body. • Expect the responsible body (which will in many cases be the local authority) either to authorise the deprivation of liberty or, if the person being assessed appears to be objecting to the placement, to arrange for a more in-depth assessment from an Approved Mental Capacity Professional. • Give people the right to appeal to the Court of Protection if they wish to appeal against the deprivation of their liberty. <p>A Code of Practice is being prepared and the Welsh Government are considering any funding implications for introducing the new scheme. A full programme of training and implementation will be rolled out by Social Services over the coming year. Initial training has already taken place with senior managers and relevant providers and an internal project manager has been appointed to drive the implementation.</p>
1.07	<p>Adult Safeguarding and Adults at Risk</p> <p>The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) expects the Local Authority to undertake relevant enquiries and decide on next steps within 7 working days of receipt of an adult safeguarding report.</p> <p>Between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, 679 adult safeguarding referrals were received at the Single Point of Access (SPOA), with 97% of enquiries being completed within seven days. This reflected an increase from 528 referrals the previous year, when 94% of enquiries were completed within seven days. Over the six months from April 1st, 2019, 416 reports have been received, suggesting that we are likely to see a significant annual increase in referrals by the end of March, 2020.</p> <p>Referrals are becoming more complex and financial abuse is an increasing trend within Adult Safeguarding.</p>
1.08	<p>The Adult Safeguarding Team have convened 171 strategy meetings between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 with an additional 85 being held in the following 6 months.</p> <p>The Adult Safeguarding Team undertake internal audits on a regular basis to identify areas for development and ensure consistency of approach.</p>
1.09	<p>Children’s Safeguarding and the Child Protection Register</p> <p>The purpose of the Child Protection Register (CPR) is to keep a confidential list of all children in Flintshire who have been identified as being at risk of significant harm in accordance with the categories of abuse within the All Wales Child Protection Procedures (AWCPP) 2008. The Safeguarding Unit are responsible for maintaining the CPR, providing information to relevant partner agencies about children on the register and ensuring that Child Protection plans are formally reviewed in accordance with the AWCPP.</p>

1.10	<p>Number on the Register</p> <p>Numbers on the register fluctuate as cases progress through the system. If risk reduces, children may be removed from the register and supported through more informal means. If risk increases, cases can progress into court proceedings and children can be taken into care.</p> <p>The Safeguarding Unit have no control over the number of referrals into First Contact nor do they have influence over which cases come to conference.</p> <p>At the end of March 2018 there were 145 children on the register. By the end of September 2018 there were 139 Flintshire children on the register with 35 temporary registrations totalling 174 children.</p> <p>At the end of March 2019 there were 131 children on the register, 111 of them Flintshire children.</p> <p>As of 14th November there were 161 children on the register, comprising 149 Flintshire children, 12 temporary registrations.</p>												
1.11	<p>Categories of Risk</p> <p>For the past two years the highest category has been emotional abuse as a single category with the next highest being Physical and Emotional abuse. This year the highest category currently is Neglect closely followed by Emotional Abuse.</p> <p>Emotional Abuse unfortunately continues to be linked with high levels of reported Domestic Abuse, usually linked to alcohol and/or drug misuse.</p> <div data-bbox="304 1115 1347 1675" data-label="Figure"> <table border="1"> <caption>Children on the CP Register by Category of Registration on 30 Sep 2019</caption> <thead> <tr> <th>Category</th> <th>Count</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Neglect</td> <td>56</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Emotional Abuse</td> <td>45</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Physical Abuse</td> <td>30</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Neglect & Physical</td> <td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Sexual Abuse</td> <td>1</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> </div>	Category	Count	Neglect	56	Emotional Abuse	45	Physical Abuse	30	Neglect & Physical	3	Sexual Abuse	1
Category	Count												
Neglect	56												
Emotional Abuse	45												
Physical Abuse	30												
Neglect & Physical	3												
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1.12	<p>Length of time on the register</p> <p>Children on the register are reviewed in line with AWCPP guidelines. Initially at 3 months and thereafter within 6 months.</p> <p>Children reaching their 3rd review are automatically reviewed under the County and Public Law Outline and are subject to a Legal Advice Meeting (LAM) to identify whether the case should be moving into court proceedings.</p> <p>Children’s Safeguarding Managers regularly review cases that have been</p>												

on the register for 12 months or more. The findings are reported to Senior Managers and discussed within Regional Safeguarding Delivery Groups.

On 30 September 2019, 3 young people from 3 families had been on the CPR for more than 12 months, the longest being 25 months

There are processes in place with Children's Services Service Managers to ensure such cases are reviewed within Legal Advice Meetings and Senior Managers meetings to ensure there is no drift.

All cases of re-registration within 12 months of de-registration are audited on behalf of the Safeguarding Board each year.

During the period 01/04/2018 to 31/03/2019, there were 5 children from 3 families registered to the Child Protection Register within 12 months of their previous registration. All cases involved domestic violence, parental alcohol abuse and the inability of parents to engage consistently with services.

1.13 Number of Child Protection Case Conferences held

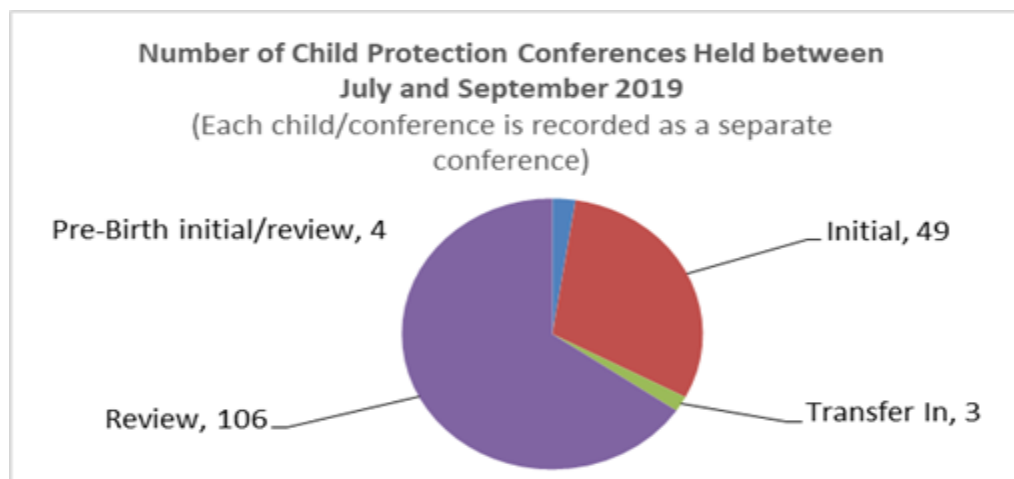
The breakdown for the number of case conferences held is given below. Up to 8 conference a week are chaired and minuted by the Safeguarding Unit. Initial case conferences are convened within 15 working days of the strategy decision to come to conference and reviews are held as stated in above.

From April 2018 to March 2019, 89% of initial child protection conference and 99% of review conferences were carried out within statutory timescales. From 1st April 2019 to 30th September 2019, 89% of initials and 99% of reviews were held in timescales.

The last quarter returned 100% compliance for both initial and review case conferences.

Any conferences that have to go outside timescales are agreed with the Service Manager for Social Care and Safeguarding. In the interim, Children's Social Services ensure immediate safeguarding issues are managed with relevant partner agencies.

76 family Child Protection Conferences were held in Quarter 2, for 162 children.



1.14	<p>Looked After Children</p> <p>The number of Looked After Children has previously remained relatively steady but has been increasing both locally, regionally and nationally. At the end of October 2018 there were 239 children being looked after by the Local Authority.</p> <p>Between 1st April 2018 and 31st March 2019, 78 children started to be looked after.</p> <p>Between 1st April and 30th September 2019, 31 children started to be looked after, 18 have left care and there have been 52 placement moves. Flintshire are currently looking after 261 children.</p> <p>Children can leave care for a number of reasons, either going home to their families, becoming adopted or reaching 18 years of age where they no longer need to be reviewed under looked after procedures. Children can receive support and services up to the age of 19 from transition services. Young people can also be supported through Pathway Plans up until they are 24 years old should they need this input.</p> <p>There are 3 Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs), within the Safeguarding Unit who review Care Plans and ensure placements are appropriately supporting the children.</p> <p>Flintshire Children are in the main located with Flintshire Foster Carers or at home under Placement with Parents regulations. However, IROs do have cases as far as South Coast of England, North of England and Ireland and they are expected to travel to the placement address to hold their reviews. This has an evident impact on available resources.</p>
1.15	<p>Another role of the Safeguarding Unit is to ensure partner agencies and social work colleagues are fully aware of safeguarding processes so that they can fulfil their duties under the Social Services and Well-Being Act. This is a priority of the Corporate Safeguarding Panel and also the Regional Safeguarding Board. A number of training sessions have taken place over the last year to ensure the message about Adult and Children's Safeguarding is delivered effectively and consistently.</p> <p>A further piece of work raising awareness of safeguarding issues and the duty to report concerns regarding Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing Children, Modern Slavery and Trafficking has been commenced by the Licensing Team in conjunction with Safeguarding colleagues. It is now a mandatory requirement for private hire and hackney carriage drivers to undertake safeguarding training. During October 412 drivers, operators and desk operators attended safeguarding training. It was arranged by the Licensing Team and delivered by the NSPCC. Six different 2 hour slots were offered. A further free session will be arranged in January 2020 to capture any drivers who were unable to attend the October dates, or those who have recently obtained their licence.</p>
1.16	<p>Learning from Child Practice Review (CPR), Adult Practice Reviews (APR) and Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR)</p> <p>In accordance with the Safeguarding Boards (Functions and Procedures) (Wales) Regulations 2015 (which came into force 6 April 2016),</p>

Safeguarding Boards have a statutory responsibility to undertake multi-agency practice reviews in circumstances of a significant incident where abuse or neglect of an adult at risk is known or suspected and the adult or child has died, sustained potentially life threatening injury or serious and permanent impairment of health or development.

Practice guidance for completing practice reviews has been issued under section 145 Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014.

The purpose of practice reviews is to learn lessons, to inform and improve practice. The outcome of a review is intended to generate professional and organisational learning and promote improvement in future inter agency protection guidance.

Practice reviews do not seek to apportion blame.

There are two types of review:

- Concise Practice Reviews – when the person was not referred to services for protection within 6 months of the incident or death
- Extended Practice Reviews – when the person was referred to services in the 6 months prior to the incident or death

If the criteria for the above is not met, a decision can be made to hold a Multi-Agency Professional Forum (MAPF) which is a learning event that sits outside the Regional Safeguarding Board APR/CPR review sub group. MAPF utilise case information, findings from audits, inspections and reviews to develop and disseminate learning to improve local knowledge and practice and also inform the Safeguarding Board's future audit and training priorities.

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs) were established on a statutory basis under section 9 of the Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act (2004). This provision came into force on 13th April 2011. Community Safety Partnerships are required to undertake them. The Community Safety Partnership then monitors the action plan.

1.17

Flintshire APRs and CPRs

When cases come to the attention of safeguarding, consideration is always given to whether a case should be recommended for APR or MAPF. This consideration is also part of the safeguarding audit tool. Adult Locality teams can also refer cases to the APR subgroup as can any agency. Consideration for a CPR is usually determined within a PRUDIC (Procedural Response for Unexplained Death in Children) meeting however, again any agency can refer to the CPR subgroup.

Currently in Flintshire, one CPR report was published earlier this year and one APR report was finalised recently. The action plan is already being reviewed within partner agencies and Social Services. There is work on a second APR in progress and a second CPR. There is also a DHR in progress.

The CPR is about the Flintshire mother who was convicted of the manslaughter, by drowning, of her baby daughter in July 2015. She was just over 1 year old and was a twin. A CPR was commenced initially,

	<p>however, was put on hold until the criminal proceedings were complete. A learning event has been booked in March 2020 and the panel are currently collating timelines from all agencies.</p> <p>The APR is about an adult without capacity who was resident in a local care home. Some of the issues were linked to professionals having problems dealing with his challenging behaviour, questions about whether he was in the correct support placement and subsequent questions about care received when transferred to hospital following a fall.</p> <p>Following the death of woman in Flintshire in October 2018 a DHR was commissioned by the Flintshire Community Safety Partnership. The review is still on-going, and FCC are fully committed to supporting the requirements of the DHR, and provide information as and when required. Partner agencies are in the process of completing Individual Management Referrals, which in turn will assist the Author to draft their report. The DHR Panel have been meeting on a regular basis. This was the case of Theresa Garner, killed in a Domestic Homicide (October 2018) by her husband John Garner. He was later convicted in May 2019 of her murder.</p> <p>The North Wales Region has been adhering to the SSWBA by actively considering cases that would fit the criteria for APR/CPR. This means that North Wales has the correct number of active cases, particularly with APRs. This has a resource impact on all agencies and there has been an issue with delays in commencing reviews due to scarcity of trained reviewers, however, the Board has addressed this issue through recent training.</p>
1.18	<p>Learning from CPRs and APRs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When relevant CPRs are published nationally, Practice Directives are drafted by Flintshire’s Children’s Services Team Managers with summaries of the key issues and these are shared with all teams • The Regional Safeguarding Board send out weekly bulletins highlighting published CPRs and APRs regionally • Learning events are held following CPRs and APRs where practitioners meet to discuss key themes and lessons from the investigations. • Action Plans emanating from CPRs and APRs are monitored locally and regionally through the Safeguarding Board and through the Flintshire & Wrexham Children’s Delivery Group and the Flintshire & Wrexham Adult Delivery Group, subgroups of the Children’s and Adults Regional Boards • Specific recommendations from other Local Authority CPRs/APRs can come from other agencies for action within Social Services. <p>All CPR and APR Final Reports are published on the Welsh Government website and North Wales APR and CPR Reports are also published on the North Wales Safeguarding Board website.</p>
1.19	<p>Domestic Homicide Review</p> <p>The purpose of a DHR is to examine the circumstances that led to a reported death and review the contact that organisations had with the victim and offender also identifying lessons to be learnt.</p>

	The last Flintshire Domestic Homicide Review was published on the Flintshire County Council website in July 2018 however, another DHR is currently in progress as detailed above.
1.20	Social Services managers and staff are acutely aware that the key messages from National, Regional and Local APRs/CPRs are usually about lack of information sharing and poor communication between partner agencies. Flintshire Social Services are well informed about current themes and trends in outcomes of APRs/CPRs. Case file audits, supervision, legal advice meetings, multi-agency case management meetings, learning and training workshops, access to online research and case discussion are all tools to ensure outcomes from APRs/CPRs are at the forefront of the work that is undertaken in Flintshire to safeguard children, adults and families.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	There are no resource 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
	None

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>Wales National Safeguarding Procedures http://www.safeguarding.wales/ http://www.diogelu.cymru/</p> <p>Wales National Safeguarding Procedures Frequently Asked Questions Safeguarding Procedures Frequently Asked Questions</p> <p>Links to Regional Safeguarding Board 7 minute briefings https://www.northwalessafeguardingboard.wales/resources/7-minute-briefings/ Key messages from Regional Safeguarding Board September 2019 Key Messages NWSB</p>

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7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>(1) Looked After Child: Looked after children are children and young people who are in public care and looked after by the state. This includes those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care. The term is also used to describe ‘accommodated’ children and young people who are looked after on a voluntary basis at the request of, or by agreement with, their parents.</p> <p>(2) Section 47 Investigation Where information gathered during a Referral or an Assessment results in the social worker suspecting that the child is suffering or likely to suffer Significant Harm, a Strategy Discussion Meeting should be held to decide whether to initiate enquiries under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989. Strategy Discussions/Meetings should be held as soon as possible, bearing in mind the needs of the child. A Section 47 Enquiry will decide whether and what type of action is required to safeguard and promote the welfare of a child who is suspected of, or likely to be, suffering significant harm.</p> <p>(3) Section 126 Enquiry Section 126 (2) of the SSWBA sets out that ‘if a local authority has reasonable cause to suspect that a person within its area (whether or not ordinarily resident there) is an adult at risk, it must;</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a) Make (or cause to be made) whatever enquiries it thinks necessary to enable it to decide whether any action should be taken (whether under the Act or otherwise) and if so, what, and by whom; and b) Decide whether any such action should be taken.’ <p>(4) Liberty Protection Safeguards: The Liberty Protection Safeguards will replace DoLS and is due to be implemented in October 2020. LPS will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cover people of sixteen years and over (DoLS applied to people of eighteen and over) • Apply to people living in the community as well as to people in care homes and hospitals • Put more responsibility on the providers and commissioners of care to gather together the assessments required and to send them into the responsible body. • Expect the responsible body (which will in many cases be the local authority) either to authorise the deprivation of liberty or, if the person being assessed appears to be objecting to the placement, to arrange for a more in-depth assessment from an Approved Mental Capacity Professional. • Give people the right to appeal to the Court of Protection if they wish to appeal against the deprivation of their liberty.

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