

# Public Document Pack

**Gareth Owens LL.B Barrister/Bargyfreithiwr**  
Chief Officer (Governance)  
Prif Swyddog (Llywodraethu)



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To: Cllr Ian Roberts (Leader)

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, David Healey, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones and Billy Mullin

20 September 2022

Dear Sir/Madam

**NOTICE OF REMOTE MEETING**  
**CABINET**  
**MONDAY, 26TH SEPTEMBER, 2022 at 2.00 PM**

Yours faithfully

Steven Goodrum  
Democratic Services Manager

The meeting will be live streamed onto the Council's website. The live streaming will stop when any confidential items are considered. A recording of the meeting will also be available, shortly after the meeting at <https://flintshire.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

If you have any queries regarding this, please contact a member of the Democratic Services Team on 01352 702345.

## A G E N D A

### 1 **APOLOGIES**

**Purpose:** To receive any apologies.

### 2 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

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

### 3 **MINUTES** (Pages 7 - 28)

**Purpose:** To confirm as a correct record the minutes of the meetings held on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022 and 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

TO CONSIDER THE FOLLOWING REPORTS

### **STRATEGIC REPORTS**

### 4 **MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2023/24** (Pages 29 - 36)

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

**Purpose:** To update on the budget estimates and strategy for the setting of the 2023/24 budget and to refer to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

### 5 **COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM SCHEME FOR SECOND HOMES AND LONG-TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES** (Pages 37 - 160)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance) - Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

**Purpose:** To set the Council Tax Premium scheme for 2023-24 following a recent public consultation.

### 6 **NORTH WALES MARKET STABILITY REPORT** (Pages 161 - 404)

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

**Purpose:** To seek support and approval of the North Wales Market Stability Report.

## **OPERATIONAL REPORTS**

### **7 REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 (MONTH 4) (Pages 405 - 426)**

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

**Purpose:** This regular monthly report provides the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2022/23 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The position is based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 4, and projects forward to year-end.

### **8 CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2022/23 (MONTH 4) (Pages 427 - 454)**

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

**Purpose:** To present the Month 4 Capital Programme information for 2022/23.

### **9 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22 (Pages 455 - 474)**

Report of Corporate Finance Manager - Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

**Purpose:** To present the draft Annual Treasury Management Report for 2021/22 for recommendation to Council.

### **10 WELSH GOVERNMENT CONSULTATION - COUNCIL TAX REFORM (Pages 475 - 488)**

Report of Chief Officer (Governance) - Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

**Purpose:** To present information and responses for the Welsh Government consultation on reform of Council Tax.

### **11 COST OF LIVING CRISIS (Pages 489 - 496)**

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

**Purpose:** To provide an update on support schemes and seek approval for the development of warm hubs.

12 **RECYCLING BRING SITES** (Pages 497 - 504)

Report of Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) - Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy

**Purpose:** To seek approval to remove the recycling Bring Sites from across the County.

13 **DEVELOPMENT OF A LOCAL VISITOR LEVY** (Pages 505 - 508)

Report of Chief Officer (Governance) - Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

**Purpose:** To provide information on the Local Visitor Levy in advance of the Welsh Government consultation.

14 **EDUCATION & YOUTH SELF EVALUATION REPORT 2021 - 2022** (Pages 509 - 564)

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

**Purpose:** To provide details of the portfolio's review and evaluation of services during 2021-22.

15 **EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS** (Pages 565 - 566)

**Purpose:** To provide details of actions taken under delegated powers.

**FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME - COUNTY COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY - FOR INFORMATION**

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

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The report contains information relating to contracts to be let and the public interest in withholding those details outweigh the public interest in revealing them until the contracts are let.

**16 THEATR CLWYD PROJECT – UPDATE (Pages 613 - 628)**

Report of Corporate Manager – Capital Programme & Assets - Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

**Purpose:** That the Council approves its share of the projected increase in costs for the capital refurbishment of the Theatre provided Welsh Government also agrees to bear its share of the extra costs in line with the proportions previously agreed.

The following item is considered to be exempt by virtue of Paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

The report contains details of proposed contracts and the public interest in withholding the information outweighs the public interest in disclosure until the contracts have been awarded.

**17 COMMISSIONING OF RESIDENTIAL AND THERAPEUTIC SERVICES FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN FLINTSHIRE (Pages 629 - 688)**

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

**Purpose:** To seek approval of a direct award of a contract for the continued delivery of Residential and Therapeutic services.

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

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**CABINET**  
**28<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

**PRESENT: Councillor Dave Hughes (Deputy Leader in the Chair)**

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Dave Healey, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones and Billy Mullin.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Corporate Finance Manager, Community and Business Protection Manager, Damian Hughes, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

**APOLOGIES:**

Councillors: Ian Roberts and Chris Bithell

**9. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

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

**RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following items by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

**10. SOCIAL SERVICES – RESOURCING AND STAFFING**

Councillor Jones introduced the report which provided an overview of the proactive work that was being taken to enhance the approach to recruit, develop and retain experienced social workers across the portfolio. The work was being driven by a Task and Finish Group which was taking a whole portfolio approach responding to workforce pressures.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the role of expert practitioners in children and adult services to reflect the expertise, knowledge, autonomy and complexity of decisions that identified practitioners are required to take, is developed. This development would need to be considered within the context of pay and grading conventions:

- (b) That a team of agency workers to support our Children's front door whilst we develop, and implement our action plan to reset and rebuild our resilience, be agreed;
- (c) That the Council seek to recruit appropriately qualified and experienced social workers from abroad; and
- (d) That the Council seek to work collaboratively with neighbouring authorities to develop a unified approach to workforce recruitment and retention including the potential for a retention/recruitment payment and implementing initiatives to manage the agency market.

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

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

(The meeting commenced at 10.00 a.m. and ended at 10.28 a.m.)

.....  
**Chair**



**CABINET**  
**12<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2022**

Minutes of the meeting of the Cabinet of Flintshire County Council held virtually via Zoom on Tuesday 12<sup>th</sup> July 2022.

**PRESENT: Councillor Ian Roberts (Chair)**

Councillors: Sean Bibby, Chris Bithell, Dave Healey, Dave Hughes, Paul Johnson, Christine Jones and Billy Mullin.

**IN ATTENDANCE:**

Chief Executive, Chief Officer (Governance), Chief Officer (Social Services), Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy), Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation), Chief Officer (Housing and Communities), Chief Officer (Education and Youth), Strategic Finance Manager, Corporate Manager, People and Organisational Development, Senior Manager – Adults, Revenues and Procurement Manager and Team Leader – Democratic Services.

**12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**13. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meetings held on 31<sup>st</sup> May and 14<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were submitted and confirmed as a correct.

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings be approved as a correct record.

Councillor Roberts led tributes to Susie Lunt for her contribution to the Council over 40 years which had been exceptional. He wished her well for a long and happy retirement. Councillor Jones also expressed her thanks and gratitude to Susie for her help and support since she had become a Cabinet Member. The Chief Executive praised Susie's infectious and enthusiastic personality which was important in the role she had held at the Council. The Chief Officer (Social Services) also expressed his thanks to Susie for all of her hard work in her 40 years at the Council. Susie thanked everybody for their kind words and said it had been a pleasure and a privilege to work for Flintshire.

Councillor Roberts welcomed the Chief Officer for Housing and Communities.

**14. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2023/24**

Councillor Johnson introduced the item and explained that the Council reviewed and updated the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTF) annually, and in advance of planning the annual budget for the following financial year.

The MTFs forecasted the resources the Council would need to meet the ever changing cost base for the years ahead. The updated forecast showed that the Council was likely to have a minimum budget requirement of an additional £16.503m of revenue resources for 2023/24.

During the Autumn, the Overview and Scrutiny Committees would be invited to review the cost pressures, and the opportunities for cost control and efficiency, under their respective terms of reference. Member workshops would be held to explain the forecast position and the budget strategy in more detail and were in the process of being arranged for September.

The report also set out the strategy to achieve a legal, balanced budget, which was based on national funding from Welsh Government (WG) through Aggregate External Finance (AEF), identification of service and corporate efficiencies and annual uplifts in Council Tax.

As part of the 2022/23 Local Government Settlement, the Council was given indicative figures for 2023/24 and for 2024/25. Whilst that was welcome, the next two years of local government settlements would be at a considerably lower level than the previous two years which presented significant challenges and increased the amount that needed to be met from other sources.

Members were aware that whilst some cost savings and efficiencies could be identified as part of the annual budget process, there were no cost savings of any scale remaining following a decade of under-funding of local government and the Council had stood by the principle that the Council would not reduce the budget for any service to the point where the service was unsafe, or to do so would mean failing to meet statutory duties or failing to meet quality standards.

Therefore the need to consider areas of service reform to generate, where possible, a higher level of costs savings, would be an area where the Council would need to undertake a great deal of work over the summer to find solutions that would enable the Council to set a legal and balanced budget.

The budget timeline was outlined in the report.

The Strategic Finance Manager confirmed the arrangements for the Member Workshops which would enable all Members to go through the figures in more detail. In addition, on National Pay Awards, if the figure was above 3.5% that would place a further pressure on the budget for 2023/24. The Chief Executive explained that it was a challenging budget process and emphasised the importance of the Member Workshops. Following requests, he confirmed that an all Member briefing would be held on 22<sup>nd</sup> July, hosted by John Rae from the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGGA), on how the funding formula worked.

On pay awards for teachers, Councillor Roberts said each additional half a percentage would equate to approximately a further £200,000. The same would apply to the whole workforce.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the additional budget requirement be received and noted;
- (b) That the process and timeline for Member workshops be agreed;
- (c) That the cost pressures be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the Autumn; and
- (d) That the solutions available to meet the cost pressures and re-set the funding strategy for 2023/24 be noted.

Councillor Roberts advised there would be a change in the order of agenda items and agenda item number 23: Food Service Plan 2022-23 for Flintshire County Council would be considered next.

**15. FOOD SERVICE PLAN 2022-23 FOR FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

Councillor Bithell introduced the item which provided an overview of the Food Service in line with The Framework Agreement on Official Feed and Food Controls by Local Authorities April 2010. The plan set out the aims and objectives for the Service for the forthcoming year and how those were to be achieved.

The Service Plan had been produced by officers of the Food Safety and Standards Team and Animal Health Team within the Planning, Environment and Economy portfolio in line with the model format contained within the Framework Agreement. It outlined the proposals for service delivery for the period 1st April 2022 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023. It also contained a review of the service performance for 2021-22 with overall performance for 2021-22 detailed in Appendix 3 within the Service Plan.

Key achievements for 2021-22 and targets for 2022-23 were outlined in the report.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) explained that it was a statutory plan and the report had also been submitted to Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee where it had been supported.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Food Service Plan 2022-23 be approved.

**16. COUNCIL PLAN 2021/22 END OF YEAR PERFORMANCE REPORT**

Councillor Roberts introduced the item which presented the annual out-turn of progress against the Council Plan priorities identified for 2021/22. It had been a challenging year for staff and he thanked everybody for their efforts during the difficult times, including their flexibility.

The Chief Executive explained that the out-turn report for the 2021/22 Council Plan showed 73% of activities were making good progress with 74% likely to achieve

their planned outcomes. 73% of the performance indicators had met or exceeded their targets, 9% were being closely monitored and 18% were currently not meeting target.

The report was an exception based report and concentrated on those areas of performance which were not currently achieving their target.

Councillors Mullin and Healey echoed the thanks to all staff for their work undertaken.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the levels of progress and confidence in the achievement of priorities with the 2021/22 Council Plan be endorsed and supported;
- (b) That the overall performance against the 2021/22 Council Plan performance indicators be endorsed and supported; and
- (c) That Cabinet be assured by explanations given for those areas of underperformance.

**17. COUNCIL PLAN 2022/23**

Councillor Roberts introduced the item and explained that the Council Plan for 2017-23 was adopted by County Council to show the key priorities of the Council for the five-year term of the new administration. The Plan was subject to annual review.

The 2022/23 Draft Plan had been reviewed and refreshed for content following on from the response to the pandemic and the Recovery Strategy. The themes and priorities remained the same to 2021/22 however there were some developments with sub-priorities.

The 'super-structure' of the Plan continued to be aligned to a set of six Well-being Objectives. The six themes continued to take a long-term view of recovery, ambition and work over the next year.

The outline of the Council Plan for 2022/23 including the six themes, their priorities and actions was appended to the report.

The Chief Executive expressed his thanks to each of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee's for their help in shaping and developing the document. Councillor Healey welcomed the additions to the Plan, particularly climate change adaptation. He added that there needed to be awareness of other extreme conditions, such as high temperatures and heat waves which could also affect services. The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) echoed the concerns on such weather conditions, and explained that measures were being put in place to divert resources to assist essential services over the coming days for the predicted heat wave. Councillor Johnson welcomed the priority relating to poverty, in particular noting the challenges facing the authority in the coming year.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Council Plan 2022/23 Part 1 be approved and recommended to Council for adoption.

**18. RESULTS OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE DIGITAL STRATEGY**

Councillor Mullin introduced the item and explained that the revised strategy incorporated learning experiences, growth and ambition since Digital Flintshire was first published in 2016. It also featured, as a separate theme, the objective to help reduce the exclusion that could be suffered without access to the skills, devices or connectivity needed to take advantage of digital services.

The Chief Officer (Governance) said consultation had been open to all and was undertaken by engaging with members of the public, the workforce and specific user groups that had been identified and it was published on the website. 179 responses were received, all of which indicated support for the strategic aims and ambitions of the Council.

Feedback indicated four main areas of focus for respondents, which were largely being addressed as part of cross-cutting projects or themes within the Digital Strategy and would be prioritised as work progressed. The areas were:

- Planning and information;
- Inclusion and accessibility;
- Connectivity; and
- Website and service provision.

A website group had been re-established to ensure that the website was improved, for example updating online content and maintaining links. In addition, the website would continue to be streamlined and updated, have an improved search functionality and it would be accessible across all devices, noting that the majority of website hits were from smart phones.

Following the consultation, additional wording had been proposed to incorporate some elements of feedback and a draft response had been prepared for publication.

The Digital Strategy Project Plan contained a list of all projects within the Digital Strategy which were assigned to a theme and reported against. It also collated the costs of the projects for the purposes of financial planning. The revised strategy was appended to the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the consultation results be welcomed;
- (b) That the refreshed Digital Strategy for 2021-2026 be approved with the additional amendments suggested in the report; and

- (c) That the Chief Officer (Governance) be given authority to finalise the policy in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources.

## **19. SHARED PROSPERITY FUND**

Councillor Healey introduced the item and explained that the Shared Prosperity Fund would deliver £2.5bn of investment until March 2025 across the UK. The aim of the programme was “to build pride in place and increase life chances”. UK Government had allocated £126m to North Wales to deliver the programme between 2022/23 and 2024/25 with £10.8m allocated to Flintshire for the core programme.

UK Government had set a challenging 16 week timescale to develop and submit a high-level Investment Strategy for the programme. The deadline was 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 and delivery of the programme was estimated to need to start in September 2022.

The Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) explained that the report provided an outline of the programme, a summary of the work done to date to prepare for it and the next steps required to meet the UK Government’s requirements to allow the funding to be drawn down. The investment priorities set out by UK Government were:

- Community and Place
- Supporting Local Businesses
- People and skills

A regional budget allocation had been made available by the UK Government and was detailed in the report. In response to a comment, the Chief Executive said he would draw attention to UK Government on the allocation of funding, with a neighbouring authority receiving twice as much as Flintshire per head.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That approval be given to further develop the Shared Prosperity Fund programme within Flintshire and regionally, through officer input, in line with the principles set out in the report;
- (b) That delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy to develop and submit Flintshire’s priorities for inclusion in the regional Investment Strategy to enable the programme funding to be drawn down;
- (c) That the proposal to ask Gwynedd County Council to act as the lead body to submit the regional Investment Strategy to UK Government and to lead subsequent programme delivery be supported; and
- (d) That UK Government be written to on the allocation of funding, with a neighbouring authority receiving twice as much as Flintshire per head.

**20. WELSH GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION ON PROPOSALS FOR NEW BUS LEGISLATION**

Councillor Hughes introduced the item and explained that Welsh Government (WG) were seeking views on the proposal to introduce new legislation to fundamentally change the way bus services were planned and operated in Wales and had launched a 12-week public consultation on how the new bus system would be designed. That consultation closed on 24<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

Flintshire had sought an extension to the consultation to allow the new administration and ensure that newly elected Members were afforded the opportunity to learn about the proposals and provide a response. Accordingly, WG had agreed to a small window beyond the consultation deadline, which would ensure that Flintshire Members were given the opportunity to respond to the proposals.

The Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) added that the legislative proposals sought to essentially change the way that bus services were governed, co-ordinated and operated in Wales. WG was intent on achieving a bus system that boosted social equality and was capable of delivering the scale of modal shift required by the climate emergency, which was governed and designed to serve the public interest, with the widest possible geographic coverage, fully integrated connections between different services, the highest possible service frequencies, and simple unified easy-to-use ticketing and information under the banner: 'One Network, One Timetable, One Ticket: planning buses as a public service for Wales'.

The report outlined the proposals for the new bus legislation and highlighted some of the benefits and risks.

In response to a comment from Councillor Healey, the Chief Officer (Streetscene and Transportation) explained that the formal response was a lengthy document but it was summarised within the report. She added that a regional response was also being submitted, along with ones from the Mersey Dee Alliance and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA), all of which reflected the risks outlined in her report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the proposals to introduce new legislation for bus services in Wales be welcomed, whilst noting some of the risks and challenges highlighted in the report; and
- (b) That the proposed response put forward by Flintshire to the White Paper Consultation be supported.

**21. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2021/22 (OUTTURN)**

Councillor Johnson introduced the item which provided the revenue budget final outturn position for the financial year 2021/22 for the Council Fund and the Housing Revenue Account.

The Accounts for 2021/22 were closed and the Council was on schedule to submit the formal Statement of Accounts and supporting notes to Audit Wales within the framework set by Welsh Government (WG).

The Strategic Finance Manager added that the COVID-19 pandemic had continued to provide challenges for the Council, with the financial impact over the last 12 months being significant. The final position reflected additional grant funding received from WG which had significantly contributed to the level of operating surplus. That included additional Social Care funding for winter pressures of £2.167m together with additional grant funding for Children's Services from WG of £0.292m.

The final year end position was:

#### **Council Fund**

- An operating surplus of (£5.711m) which was a favourable movement of (£1.107m) from the surplus figure of (£4.604m) reported at Month 10
- The operating surplus of (£5.711m) which equated to 1.9% of the Approved Budget, which was above the target MTFS KPI for a variance against budget of 0.5%
- A projected contingency reserve balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 of £7.098m

#### **Housing Revenue Account**

- Net revenue expenditure £1.404m higher than budget
- A closing balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 of £3.616m

The Chief Executive explained that it was important to note that the majority of positive movements provided a one-off benefit only and would not have been material to the budget setting process for 2022/23.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the overall report and the Council Fund contingency sum as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 be noted;
- (b) That the final level of balances on the Housing Revenue Account be noted; and
- (c) That the carry forward requests be approved.

## **22. CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING 2021/22 (OUTTURN)**

Councillor Johnson introduced the item which summarised the final outturn position for 2021/22 together with changes made to the Capital Programme during the last quarter.

The Capital Programme had seen a net reduction in budget of £10.146m during the last quarter which comprised of:



- Net budget reduction in the programme of £7.008m (see Table 2 – Council Fund (CF) (£6.293m), Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (£0.715m))
- Net Carry Forward to 2022/23, approved at Month 9 of (£0.667m), switch of additional capital grants for Primary Free School Meals (£1.262m) and Integrated Care Fund (£0.839m) (all CF)
- Identified savings at outturn (£0.370m) (all CF)

Actual expenditure for the year was £67.907m.

The Strategic Finance Manager explained that the final outturn funding surplus from the 2021/22 – 2023/24 Capital Programme was £6.296m. The 2022/23 – 2024/25 Capital Programme was approved on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021, utilising £4.147m of the current year surplus towards the programme and leaving a projected funding deficit of £0.081m, following the final local government settlement. The final outturn for 2021/22 had the impact of a revised opening funding position surplus of £2.068m, prior to the realisation of additional capital receipts and/or other funding sources.

The Chief Executive added that the outturn expenditure, across the whole of the Capital Programme, was £67.907m. The breakdown of expenditure was analysed in table 3 of the report, along with the percentage spend against budget. It showed that 95.5% of the budget had been spent which was a good level.

**RESOLVED:**

- That the report be approved;
- That the carry forward adjustments be approved; and
- That the additional allocations be approved.

**23. PRUDENTIAL INDICATORS – ACTUALS 2021/22**

Councillor Johnson introduced the item and explained that under the Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities (the Prudential Code), as updated in 2017, Councils were required to set a range of Prudential Indicators for 2021/22 compared with the estimates set for:

- Prudential Indicators for Prudence
- Prudential Indicators for Affordability

The Strategic Finance Manager explained that the framework established by the Prudential Code was intended to support local strategic planning, local asset management planning and robust option appraisal. The objectives of the Code were to ensure, within a clear framework, that the capital investment plans of local authorities were affordable, prudent and sustainable, and that treasury management decisions were taken in accordance with good professional practice.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be approved.

**24. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23 (INTERIM)**

Councillor Johnson introduced the item which provided the first overview of the budget monitoring position for the 2022/23 financial year. Significant variances which could impact the financial position in 2022/23 were reported by exception.

Based on the high level assumptions in the report, the potential variations to budget identified by Portfolios equated to a minimum net additional expenditure requirement of around £0.300m.

The Council's ability to mitigate financial risks in the recovery phase from the pandemic in the first half of the year, following the loss of the hardship and income loss Grant from Welsh Government (WG), would centre on review and challenge of delayed and deferred spend, maximising income streams following a return to normal operations.

An amount of £2.066m remained available from the £3m emergency ring-fenced fund. The 2022/23 budget approved in February included a top up of £3.250m to the reserve to provide a prudent safeguard against any ongoing impacts of the pandemic.

The Strategic Finance Manager explained that a full detailed monitoring report would be provided in September which would update on the overall financial position.

Councillor Roberts thanked Flintshire residents for payments of Council Tax and said if any residents found themselves in any financial difficulty that they should make contact with the Council who could either help, or signpost them to the appropriate place.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report and the estimated financial impact on the 2022/23 budget be noted.

**25. ANNUAL REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES 2022**

Councillor Johnson introduced the item and explained that the 2022 review of fees and charges had been completed in line with the Council's Income Generation Policy, which set out the rationale and process for an annual review of fees and charges. The outcome of the review was set out in the appendix to the report and would apply from 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022.

The Strategic Finance Manager added that the Income Generation Policy had been updated to provide greater clarity around roles and responsibilities following recommendations from Internal Audit in 2022. A revised version three of the policy was also appended to the report and recommended for approval.

The report also outlined the ongoing requirements of the annual review of fees and charges for 2023, particularly for those fees and charges who were still to demonstrate that they achieved full cost recovery.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the schedule of fees and charges outlined in appendix A for implementation on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2022 be approved;
- (b) That the revised Income Generation Policy version three be approved; and
- (c) That a customer friendly version of the schedule of fees and charges be produced and published.

**26. COMMUNAL HEATING CHARGES 2021/22**

Councillor Bibby introduced the item and explained that the Portfolio operated eight communal heating schemes within Flintshire. The Council negotiated fuel costs in advance and tenants benefitted from the Council's Industrial and Commercial Contract rate.

New communal heating charges were based on the previous year's energy use ensuring an accurate assessment of costs and impacts on the heating reserve account.

The proposed recharges for 2022/23 were set out in the report and were pending Cabinet approval. In the majority of cases, the recharge to tenants had reduced for 2022/23, which as in other years, would allow Flintshire to recover the projected costs of the heating charges whilst still passing on the benefit of reduced energy costs to tenants.

The Chief Executive added that tenants were currently benefitting from preferential unit rates due to the Council having secured a fixed rate for fuel until March 2023. It was very likely that Communal Heating Charges would increase from 2023/24 when the Council had to renegotiate new energy tariffs.

The report had been submitted to Community, Housing and Assets Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> July. Members supported the recommendations but noted concerns on the impacts of any future energy price increase, particularly when the current fixed contract term came to an end.

**RESOLVED:**

That the heating charges at Council properties with communal heating schemes be approved to take effect from 5<sup>th</sup> September 2022.

Councillor Roberts advised there was a further change in the order of the agenda with agenda item number 18: Social Services Annual Report being considered next.

## **27. SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT**

Councillor Jones introduced the item and explained that the Statutory Director of Social Services was required to produce an annual report summarising their view of the local authority's social care functions and priorities for improvement as legislated in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 and the Regulations and Inspections Act (Wales) 2015.

The purpose of the Social Services Annual Report was to set out the improvement journey and evaluate Social Services' performance in providing services to people that promoted their wellbeing and supported them to achieve their personal outcomes.

The Chief Officer (Social Services) added that the report was intended to provide the public, the regulator and wider stakeholders with an honest picture of services in Flintshire and to demonstrate a clear understanding of the strengths and challenges faced. He commented on the successes of Project Search, Ty Nyth, Marleyfield House and Glan Y Morfa.

### **RESOLVED:**

That the Social Services Annual Report be noted, including the key developments of the past year and priorities for next year.

## **28. ADOPTION OF DISCRETIONARY COST OF LIVING SUPPORT SCHEME AND POLICY FRAMEWORK**

Councillor Mullin introduced the item and explained that Welsh Government (WG) had recently announced a 'Cost of Living Support Scheme' (COLSS) which provided grants to households to help with the rising cost of energy bills. The package of measures included £6.99m within the main scheme to provide £150 grants to circa. 46,670 qualifying households in Council Tax Bands A to D along with those households in Council Tax Bands A to I that received Council Tax Reduction.

In addition to the £6.99m, £1.15m was available to the Council to provide discretionary assistance and to support other households it considered to also be in most need of financial support or who might also be excluded from help within the main scheme. Local authorities had complete autonomy to target the funds to best support residents considered to be in need of assistance with their living costs.

The Revenues and Procurement Manager said the report set out the proposed discretionary scheme criteria to provide some support to households who were currently not eligible for a grant within the main scheme as well as providing targeted 'top-up' grants of £125 to households whose children were in receipt of Free School Meals.

A small part of the Discretionary Funding was also earmarked to supporting wider anti-poverty measures and to help the Council meet one of its key well-being objectives (*Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic*

needs) by supporting ongoing development of the “Well Fed” food hub to allow all resident to access fresh meals at affordable prices.

**RESOLVED:**

That the Discretionary Policy Framework and funding distribution be approved.

**29. NORTH WALES REGIONAL ECONOMIC FRAMEWORK**

Councillor Healey introduced the item which presented the final draft Regional Economic Framework (REF) for North Wales and sought Cabinet’s endorsement of its content.

The REF for North Wales promoted collaborative economic development across the region through an agreed and shared set of priorities for delivery amongst regional partners.

The Memorandum of Understanding (Memorandum of Understanding Working Together to deliver a stronger North Wales Economy) set out how the Welsh Government (WG), the North Wales Economic Ambition Board (NWEAB) and other partners would work in partnership to develop and deliver against a single common North Wales Regional Economic Framework.

In addition to the co-production that took place through the various NWEAB groups, two cross-sector stakeholder events took place. The first in May 2022 provided background and discussion on strengths and opportunities for the region. The second was a series of eight workshops which sought views on priorities for the region.

**RESOLVED:**

That the ‘Regional Economic Framework for North Wales’ be recommended for endorsement by Council.

**30. WELSH GOVERNMENT (WG) PROGRAMMES – SUMMER OF FUN, WINTER OF WELLBEING**

Councillor Roberts introduced the item and explained that during the spring of 2021 the Children’s Commissioner for Wales initiated a discussion with Welsh Government (WG) and local authorities about the need to make provision for children and young people to have access to fun activities to try and mitigate the impacts of the pandemic on their emotional, social and physical wellbeing.

The Chief Officer (Education and Youth) added that WG made funding available to local authorities and other national organisations to deliver a ‘Summer of Fun’. This was successfully delivered in Flintshire alongside play schemes and reported to Education Overview & Scrutiny Committee in December 2021. The success of the scheme, which was independently evaluated, resulted in WG providing more funding for a ‘Winter of Wellbeing programme over the winter of

2021-2022 and had recently confirmed additional funding for another 'Summer of Fun' this year.

The report provided an overview of the Council's delivery of those programmes and the WG evaluation report. Locations were being collated at the request of Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would be shared with all Members when complete.

Councillors Johnson and Bithell welcomed the wide range of activities being made available to children and young people over the summer period.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet be reassured that children and young people in Flintshire have benefitted from Welsh Government funding through the Winter of Wellbeing Programme.

**31. THE SCHOOL STANDARDS AND ORGANISATION (WALES) ACT 2013, SCHOOL ORGANISATION CODE FOR AN ENLARGEMENT OF THE PREMISES OF A SCHOOL FOR DRURY C.P. SCHOOL AND PENYFFORDD C.P. SCHOOL**

Councillor Roberts introduced the item which sought approval to issue a statutory notice through 'The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, School Organisation Code' for an enlargement of the premises at two schools - Drury C.P. School and Penyffordd C.P. School.

The Code set out Regulated Alterations to Community, Foundation and Voluntary schools requirements in relation to the enlargement of school premises. The proposed investment projects at Drury C.P. and Penyffordd C.P. met the triggers that required consultation on increased capacity for each school through the Welsh Government's legal framework.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approve to proceed to issue statutory notice through 'The School Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013, School Organisation Code' for an enlargement of the premises at Drury C.P. School and Penyffordd C.P. School.

**32. PLAY SUFFICIENCY ASSESSMENT 2022**

Councillor Roberts introduced the item and said Flintshire County Council and its partners were committed to ensuring that all children and young people resident in the county had access to time, space and permission to play as part of their everyday lives which benefitted families and their communities. Children living in Flintshire had a 'right to play' as enshrined within Article 31 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC).

The Council recognised that play was central to children and young people's enjoyment of life and was essential to their physical and emotional wellbeing and their healthy development. It was recognised that some aspects of our

modern society could limit children's time, space and permission to play. The Council was committed to the continuation of creating effective partnerships to enable play sufficiency.

The aim was to help to create rich play environments where children could freely play and encourage our communities to be as play-friendly as possible to support children's play. By increasing opportunities for play within local communities, children's and young people's experience of growing-up in Flintshire would be enhanced.

The report provided an overview of the Play Sufficiency Assessment process, the development of a Play Sufficiency Action Plan and the draft Assessment for 22-23 prior to submission of the completed assessment to Welsh Government by 30th June 2022.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the content of the draft Play Sufficiency Assessment (PSA) 2022 and the draft Action Plan 2022/23 be noted prior to submission to Welsh Government; and
- (b) The continued development of a strategic Flintshire Play Sufficiency Implementation Group be supported, to provide a multi-agency forum to monitor the PSA Action Plan 2022/23.

**33. ARMED FORCES ACT 2021**

Councillor Mullin introduced the item and explained that Flintshire County Council signed the Armed Forces Covenant (AFC) in July 2013. The Covenant was a promise from the nation to those who currently served, or had served, in the armed forces to ensure they were treated fairly, along with their families.

The Armed Forces Act 2021 enshrined the AFC into law, placing a legal obligation of public bodies to prevent services personnel, reservists, veterans and their families being disadvantaged when accessing public services.

The Chief Executive explained that Section 8 of the Armed Forces Act 2021 was expected to come into force in Autumn 2022 and introduced a duty in Housing and Education to have "due regard" to the principles of the AFC.

**RESOLVED:**

That the forthcoming legislation and implications for Housing and Education be noted.

**34. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES FOR LEARNING – MUTUAL INVESTMENT MODEL (MIM) – FINANCIAL CLOSE FOR THE 3-16 CAMPUS PROJECT, MYNYDD ISA**

Councillor Roberts introduced the item which followed previous updates to Cabinet on Welsh Government's (WG) Sustainable Communities for Learning (formerly 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools Investment Programme, Band B) Mutual Investment Model (MIM) for the proposed 3-16 Campus project at Mynydd Isa.

The report provided the background to MIM and progress the project had made through the WG business case process and the design development process to cost certainty.

Details of the capital and revenue liabilities were outlined in the report and approval was sought for the annual Service payment, and to enter into a Project Agreement for the construction phase, finance and maintenance of the buildings and associated infrastructure for the years 3-6 campus project. It was based on a maximum financial cap set by WG to overcome the challenges the construction sector/supply chain were currently experiencing, the complexities of MIM and in order to keep the project timeline on track.

Given the nature of the Public Private Partnership (PPP) the report was written in part to ensure funders' requirements were met, as a consequence the report contained technical and legal wording which had been simplified as much as possible.

Subject to Cabinet approval, the anticipated construction start was August 2022, with building occupation planned for the start of the new academic year, September 2024, thereafter external works would follow, starting with the demolition of the existing Argoed High School. Any delay to the anticipated start could result in a significant project delay and associated cost increases. Cabinet approval of the recommendations would allow completion of the funding package for the project and enable the Agreements to be entered into and works to commence in line with the programme.

The Chief Executive explained that over the past 24/30 months, various global issues had been impacting prices in the construction market which were as a result of Brexit, the COVID-19 pandemic and the war in Ukraine. Those had conflated with the impact being:

- An increase in demand for construction (post COVID)
- Supply chain disruption and an ongoing energy crisis. The consequences of that were the lack of construction materials
- High inflation and price volatility
- High raw material prices
- High energy prices and increased uncertainty

To allow the project to progress, the WG MIM team, with their commissioned experts, had set a funding cap, which set the estimated maximum annual service charge. The estimate maximum cap was a direct result of the current market, inflation and supply chain issues faced by the construction industry presently and



was a reflection of where the project currently sat in the granular market testing/cost certainty process. However, it was anticipated that the project figure would be confirmed as lower as the project moved towards financial close in July/August 2022.

The Full Business Case to WG also sought agreement from WG to cap the Council's annual service charge contribution to a maximum value of £1,000,000 per annum. Should the project figure be lower than the maximum capped figure, as anticipated, that would reduce the annual service charge figure accordingly to the benefit of both WG and the Council.

The legal considerations and resource implications were outlined in full in the report.

**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the execution, delivery and performance of the MIM Project Agreement with Project Co (to be established by the Welsh Education Partnership Co Limited) be approved, together with the Funders' Direct Agreement, the Collateral Agreements, the Independent Tester Contract and the Insurance Proceeds Account Agreement, Clerk of Works Appointment, Independent M&E Commissioning Manager Agreement (together the "**Agreements**") (and any documents to be delivered by the Agreements pursuant thereto) to facilitate the delivery of the Project;
- (b) That the Project Agreement at Appendix 1a be approved, together with Appendix 1b Schedule 14 Payment Mechanism which shall be incorporated into the Project Agreement, and which is summarised in Appendix 2 and 3 of this report; so as to give effect to recommendation (c), subject to recommendation (f)
- (c) That the Funders' Direct Agreement be approved, the Collateral Agreements, the Independent Tester Contract, and the Insurance Proceeds Account Agreement (also as Schedules of the Project Agreement), and other legal documentation at Appendix 4a – 4f of this report so as to give effect to recommendation (a), subject to recommendation (d)
- (d) That it be noted that the Monitoring Officer shall complete the Agreements for execution and is approved to:
  - i. Complete all information gaps including but not limited to confirmation of financial obligations (including the Annual Service Charge and Monthly Service Payment) and commitments of the Council and programme dates; and
  - ii. Make any further genuine project specific drafting changes to the Agreements, as may be required

and that by the act of execution any final changes are approved:

- (e) That delegated authority be given to the Monitoring Officer to approve any further deeds and documents for execution by the Council which are ancillary to the Agreements approved here; and

- (f) That it be noted that the Chief Executive, the S151 Officer, or the Monitoring Officer will complete and sign the certificates under the Local Government (Contracts) Act 1997 and agree to indemnify this officer in the act of doing so.

### **35. EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS**

An information item on the actions taken under delegated powers was submitted. The actions were as set out below:-

#### **Housing and Communities**

- **Council Rent – Write Off of Housing Tenancy Arrears**  
Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) stipulates that individual bad and irrecoverable debts in excess of £5,000 are considered for write off in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member. The decision to write off is in respect of two separate council house cases where tenants are subject to Debt Relief orders (DRO's). In the first case, rent arrears of £9,232.42 are included in the DRO. In the second case, rent arrears of £5,552.95 are included in the DRO. The arrears are no longer recoverable in either case.
- **Community Asset Transfer, Former Civic Amenity Site, Dock Road, Connah's Quay, Flintshire**  
The report relates to the Community Asset Transfer of Former Civic Amenity Site, Dock Road, Connah's Quay, Flintshire.

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

#### **RESOLVED:**

That the press and public be excluded for the remainder of the meeting for the following item by virtue of exempt information under paragraph(s) 14 of Part 4 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 (as amended).

### **36. CAPITAL WORKS – VARIATION TO CONTRACT, WELSH HOUSING QUALITY STANDARDS (WHQS) WHOLE HOUSE EXTERNAL (WHE) PROGRAMME**

The Chief Executive introduced the item and explained that the report sought approval to increase the P2P order value for the contract to allow payment for additional properties, works and costs for the 2021/22 Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS) Whole House External (WHE) programme.

The contract was still ongoing and the increase would allow for the works to continue to proceed.

**RESOLVED:**

That Cabinet approve the contract sum increase by £1,000,000 as set out within the report.

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

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

(The meeting commenced at 10.30 a.m. and ended at 1.27 p.m.)

.....  
**Chair**

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 26 September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2023/24
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value & Procurement
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Finance Manager and Chief Executive
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an update to the additional budget requirement for the 2023/24 financial year in advance of the specific Member Briefings and Scrutiny meetings to be held in the Autumn.

An additional budget requirement of £16.503m for 2023/24 was reported to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. At that stage it was acknowledged that there was further work to be undertaken over the summer to reflect ever changing service demands and to assess the impacts of emerging pay awards and inflationary impacts such as utilities.

The current national employers pay offers for Teachers and NJC (Green Book) employees are now known and the significant financial impact has been included in the revised forecast. Latest intelligence on potential future increases on utility prices has also been built into the forecast - this is also significant.

The impact of pay and utilities, together with other changes to existing cost pressures and some new emerging pressures across Portfolios, have increased the minimum budget requirement to £24.348m as detailed in table 1 of the report.

The report also sets out the budget solutions and risks that will need to be urgently considered to enable the Council to set a legal and balanced budget in February.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To receive and note the revised additional budget requirement for the 2023/24 financial year.
2	To note the budget solutions and risks that will need to be urgently considered to enable the Council to set a legal and balanced budget in February.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY AND BUDGET 2023/24</b>
1.01	This report provides an update to the additional budget requirement for the 2023/24 financial year in advance of the specific Member Briefings and Scrutiny meetings to be held in the Autumn.
1.02	An additional budget requirement of £16.503m for 2023/24 was reported to Cabinet and Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in July. At that stage it was acknowledged that there was further work to be undertaken over the summer to reflect ever changing service demands and to assess the impacts of emerging pay awards and inflationary impacts such as utilities.
	<b>THE REVISED ADDITIONAL BUDGET REQUIREMENT</b>
1.03	<p><u>Pay Awards – Update</u></p> <p>National negotiations have commenced between Employers and Trade Unions for the current year 2022/23. The Council has provided for an uplift of 3.5% for Teaching and Non-Teaching employees within this year's budget.</p> <p>The current pay offer for teachers is 5% for 2022/23 and 3.5% for 2023/24 and for NJC employees an offer of an £1,925 increase on all spinal column points has been made for 2022/23. This equates to an increase of 2.54% on the highest scale point to 10.5% on the lowest level.</p> <p>The in year impact of this increased pay offer will need to be met from reserves in 2022/23 and the budget requirement for 2023/24 will also increase due to the need to ensure the amounts are built into the base budget on a recurring basis.</p> <p>The additional impact for 2023/24 of the 2022 pay offer as it stands at the moment is £4.594m for NJC staff (including schools) and the additional cost for Teachers over and above the estimate already included is £1.144m.</p>

	<p>The teachers' pay offer included an increase of 3.5% for 2023/24. The 2023/24 pay award assumptions for Teachers and NJC have therefore been increased from 2.5% to 3.5% to bring them to this level which is considered reasonable at this time.</p>																														
1.04	<p><u>Utilities Inflation – Update</u></p> <p>Market volatility is continuing and forecasting likely increases in this market is extremely challenging. This has had a significant impact on UK energy prices causing steep cost rises across the wholesale utility markets.</p> <p>The revised forecast has been calculated with information from our energy suppliers on a range of scenarios taking account of new contracts to be purchased for both electricity and gas. As current markets are likely to remain volatile it is difficult to include any longer term forecasts beyond 2023/24.</p> <p>The revised forecast includes an increase of 75% for electricity and an increase of 291% on gas. The impact of these increases is affected by the current amount of energy already purchased by our suppliers.</p> <p>These inflationary impacts have increased the additional budget requirement by £1.050m for 2023/24.</p>																														
1.05	<p>The impact of pay and utilities, together with other changes to existing cost pressures and some new emerging pressures across Portfolios, have increased the additional budget requirement to £24.348m as detailed in table 1 below:</p>																														
1.06	<p><b><u>Table 1: Changes to the Additional Budget Requirement 2023/24</u></b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: right;">£m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td><b>July Cabinet Report</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>16.503</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Increases to Pressures:</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Pay</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Impact of NJC Pay offer 2022</td> <td style="text-align: right;">4.594</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Impact of Teachers Pay offer 2022</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.144</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised Projections for 2023 NJC</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.366</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Revised Projections for 2023 Teachers</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.482</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total Changes to Pay</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>7.586</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Utility Cost Inflationary Increase</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.050</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Fuel Cost Increase</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.362</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Pressure for Basware reprofiled from 25/26</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.041</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Other Changes to Pressures</b></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>1.453</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Reductions to Pressures</b></td> <td></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Borrowing costs reprofiling</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(0.448)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		£m	<b>July Cabinet Report</b>	<b>16.503</b>	<b>Increases to Pressures:</b>		<b>Pay</b>		Impact of NJC Pay offer 2022	4.594	Impact of Teachers Pay offer 2022	1.144	Revised Projections for 2023 NJC	1.366	Revised Projections for 2023 Teachers	0.482	<b>Total Changes to Pay</b>	<b>7.586</b>	Utility Cost Inflationary Increase	1.050	Fuel Cost Increase	0.362	Pressure for Basware reprofiled from 25/26	0.041	<b>Other Changes to Pressures</b>	<b>1.453</b>	<b>Reductions to Pressures</b>		Borrowing costs reprofiling	(0.448)
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1.07	<p><b><u>ONGOING RISKS</u></b></p> <p>Despite the work undertaken over the summer there remains a number of risks that may change the additional budget requirement further as detailed below.</p>																
1.08	<p><u>Out of County Placements</u></p> <p>The position on Out of County Placements remains a risk with increasing numbers of placements in the current financial year which will need to be kept under review.</p>																
1.09	<p><u>Social Care Commissioning</u></p> <p>The Social Care Sector continues to experience significant demand and cost pressures and negotiations with care providers are ongoing.</p>																
1.10	<p><u>Pay Awards</u></p> <p>The pay awards for both Teachers and NJC are still not agreed and therefore there is a risk that they could be increased further.</p>																
1.11	<p><u>Inflation</u></p> <p>The forecast includes updated projections on energy and fuel inflation which are based on the latest intelligence from our suppliers at this time. The forecasts are particularly volatile and subject to change.</p>																
1.12	<p><u>External Partners</u></p> <p>Our external partners are also subject to the same cost pressures on pay and inflation which will present them with similar challenges to the Council. There is a risk and likelihood that additional contributions will be sought from the Council.</p>																
	<p><b>Budget Solutions</b></p>																
1.13	<p>The options available to the Council to meet this significant additional budget requirement are summarised in the table below, all will need to be progressed with urgency:</p>																



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1.14	<p><u>Government Funding - Aggregate External Finance (AEF)</u></p> <p>The 2022/23 local government settlement provided, for the first time in a number of years, indicative figures for future settlements of 3.5% for 2023/24 and 2.4% for 2024/25.</p> <p>These indicative allocations, though welcome at the time, are at a much lower level than those received over the last two years and were also set in a vastly different economic climate. By way of context an uplift on the Council's AEF of 3.5% equates to around £8m.</p> <p>Without a supplementary increase to our allocation the Council will have a serious and significant challenge to be able to meet its statutory responsibility of setting a legal and balanced budget for 2023/24 and future years.</p>																		
1.15	<p><u>Table 4 – Budget Timeline</u></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Event</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>September/October</td> <td>Member Briefings</td> </tr> <tr> <td>October/November</td> <td>Overview and Scrutiny Committees</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 December 2022</td> <td>Cabinet</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 December 2022</td> <td>Welsh Government Draft Budget</td> </tr> <tr> <td>21 December 2022</td> <td>Provisional Local Government Settlement</td> </tr> <tr> <td>17 January 2023</td> <td>Cabinet – Budget Review</td> </tr> <tr> <td>14 February 2023</td> <td>Cabinet and Council – Final Budget Setting</td> </tr> <tr> <td>1 March 2023</td> <td>Welsh Government Final Budget/Settlement</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Event	September/October	Member Briefings	October/November	Overview and Scrutiny Committees	20 December 2022	Cabinet	20 December 2022	Welsh Government Draft Budget	21 December 2022	Provisional Local Government Settlement	17 January 2023	Cabinet – Budget Review	14 February 2023	Cabinet and Council – Final Budget Setting	1 March 2023	Welsh Government Final Budget/Settlement
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17 January 2023	Cabinet – Budget Review																		
14 February 2023	Cabinet and Council – Final Budget Setting																		
1 March 2023	Welsh Government Final Budget/Settlement																		

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	<p><b>Revenue:</b> the revenue implications for the 2023/24 budget are set out in the report.</p> <p><b>Capital:</b> the borrowing needs for the capital programme are built into the revenue estimates for 2023/24.</p>

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>	
3.01	<b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b>	
	Long-term	Negative – the absence of longer-term funding settlements from Welsh Government means that sustainable support for service delivery is challenging for the longer term. Sustainable funding from Welsh Government that provides additional funding for Indexation, Service demands and new legislation will provide a positive and sustainable position for the Council in the longer term.
	Prevention	As above
	Integration	Neutral Impact
	Collaboration	Services continue to explore opportunities for collaboration with other services and external partners to support positive impacts.
	Involvement	Communication with Members, residents and other stakeholders throughout the budget process.
	<b>Well-Being Goals Impact</b>	
	Prosperous Wales	Longer term funding settlements from Welsh Government that provide additional funding for indexation, service demands and new legislation will aid sustainability and support a strong economy that encourage business investment in the region. The opposite will be true if settlements are inadequate.
	Resilient Wales	Continuation of services to support communities and social cohesion will have a positive impact. The opposite will be true if settlements are inadequate.
	Healthier Wales	An appropriate level of funding will ensure that communities are supported and will have a positive impact. The opposite will be true if settlements are inadequate.
	More equal Wales	A positive impact with greater parity of funding from Welsh Government for all Welsh Local Authorities. The opposite will be true if settlements are inadequate.

	Cohesive Wales	Appropriate level of funding will support services working alongside partners. The opposite will be true if settlements are inadequate.
	Vibrant Wales	As Healthier and Cohesive Wales above
	Globally responsible Wales	Neutral impact.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Consultation has taken place with Portfolio Management Teams and the Chief Officer Team, the Finance Team, Cabinet Members, Group Leaders and Scrutiny Committees. Further consultation will be undertaken through Member briefings and specific Scrutiny meetings during the Autumn.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	None to this report

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Cabinet Report 12 July 2022

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Gary Ferguson Corporate Finance Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702271 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:gary.ferguson@flintshire.gov.uk">gary.ferguson@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS):</b> a written strategy which gives a forecast of the financial resources which will be available to a Council for a given period, and sets out plans for how best to deploy those resources to meet its priorities, duties and obligations.  <b>Revenue:</b> a term used to describe the day to day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges

for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.

**Capital:** Expenditure on the acquisition of **non-current assets** or expenditure which extends the useful life of an existing asset.

**Budget:** a statement expressing the Council's policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.

**Revenue Support Grant:** the annual amount of money the Council receives from Welsh Government to fund what it does alongside the Council Tax and other income the Council raises locally. Councils can decide how to use this grant across services although their freedom to allocate according to local choice can be limited by guidelines set by Government.

**Specific Grants:** An award of funding from a grant provider (e.g. Welsh Government) which must be used for a pre-defined purpose.

**Welsh Local Government Association:** the representative body for unitary councils, fire and rescue authorities and national parks authorities in Wales.

**Financial Year:** the period of 12 months commencing on 1 April.

**Local Government Funding Formula:** The system through which the annual funding needs of each council is assessed at a national level and under which each council's Aggregate External Finance (AEF) is set. The revenue support grant is distributed according to that formula.

**Aggregate External Finance (AEF):** The support for local revenue spending from the Welsh Government and is made up of formula grant including the revenue support grant and the distributable part of non-domestic rates.

**Provisional Local Government Settlement:** The Provisional Settlement is the draft budget for local government published by the Welsh Government for consultation. The Final Local Government Settlement is set following the consultation.

**Funding Floor:** a guaranteed level of funding for councils who come under the all-Wales average change in the annual Settlement. A floor has been a feature of the Settlement for many years.



## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources Corporate Management and Assets
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Governance)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Local authorities in Wales have had discretionary powers since 2017 to charge a Council Tax premium of up to 100% above the standard rate of Council Tax on certain classes of second homes and long-term empty properties.

From April 2023, local authorities in Wales will also have the autonomy to charge, or vary, a Council Tax premium rate of up to 300% above the standard charge which could result in individuals paying an overall charge of 400%.

The Council introduced a premium scheme from 2017 and established a premium rate of 50% on both second homes and long-term empty properties. This rate has applied each year since 2017.

Following a public consultation that was undertaken in November 2021, this report now sets out the key considerations and options for Cabinet to consider retaining or varying the premium rates from 2023/24, and for those recommendations to be approved, at a future meeting, by full Council.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	For Cabinet to consider the current rate of premium of 50% on second homes and long-term empty properties and whether the rate should remain the same, or be varied, from April 2023, prior to a final determination being made by full Council.
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2	For Cabinet to consider if the rate of premium charged on a second home should be different to that charged on a long-term empty property.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM SCHEME</b>
1.01	Following the introduction of the Housing (Wales) Act 2014, Cabinet and Full Council in March 2016 agreed to introduce a Council Tax premium from April 2017 and to charge a premium rate of 50% for dwellings designated as being periodically occupied (usually referred to as second homes) or long-term empty properties.
1.02	Since then, Council has resolved each year to continue with the scheme but with no change to the premium levels of 50%. Following a recent public consultation, this report sets out the key considerations and options if Cabinet consider it appropriate to vary the levels of the premium from 2023/24, noting that final decisions must be taken at a meeting of the full Council.
1.03	Welsh Government recently introduced further regulations so that from April 2023, local authorities in Wales will now have the autonomy to charge, or vary, a Council Tax premium rate of up to 300% above the standard charge which could result in owners of long-term empty properties and second homes being responsible for an overall charge of 400%.
1.04	Section 12 of the Local Government Finance Act says that before decisions are taken to vary or increase the rate of the Council Tax premium, Councils must also have regard to the guidance issued by Welsh Government. The key elements of the guidance is set out in section 1.12 of this report.  Consultation with the public also forms a key part of the decision-making process around future options for the Council Tax premium scheme.
1.05	At the request of Cabinet, an extensive public consultation was undertaken from 8 <sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 6 <sup>th</sup> December 2021 to canvass the views of the public on the current Council Tax premium scheme, its effectiveness and impact on the local community and the use of the scheme to incentivise owners to bring properties into full use to support the supply of local housing for local residents. The consultation also explored opinions on alterations to the premium rates and the perceived benefits and risks to adopting any alternative or amended scheme.
1.06	504 consultation responses were received from a broad range of people with many different interests and differing views. These included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Those resident in Flintshire who pay Council Tax who are not second home or Long-term empty property owners.</li> <li>• Those residents in Flintshire who are second home or long-term empty property owners.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second home and long-term empty homeowners in Flintshire who also are resident in the county;</li> <li>• Residents of Flintshire who do not pay Council Tax and also do not own a long-term empty property or second home.</li> </ul>
1.07	<p>A comprehensive breakdown of the full results of the consultation is set out in Appendix 1 and the comments made in free text responses is detailed in Appendix 2 to this report.</p> <p>In summary, the consultation revealed that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Nearly two thirds of those responding felt long-term empty properties have a negative impact on their local community compared to only 3.5% feeling they had a positive effect.</li> <li>• Almost half of those responding felt that second homes had a negative impact on their local community.</li> <li>• Over 55.3% of those responding consider that the impact of long-term empty and second homes is to decrease availability of affordable housing.</li> <li>• 50.4% felt the premium rate for second homes should be increased above the current 50% rate. Only 33.7% considered it should be reduced or not charged.</li> <li>• 50.9% felt the premium rate for long-term empty properties should be raised above the current level.</li> <li>• 58.4% of respondents felt introducing the premium rate after 12 months was the correct timescale.</li> <li>• 40.1% of respondents considered that if the premium rate was reduced it would lead to an increase in second homes and long-term empty properties in Flintshire;</li> <li>• If the premium rate were to increase, of those who are liable to pay the premium rate many said they would sell the property, followed by no action and pay the premium, refurbish and rent it out, and move into the property themselves;</li> <li>• 42.3% of respondents felt an increase in premium above 50% would have a positive impact on their local community</li> </ul>
1.08	<p>The results of the consultation demonstrate there is the opportunity for change with some support for a potential increase in the current level of premium on either, or both, long term empty properties and second homes.</p> <p>However, the consultation results also clearly demonstrate that there are occasions when tax payers become liable for the premium where it may be difficult for them to sell, renovate a property or rent it out due to perhaps inheriting a property or it forming part of a complex estate.</p> <p>Similarly purchasers who buy a property that has been empty for over 12 months may also become liable for the premium making it more difficult financially to carry out the works required.</p>

1.09	<p>Using the results of the consultation, Cabinet is now asked to consider:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Whether the premium rate for 2023-24 and beyond should be reduced, remain the same or be increased and to what percentage levels?</li> <li>• Whether the premium rate should remain the same for both long term empty properties and second homes or should different percentage rates apply?</li> </ul>
1.10	<p>A careful balance therefore needs to be struck to encourage owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use with the financial burden and affordability issues that may result on those parties such as new owners or existing owners who do not have the option or the funds to take immediate steps to bring the property back into use.</p>
1.11	<p>When considering whether or not to amend the premium rates, the discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help them to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes; and</li> <li>• Increase the supply of affordable housing and enhance the sustainability of local communities.</li> </ul>
1.12	<p>If Cabinet recommends a variation in the rate of the premium, other key considerations should be based on local housing needs, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Numbers and percentages of long-term empty homes or second homes in the area;</li> <li>• Distribution of long-term empty homes or second homes and other housing throughout the authority and an assessment of their impact on property values in particular areas;</li> <li>• Potential impact on local economies and the tourism industry;</li> <li>• Patterns of demand for, and availability of, affordable homes;</li> <li>• Potential impact on local public services;</li> <li>• Potential impact on the local community;</li> <li>• Other measures that are available to authorities to increase housing supply;</li> <li>• Other measures that are available to authorities to help bring empty properties back into use.</li> </ul>
1.13	<p>Not all long term empty properties and second homes are subject to the premium and there are circumstances where a premium does not apply, or only applies after a specified time period, and this is designated by 'exception classes' as detailed below. Class 1-4 applies to both long term empty homes and second homes but Class 5-7 applies only to second homes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class 1 – Properties being marketed for sale (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months)</li> <li>• Class 2 – Properties being marketed for let (time limited exception for a period of up to 12 months)</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Class 3 – Annexes forming part of, or being treated as part of the main property</li> <li>• Class 4 – Properties which would be someone’s sole and main residence if they were not residing in Armed Forces accommodation</li> <li>• Class 5 – Occupied caravan pitches and boat moorings where the caravan or boat currently has no resident but when next in use will be a person’s main residence</li> <li>• Class 6 – Seasonal properties where all year round occupation is prohibited by planning conditions</li> <li>• Class 7 – Job related properties where a property is left empty because the person in relation to the dwelling is now resident in another dwelling which is ‘job-related’ (as defined by Regulations)</li> </ul>
1.14	Flintshire is one of eleven local authorities in Wales to levy the Council Tax premium and most local authorities, apart from those with high levels of second homes continue to levy a 50%. An analysis of the premium rates across Wales is attached in Appendix 3 to this report.
1.15	To strike the right balance, and using the results of the recent consultation, it is recommended that cabinet consider a range of options, including retaining, as a minimum, the premium rate at the existing level of 50% or increasing the premium rate on both long term empty properties and second homes to a rate no higher than 75%.
1.16	Setting a premium rate of up to 75% would ensure the Council continues to increasingly incentivise owners to bring properties back into full use, but at the same time, set a premium rate for 2023-24 which, as far as possible, does not cause undue hardship to those who are liable for the premium.
1.17	Using the Council Tax system to incentivise owners to bring properties back into permanent use does continue to offer limited capability to address local demand for housing. The premium scheme also provides additional Council Tax income to meet the demand on services or to use any additional revenue generated to help meet local housing needs, in line with the policy intentions of the premium scheme.
1.18	Solving housing problems and meeting demand remains a complex strategy involving national and local government and increasing the level of the Council Tax premium will not be the ‘silver bullet’ to resolving local demand for affordable housing which is continuing to show high levels of housing demand with 2,289 applications on the SARTH common housing register for social/affordable housing.
1.19	There is evidence to indicate that the implementation of a Premium encourages owners of long-term empty properties to bring them back into use. In 2016 (prior to the introduction of the premium) there were 888 long term empty properties in Flintshire. This figure in 2022 is now 605, a reduction of 283 (32%).
1.20	Although there are examples where owners do not take practical measures to bring properties, especially long-term empty homes, back into full use, it is also important to recognise that there are also many reasons why

properties are left long term empty or periodically occupied and therefore subject to the premium - these can typically fall into several categories:

**Long Term Empty Properties**

- Estates of deceased owners where other Council Tax exemptions have elapsed, and ownership has not transferred. Currently 11% of all Long-Term empty premiums are issued to Executors of deceased estates.
- Beneficiaries of long-term empty properties that they have inherited;
- New owners/tenants who purchase a property that has already been empty for 12 months and do not move in straight away due to works being required to the property or adaptations to meet the needs of a disability or for other reasons.
- Properties that remain empty for over 12 months whilst obtaining planning permission for alterations/improvement or an application to demolish.
- Homes where renovations cannot be completed within 12 months due to scale of works, lack of available tradesman or they are being completed by the owners in their spare time.
- Homes that remain empty over 12 months due to Covid-19 restrictions limiting progress of works, access to the property or the availability of building materials and trades.
- Long term empty properties where renovations are delayed by the owners due to financial constraints – including the imposition of the premium;
- Properties that cannot be sold due to there being negative equity in the property.
- Properties where the owner chooses not to occupy, sell or bring the property back into use.

**Second Homes**

- Properties that are secondary residencies and used as holiday homes.
- Properties that remain the responsibility of estates of deceased owners, but which remain furnished (11% of all Second Home/LTE Premium charges are addressed to Executors on behalf of deceased estates).

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Following the recent public consultation, if cabinet (and Council) decide to raise the increase the level of the premium on long term empty properties and/or second homes following a public consultation, there is a possibility of increasing the Council Tax yield and to use any additional revenue generated to help meet local housing needs, in line with the policy intentions of the premium scheme.
2.02	To assist with cabinet considerations of future premium rates up to 75%, the additional revenue generated to support services will depend on the revised level of the premium rates but would typically consist of an

additional £101k for every additional 10% levy above 50% on long-term empty properties and an additional £28k for every additional 10% levy on designated second homes. This can be illustrated as:

**Second homes – 167 homes in total**

%	50%	60%	70%	75%
<b>Value (£)</b>	139,847	167,817	195,786	209,771
<b>Increase (£)</b>	-	27,969	55,939	69,924

**Long Term-empty properties – 605 properties in total**

%	50%	60%	70%	75%
<b>Value (£)</b>	508,969	610,763	712,557	763,453
<b>Increase (£)</b>	-	101,794	203,588	254,484

<b>3.00 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>					
3.01	<p>A full integrated impact assessment (IIA) has been undertaken to ensure the Council has properly understood and assessed the potential impacts of the proposal to potentially vary the premium rates. The IIA is set out in Appendix 4. There are no negative impacts to consider with regard to protected characteristics of particular groups.</p> <p><b>Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact</b></p> <table border="1"> <tbody> <tr> <td>Long-term</td> <td><b>Positive:</b> Access to affordable housing remains, as well as bringing empty homes back into full, use remains a strategic long-term priority for the Council to enhance the local housing market and improve local communities. The premium scheme is designed to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use ensuring that we maximise the use of our existing resources prior to exploring the possibility of encouraging new developments.</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Prevention</td> <td><b>Positive:</b> The premium scheme is designed to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use. Reducing the number of empty homes will in the long term tend to reduce housing disrepair. Empty homes can also have a detrimental impact on local communities and the majority of the respondents to the consultation. Nearly two thirds of those responding felt long-term empty properties have a negative impact on their local community</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Long-term	<b>Positive:</b> Access to affordable housing remains, as well as bringing empty homes back into full, use remains a strategic long-term priority for the Council to enhance the local housing market and improve local communities. The premium scheme is designed to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use ensuring that we maximise the use of our existing resources prior to exploring the possibility of encouraging new developments.	Prevention	<b>Positive:</b> The premium scheme is designed to encourage owners to bring empty homes back into use. Reducing the number of empty homes will in the long term tend to reduce housing disrepair. Empty homes can also have a detrimental impact on local communities and the majority of the respondents to the consultation. Nearly two thirds of those responding felt long-term empty properties have a negative impact on their local community
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Integration	<p><b>Positive:</b> There is a close alignment with Welsh government priorities of the refurbishment of empty properties into homes.</p> <p>One of the Councils key objectives is ‘Developing affordable and accessible housing’ and specifically bringing empty homes back into full use to enhance the local housing market and improve our local communities.</p>
Collaboration	<b>No change</b>
Involvement	<p><b>Positive:</b> A full public consultation has been undertaken and the majority of responses support the continuation of the scheme, with many responses also supporting an up-lift in the premium rates. The summary of the consultation is set out in Appendix 1 to this report.</p>
<p>The introduction, and continuation, of the Council Tax premium scheme for long term empty properties and second homes is intended to help to bring properties back into full use, to improve the supply of affordable housing and to support the sustainability of local services and communities. The policy will continue to positively contribute to the well-being objectives.</p>	
Prosperous Wales	<p><b>Positive impact</b> – the premium scheme helps to incentivise owners to bring properties back into full use, thereby helping to develop resilient and sustainable communities.</p>
Resilient Wales	<p><b>Positive impact</b> – the premium scheme helps to incentivise owners to bring properties back into full use, thereby helping to develop resilient and sustainable communities.</p>
Healthier Wales	<p><b>Positive impact</b> – adequate provision and availability of housing is recognised as a key enabler to good health.</p>
More equal Wales	<p><b>Positive impact</b> - The premium scheme is designed to ensure empty homes are brought back into use and enable local residents to secure homes. This will create fairness in the system as we know that housing issues tend to be more acute for younger people who often find it difficult to secure homes.</p>

	Cohesive Wales	<b>Positive impact</b> - Pressures in the local housing market are such that people who live and work in the County are increasingly find it difficult to get on the property ladder and secure a house. The premium scheme could have a positive impact by encouraging owners to bring empty properties back into use and thereby helping to develop strong and cohesive communities by addressing housing needs.
	Vibrant Wales	<b>Positive impact:</b> the policy disincentives properties being left empty or being periodically occupied and instead encourages properties to be lived in full time as a primary residence. Having a higher percentage of properties being permanent residences will encourage the uptake, maintenance of the Welsh language in the community. It will also provide more opportunity for local residents to have access to housing stock when they require in order to stay living local and contribute to the local culture of the area rather than migrating away.
	Globally responsible Wales	<b>No impact</b>

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	A full public consultation was undertaken in November and December 2021. The feedback from this consultation is set out in Appendix 1 and 2.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - Results of the public consultation Appendix 2 - Free Text Responses of the Public Consultation Appendix 3 - Analysis of premium schemes across Wales Appendix 4 - Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) Appendix 5 – Analysis of Long-Term Empty Properties and Second Homes

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Housing (Wales) Act 2014</li> <li>• Local Government Finance Act 1992, sections 12A and 12B</li> <li>• Council Tax (Exceptions to Higher Amounts) (Wales) Regs 2015</li> <li>• The Council Tax (Long Term Empty Dwellings and Dwellings Occupied Periodically) (Wales) Regulations 2022</li> <li>• Welsh Government Guidance on the implementation of the Council Tax Premium scheme  <a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/council-tax-on-empty-and-second-homes.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2019-06/council-tax-on-empty-and-second-homes.pdf</a></li> </ul>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> David Barnes, Revenues &amp; Procurement Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703652  <b>E-mail:</b> david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Council Tax Premium:</b> an additional amount of Council Tax of up to 300% (a premium) can be charged from April 2023 by local authorities in Wales for property defined as either being second homes or long-term empty property. There are some exceptions from the Council Tax premium for a period of up to 12 months. For example, if the property is being actively marketed for rent or sale.</p> <p><b>Long Term Empty Property:</b> is defined as a property which is both unoccupied and substantially unfurnished for a period of six months or more, but to be liable for a premium, it would be unoccupied and unfurnished for a continuous period of one year or longer.</p> <p><b>A Second Home:</b> is defined as a property which is not a person's sole or main residence and is substantially furnished.</p> <p><b>SARTH:</b> is a process used to allocate social housing across Flintshire to eligible applicants. The Single Access Route to Housing (SARTH) is a single housing register, shared by all social housing providers in the County of Flintshire and is used to assess applications and only those with recognised housing need in a banding system can go on the housing register. This means applicants have one point of contact and one application process to complete and be considered for all available social housing in Flintshire.</p>

# Public Consultation

## Consultation on Reviewing the Council Tax Premium Scheme for Long Term Empty Properties and Second Homes in Flintshire

Page 47

December 2021

# Introduction

The public were invited to submit their views on the current premium scheme and the level of premium.

Page 48 The consultation was formed of 13 questions and was live from Monday 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

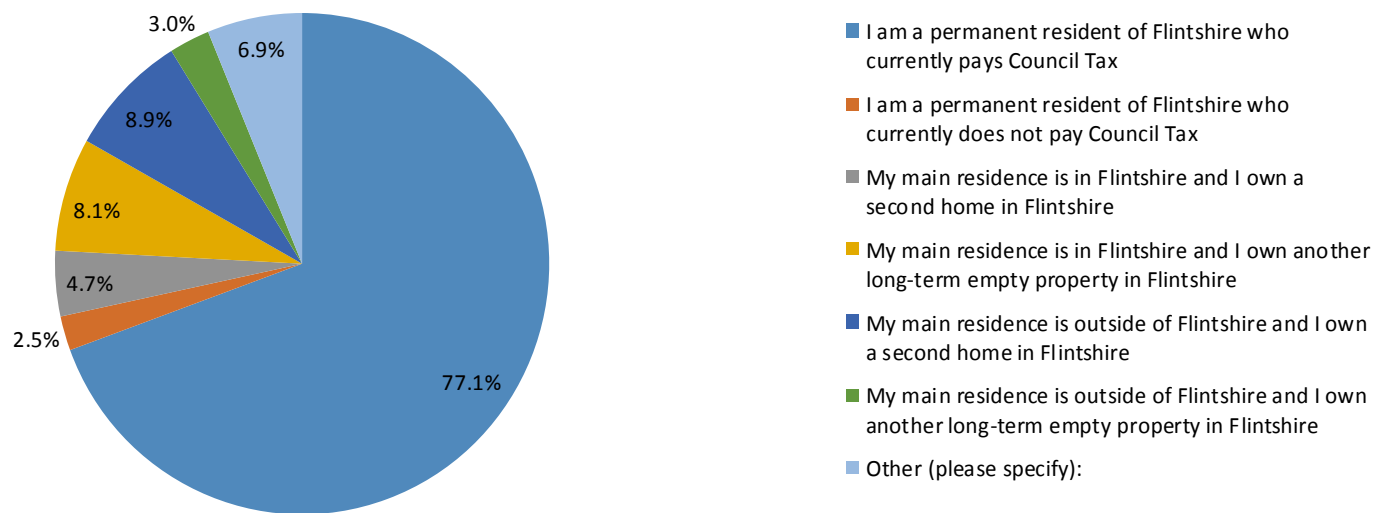
522 full or partial responses were received across the English and Welsh Consultation submissions.

The responses are documented over the coming pages.



## Q1 From the list below please select the option(s) which best describe you.

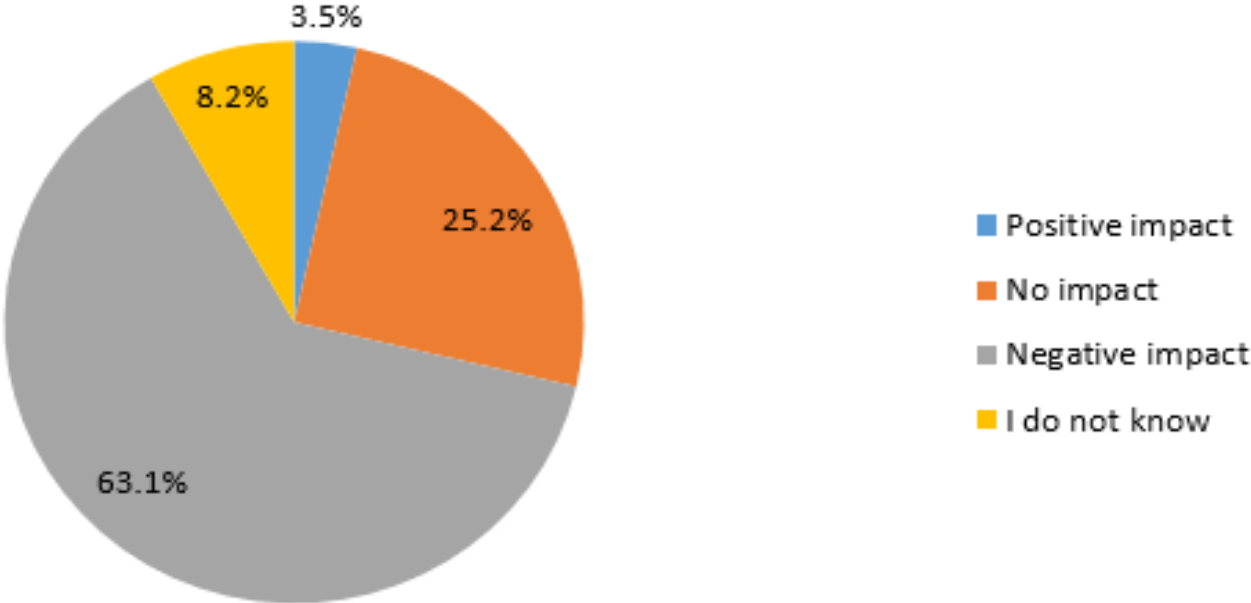
From the list below please select the option(s) which best describe you.  
Please tick all that apply to you



Over three quarters of those that responded are permanent residents of Flintshire who currently pay Council Tax

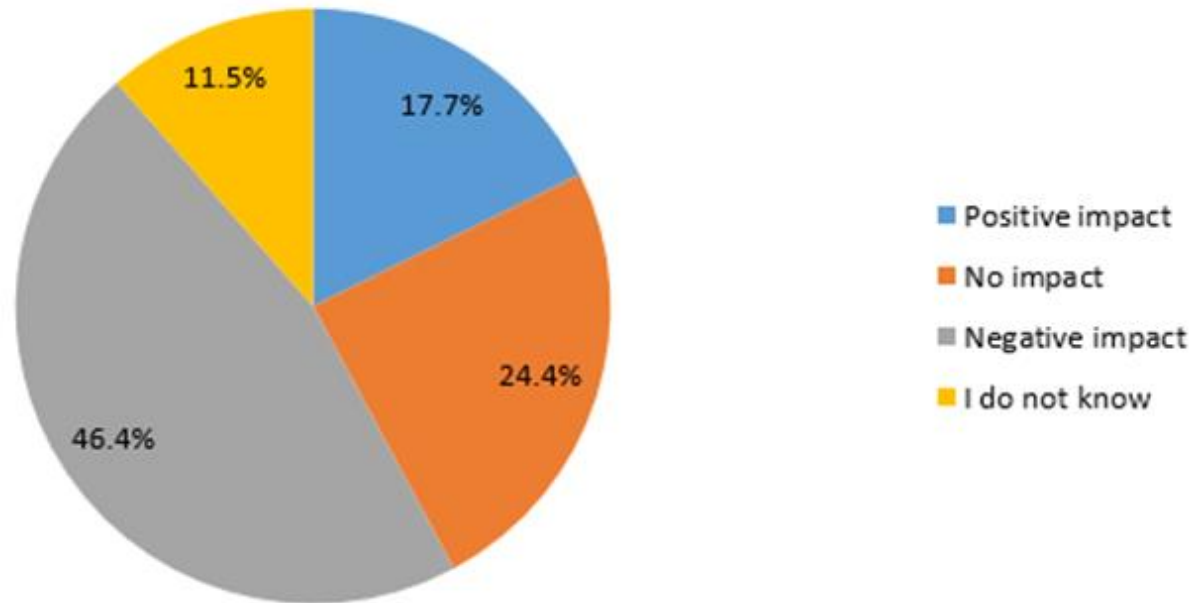
**Q2. In Flintshire there are currently 605 long-term empty properties subject to the council tax premium. In your opinion, what overall impact do long-term empty dwellings currently have on local communities?**

Page 50



Nearly two thirds of those responding felt long-term empty properties have a negative impact on their local community.

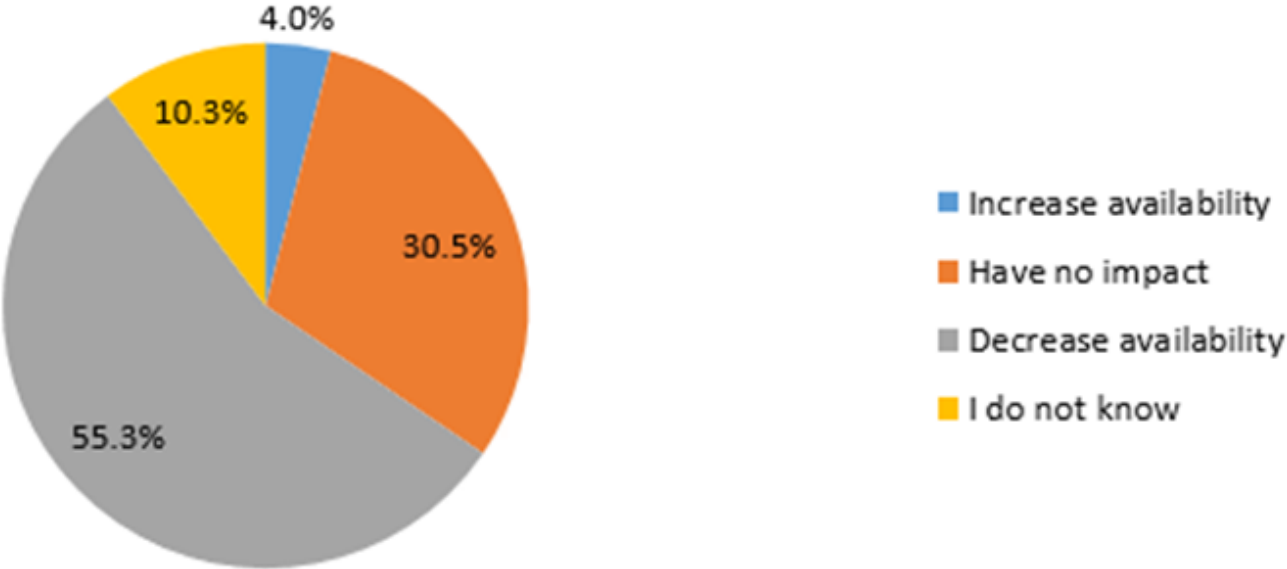
**Q3. In Flintshire there are currently 167 second homes subject to the council tax premium. In your opinion, what overall impact do second homes currently have on local communities?**



Page 51

Almost half of those responding felt that second homes had a negative impact on their local community. This is significantly lower than the 63.1% who in the previous question felt long-term empty properties had a negative impact on where they live.

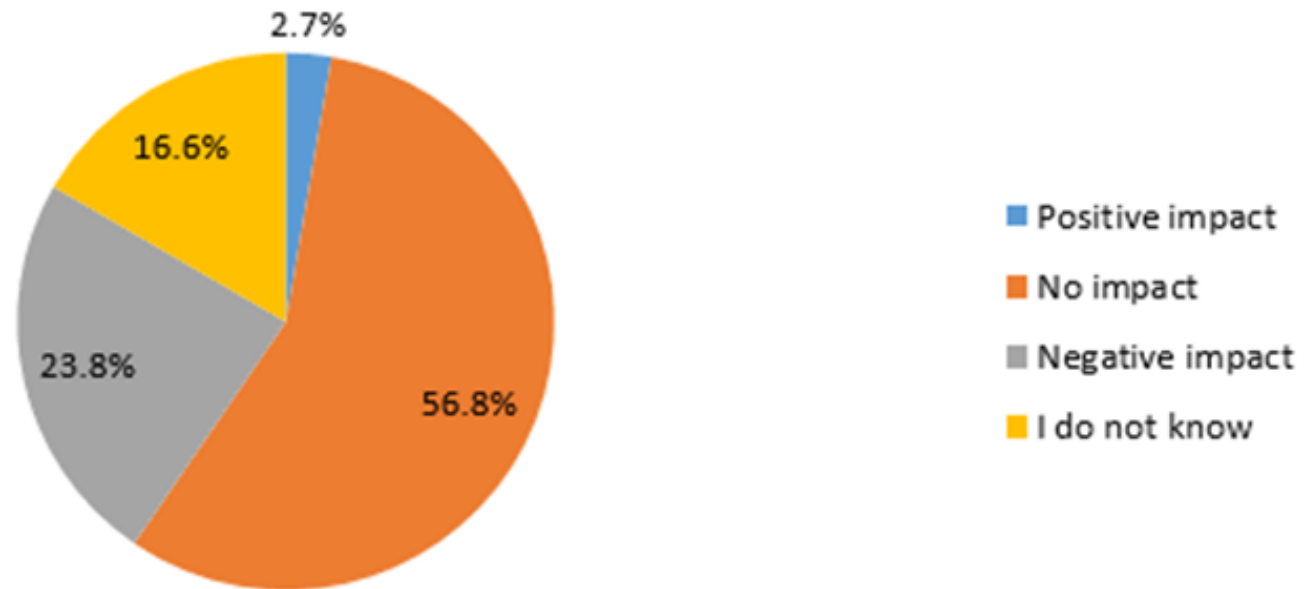
**Q4. In Flintshire there are currently 2,120 people on the waiting list for social/affordable housing. In your opinion, what impact do long-term empty dwellings and second homes currently have on the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire?**



Page 52

Over 55% of those that completed the consultation considered that the impact of long-term empty and second homes is to decrease availability of affordable housing in Flintshire.

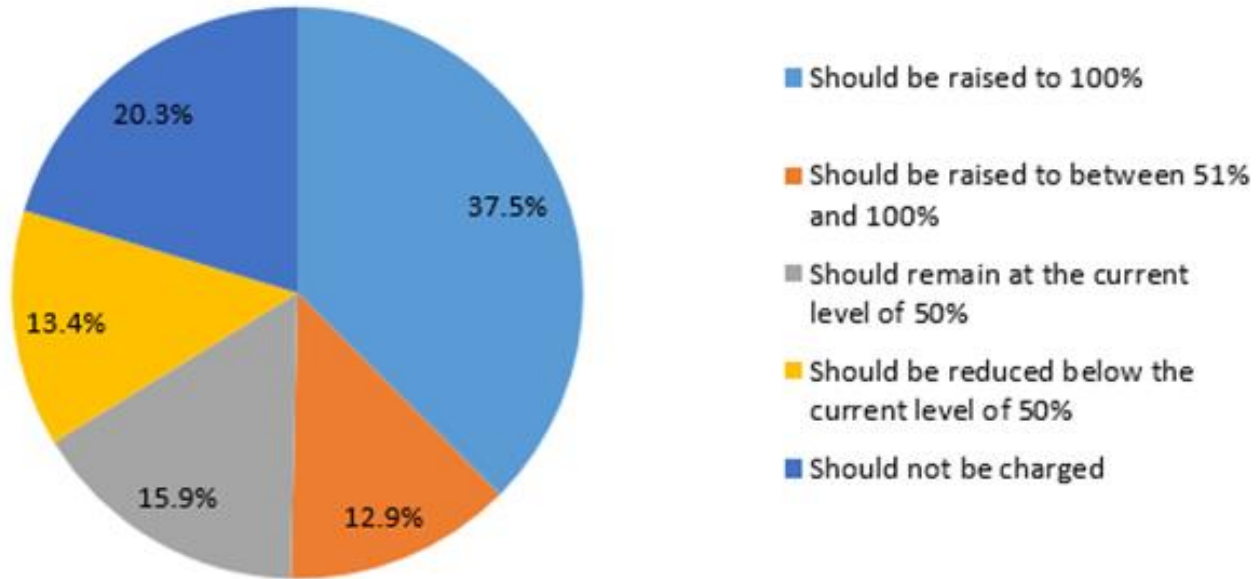
**Q5. In your opinion, and thinking about the opportunities for people to use Welsh and to ensure the Welsh language is treated no less favorably than English, what impact do the current number of second homes and long-term empty properties have on the Welsh Language?**



A majority of respondents expressed that long term empty properties and second homes have no impact on the treatment of welsh language.

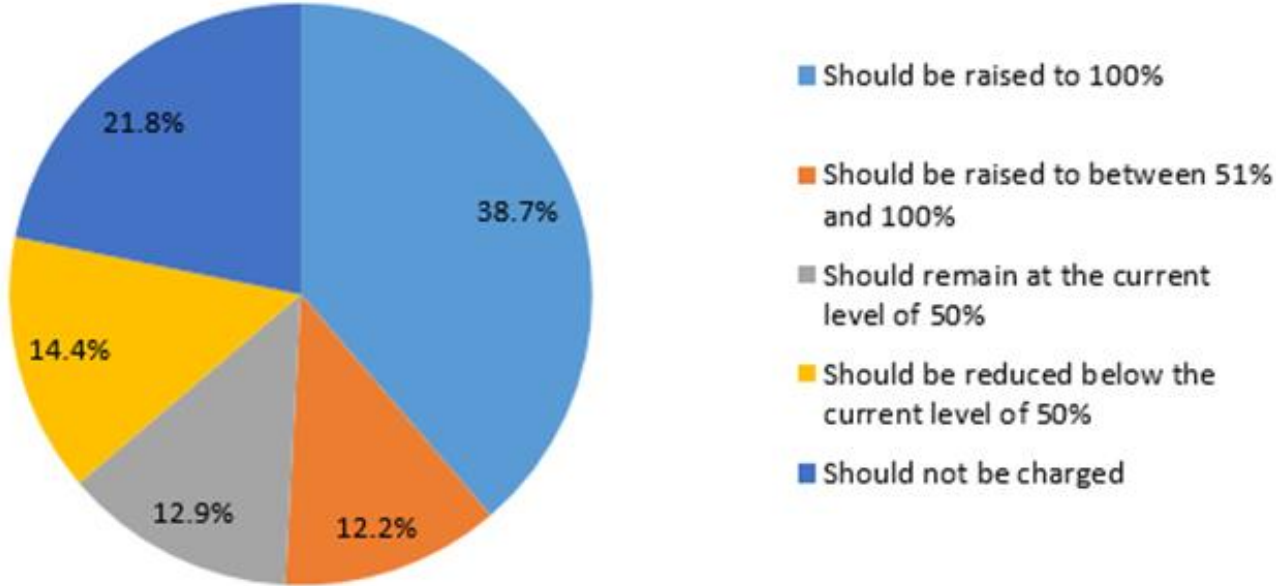
**Q6. The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 50% on second homes. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?**

Page 54



Over half of respondents felt the premium for second homes should be raised above the current level, with 37.5% considering it should be raised to the maximum 100%. This contrast with only a third of responses considered that the premium should be reduced or not charged at all.

# Q7. The Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 50% on long term empty dwellings. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire?



Page 55

Over half of respondents felt the premium for long-term empty properties should be raised above the current level, with 38.7% considering it should be raised to the maximum 100%. This outcome is similar to the views expressed for premiums on second homes.

## Q8. Please briefly explain the reason for your selections in Q6 and Q7

Various reasons were provided to support the opinions provided in the previous two questions on the level of the premium. Those in favour of increasing the premium raised the points which included:

- The current level is not enough of a deterrent;
- Second homes and long term empty properties should be discouraged to provide homes for families that need them and increase the number of properties available to let;
- Second homes and long term empty properties should be discouraged to reduce new developments, reduce blight on communities and protect the planet;
- Empty homes are an eyesore and negatively impact communities.



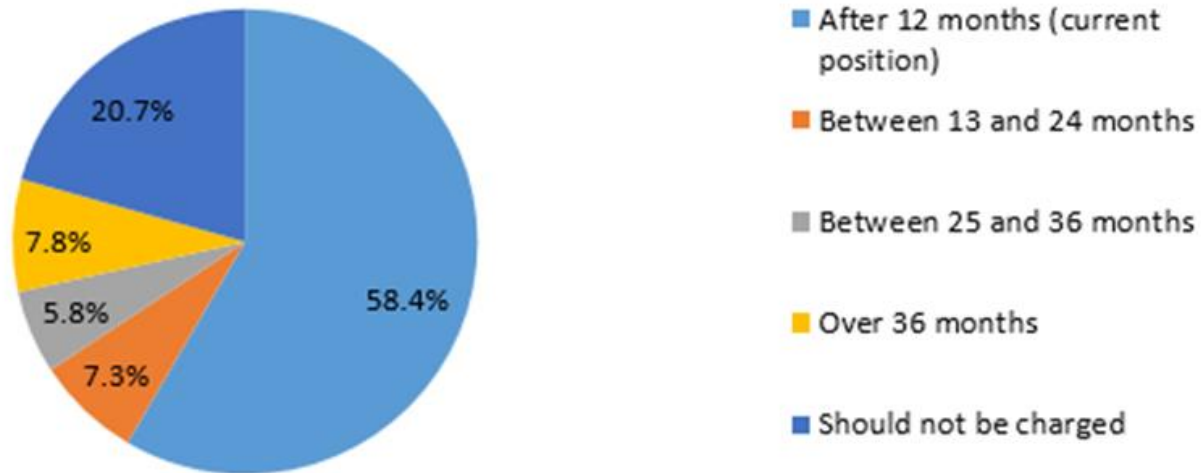
## Q8. Please briefly explain the reason for your selections in Q6 and Q7

Those in favour of a reduction in the level of premium or not charging a premium at all raised the points below:

- Empty homes are not using any facilities, why should they pay?
- Some people end up paying the premium through circumstances outside of their control including inheritance or new home owners;
- How can repairs be afforded to make long –term empty properties habitable when a council tax premium has to be paid?;
- The premium discourages investment in Flintshire;
- The premium discourages tourism in the county.

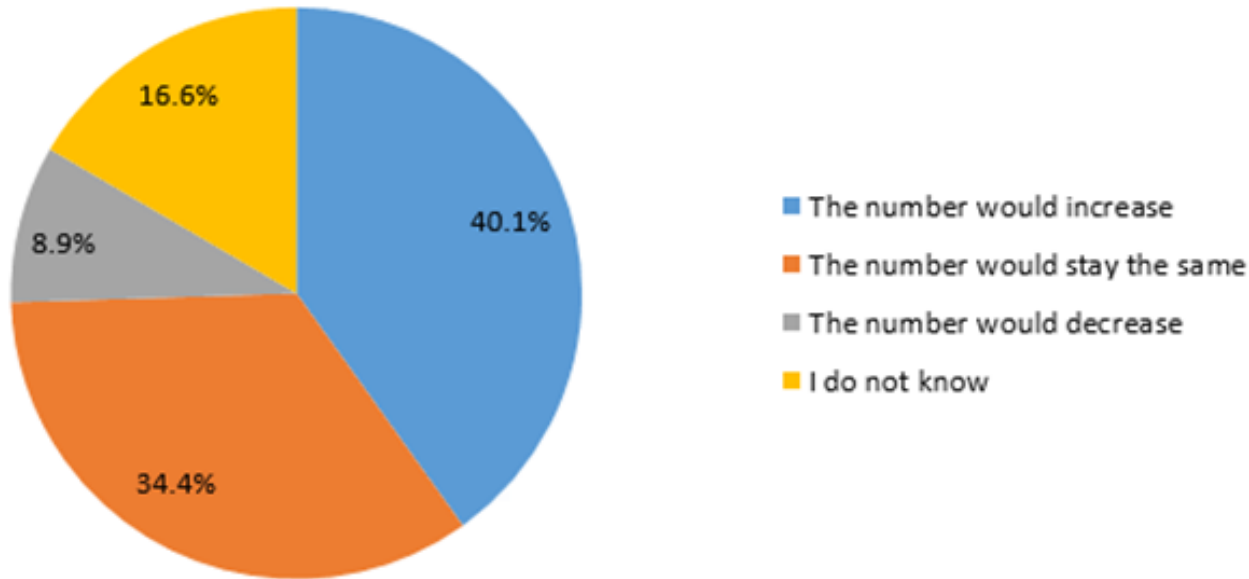
**Q9. Currently a premium becomes payable after a long-term empty property has been vacant for 12 months - unless it qualifies for an exception. What length of time do you feel a property should be empty before becoming subject to a premium?**

Page 58



A majority of respondents 58.4% confirmed they felt that introducing the premium after 12 months for a long-term empty property was the correct timescale.

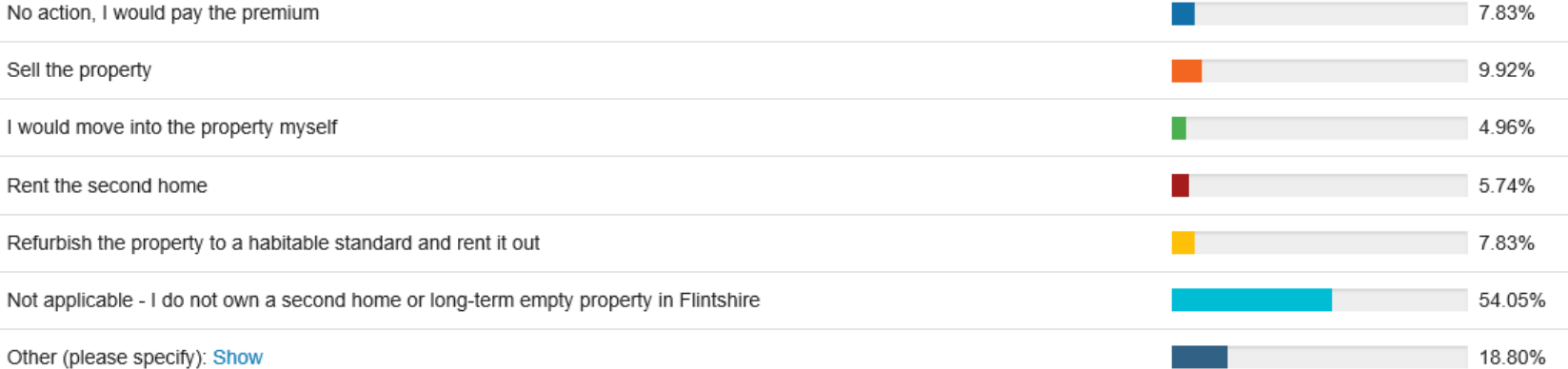
## Q10. If the premium were to be reduced, what impact do you think this would have on the number of second homes and long term empty properties in Flintshire?



40.1% of respondents felt a reduction in the premium would increase the number of second homes and long-term empty properties in Flintshire compared to only 8.9% who thought they would decrease.

# Q11. If you are the owner of a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire, what action would you be likely to take if the premium was to be increased.

Page 60

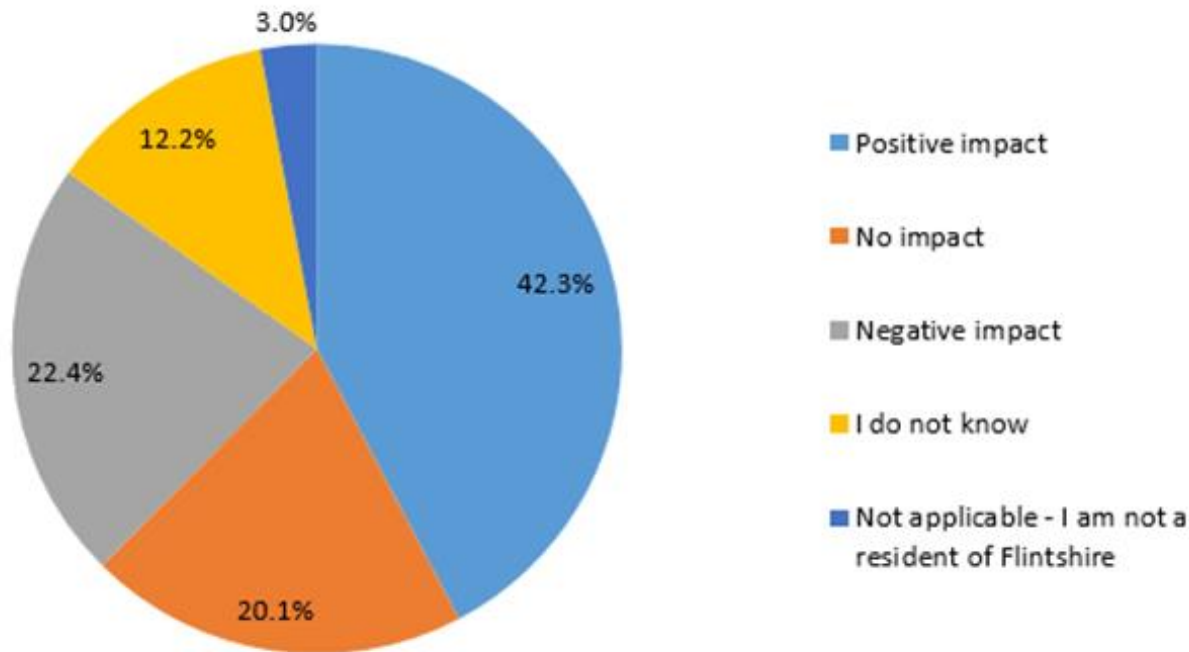


Of those that own a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire, the most chosen response was that they would sell the property if the premium was to be increased, closely followed by taking no action and paying the premium and refurbishing the property and renting it out.

## For the 67 respondents that answered “other” in question 11, they provided further detail on what actions they would take as summarised below

- Use the premises as a business;
- Use the premises as a commercial holiday let;
- Would continue with renovations but the additional charge would hamper the speed of renovations;
- Already trying to sell property;
- Demolish or merge with an existing property;
- Press planning for a quicker decision;
- Sell and invest somewhere else;
- Challenge or lobby the decision;
- Cause financial stress;
- No single answer can be provided.

## Q12. In your opinion, what impact would an increase - above the current 50% premium level - have on your local community.



Of those that are resident in Flintshire an expressed an opinion (84.8%), almost half (42.3%) felt that an increase in the current level of premium would have a positive impact on the local community.

## Q13. We welcome any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes.

185 respondents completed this free-text section with very individual circumstances and observations. Some extracts from their feedback is detailed below:

“As stated above it is an unfair charge as people sometimes take longer than anticipated to refurbish a property, why do you think you should decide how long it should take? Some people refurbish properties as a hobby, on a weekend or evenings and sometimes things crop up that take more time or cost more money than you thought and you are penalising people for that, the money you are charging could be used to finish the property off”

“No allowances are given for genuine home owners who have purchased/inherited property and are renovating to make the dwelling habitable and which will become the main residence. Also given the fact that any building works have been greatly impacted by Covid-19 I think the current system is unfair. Councils would be aware of anyone who is genuinely make home improvements as plans/building regulations would have to be approved by you. “

## Q13. Further suggestions/comments

“The County Council themselves need to act on there own properties and not have any type of property empty for long periods.”

“Why are properties left empty for years? If you don’t live in the property- let someone else have use of it. Especially if it’s run down and blights the area. If you can afford a second home - you can afford the council tax. We need to restore village communities where neighbours look out for each”

“I purchased this property in 1986. As I had to move away for work my mother moved into the property and lived there until she passed away. I have spent a great deal of money refurbishing the property. I do not wish to rent the property as it is intended for my retirement. It might prove difficult to get a tenant removed. We use the property for visits to see family . Paying 100% would have a massive impact on my salary as we are also paying to keep the electricity and heating costs so it doesn’t fall into disrepair.”



## Q13. Further suggestions/comments

“The focus should not be on long term empty property but on the building of actually affordable homes by developers.”

Page 65 “As a second home owner we are contributing to the economy of Wales”

“In my case any increase in council tax premium would reduce the amount of money I would have available to spend in local shops and for local services”

“the property was left to me for my children, I have paid the increased charge for the last two years and it is crippling! The property is uninhabitable, no heating, no kitchen, no bathroom and an outside toilet, it is literally a shell yet still I had to pay the increase the council”

## Q13. Further suggestions/comments

“Instead of diverting the attention onto a sector, where people are paying their Council taxes and contributing to the local community, the Councils should be looking at their own Buildings and assets to provide affordable housing.”

Page 66

“A relative recently died although leaving a will it was with the solicitor who had gone out of business, it took a long time to sort out not helped by the thought of council taxes being paid on the property”

“People who buy property and land as investments to make themselves richer should pay more ..property developers are pushing up house prices. .And local young people have virtually no chance of getting on the property ladder , we have seen this happen all over the country and it’s not right”

## Appendix 2 - Council Tax Premium Free Text Responses

**Q 8 the Council is currently reviewing its premium scheme of 50% on long term empty dwellings. In your opinion what should the proposed level of premium be in Flintshire Please briefly explain the reason for your selections.**

335 respondents answered this question, the responses are grouped below into themes.

<b>Q8 Response to Why Chose Level of Premium</b>
I think that in times of climate emergency, when it behoves us all to use and re-use the earth's resources carefully, the concept of second homes and empty dwellings is becoming an anachronism. We should use what we have; it's wrong to build further when an existing house could have been freed up onto the market.
Second homes should be discouraged and owners of long-term empty dwellings should be incentivised to make them available for families needing homes.
Long term empty dwellings have a negative impact on the local community and would be better utilised in improving better availability of housing
The additional premium has no impact whatsoever, serving only to alienate visitors/tourists to the county. The small number of houses used as holiday homes has no impact on the use of welsh, in fact, in many parts of the County one doesn't hear Welsh spoken at all. It could also be viewed as anti-English by people from over the border.
Because we live next door to a property that will have been empty for four years in march 2022. We have reported it and spoken face to face with a member of the empty homes team who have basically told us that they have seen worse and that there is nothing that can be done unless property actually falls apart. Why should normal council tax payers pay council tax when properties next door are deteriorating and lowering the value of other people's properties?
I have, for a very long time been worried about the number of long term empty houses across the UK As a whole and was disappointed to learn the number for Flintshire was so high! At a time when young and disadvantaged people are desperate for a decent place to live, Surely this situation is totally unacceptable? My own daughter and small granddaughter are currently in a let property, and she has been told she's not even eligible to be put on the Council list because it's a privately owned property? There are many many empty, run down properties in cities, towns and villages which could be retrofitted instead of more houses being built, even on flood plains!
To have empty homes in Flintshire is an absolute disgrace and increasing council tax in respect of empty homes will be an incentive for the owners to sell or let their properties.
Should help to deter people from owning properties used as 'second homes' or from keeping properties empty.
How can 2nd home owner bring these houses up to standard if they are paying 150%+ council tax rates. If they want them back available in the system. then a reduction in council tax would help for the first 12-18 months then maybe 150% rising to 200% after this time.
Second homes/empty dwellings have little or no positive impact on local communities, so should be subject to higher levels of tax.
It's obvious that current level of tax on empty property is not having the required effect of bringing these back into use. Perhaps a punitive level of tax will force owners of these properties into action as regards bringing them into the private rental sector.
Local properties should be for the indigenous population not for affluent non-residents

Occasionally people purchase a dwelling with the intent to demolish it and seek planning permission for a larger amount of smaller homes on the same land. This is very unjust and leads to properties remaining unused for many years. These tend to be vandalised and even set on fire. I feel that more should be done at the point of sale and contracts signed to show that the property will be lived in for at least 11 months out of twelve. Local young people cannot afford to live in our towns as they are priced out of the market. I feel that increasing the long term empty homes tax should be to 100% to deter this kind of speculative buyer.
Not enough houses for sale or to let. Think holiday home buyers who use as holiday let also have a negative impact I know many people who used to rent are now changing to this as it gives them more income and they don't pay council tax.
Sometimes the reason for unoccupied is not the owners fault
I was the owner of an empty property, approx. 3 years, having to pay the council tax did not help me get it renovated quicker, and it hindered me.
Need to make it more expensive to keep property empty than occupied or to sell it
It makes me sad to see properties sitting empty, especially when they become neglected. There is a housing shortage but houses are being built rather than using those we already have. It is wasteful.
People who can afford a second home or able to leave their property empty should pay a premium so that local residents are not put at a squeezed out of the market when trying to find good quality housing
The questions asked do not consider many other aspects & ways people live and pay for their accommodation. Or how efficient the management of collecting it is, what enforcement is carried out to recover outstanding debt
Do not reference the unpaid taxes and percentage recovery of unpaid debt
Do not consider local and incoming travellers. , People who sometimes pay one set of taxes yet have multiple homes occupied on 1 rate paying location with Chalets & Caravans also occupied
Do not consider itinerants who dwell in caravans, homes, chalets and pay no rates
Do not consider multiple occupations of many families in one dwelling
Do not consider larger homes under-occupied
Do not consider the lack of businesses in the area for locals to acquire the wealth to purchase and sustain housing
Do not consider other ways rather than increasing costs. Instead of resolving difficult issues.
Getting people to do their job and enforcing rules and regulations.
Empty homes need to be used, there are a lot of people on waiting list with Local Authorities and Housing Associations
I think you need to apply the 150% charge after 18 months so 100% after 12 months and then 150% after 18 months as owners may try to sort out the house.
Second homes- reduces the number of properties available for purchase/rent by local residents inflates home prices/rent in popular rural/coastal areas potentially reduces money spent within the community on local goods/services owners would still expect refuse collection/policing/fire services/local initiative communication improvements to be provided
Long term empty - depends on reason. Should have ability to set premium on reason
Those who can afford more, should pay more, especially when their actions have a negative impact on the community. It's a way to restore a bit of balance and fairness.
The pressures above also have an effect on the housing prices which are pushed up due to the current demand. This leads to challenges to first-time buyers and residents of Flintshire.
The private housing market needs properties at all levels. Long term empty properties attract anti-social behaviour/ give a negative view of an area/

<p>The number of second homes in Flintshire is low - where they exist, visitors use and enhance tourist facilities and create upmarket communities. This is different in areas with huge numbers of second homes which do impact the dynamic of the neighbourhood.</p> <p>There should be the ability to apply higher CT charges to long-term empty properties with maybe an element of discretion to reflect the varying reasons of why they are empty. Sometimes there are properties that few people want to buy, or probate issues etc. For other properties, incentives to use the property such as signing it over to a RSL for a set period of time, who will upgrade the facilities, should be introduced alongside higher CT charges.</p>
<p>please see comments in section 13 box</p>
<p>The impact of the 50% since 2017 started off working well as a number of empty homes were realised and this benefitted people waiting for homes, recently the emphasis has waned and there is no immediate deterrent to these empty homes owners to comply, so the action to raise the 50% should have the effect on them to renovate and let these homes to Flintshire residents</p>
<p>I firmly believe that empty properties should pay 100% duty on council tax. I also think that if a property has been empty for more than 5 years and not up for sale, the council should have the power to “compulsory purchase” that property at market value. These properties become an eyesore for future possible investment in a town. Also if tourists visit a town and see these properties, what will they think? Buckley town has this problem! Derelict property on Liverpool road by the Texaco Petrol station (been empty 20 yrs. plus) eyesore, Chester road near the station, vacant land left to overgrown, Mold road a derelict cottage by the Esso petrol station on the Wilf’s. These properties will surely discourage any future investor in the town of Buckley!!</p>
<p>Buckley for one is under pressure for housing of all sorts, shapes and sizes. However, scattered around the town there are properties of high potential which have been empty and unused for years. They are owned by persons far away who are simply holding on to them as capital assets which appreciate in time. We also have a number of second home properties, which appear to be used only intermittently.</p>
<p>As I have already stated there are currently 2120 on a waiting list. These second homes delay these people on the waiting list an opportunity to get a home</p>
<p>Second homes imply that when in use the people who are there use FCC facilities. Long term empty dwellings have little need for FCC facilities, but there should still be deterrents to having empty dwellings and financial penalties are a way of managing this.</p>
<p>They are not using any of Flintshire’s services for which the council tax is there to pay for.</p>
<p>Empty properties in particular, but second homes additionally, reduce the availability of social housing, and houses available for first time buyers wishing to stay in the area. Owners of empty houses, and of holiday homes should be prepared to contribute more. Perhaps a 75% initial levy rising ( with notice ) to 100% in 2 years</p>
<p>Long term empty homes are a waste of resources when people are homeless. Ditto second homes.</p>
<p>Increase council tax to 100% above normal rate to induce home owner and landlords to give desperate families somewhere to live.</p>
<p>In my view FCC should take all possible steps to make more affordable housing available and to eliminate homelessness as far as possible. I can see no excuse for unoccupied property which could be used. While second home ownership would appear to be less of a problem in Flintshire than in other parts of Wales, increasing the premium would make a small contribution to wealth redistribution and help to finance local services.</p>
<p>Probate and renovation work can often take some time If it can be seen work is in progress charge should not be made even if long term. Why are bins not emptied when paying 50% extra charge - Not getting any services for full council tax paid then 50% on top for nothing.</p>

There is only a small number of 2nd homes in Flintshire but these are mainly based in one area of Flintshire - around Talacre which impacts on the availability of homes for local people.

Empty properties should be made to be brought back into use after a certain length of time. An increase in council tax will push these owners to put them back in to use

Empty homes - It is not fair to group all empty homes into one basket from a Council Tax point of view. Some home will require refurbishment, some possibly major refurbishment. Increasing the tax on these properties is NOT going to help the owners with the associated costs of doing this work. Have you cross-referenced the property addresses with current planning applications or planning approvals? In my view increasing, or imposing a premium tax on empty properties is totally counterproductive to solving any housing needs in the County of Flintshire.

Second homes - I can imagine one argument being that someone buying a second home has deprived that dwelling being available for affordable housing in Flintshire. However, in the real world, housing market prices have risen over the last two years. The desire for people to buy and own their homes is stronger than ever and it is the market is driven by demand. This has raised the living standard in the communities, brought in a new income stream to the community and kept existing businesses open. The influx of people moving into an area has been attributed to retirement and commuting to present the most significant demand in rural housing markets. It has been reported (see the Welsh Government report on second homes - <https://gov.wales/research-second-homes-evidence-review-summary-html>) that local communities prosper as a direct result of 'new wealth' brought in to a community.

If there is a requirement for affordable housing - build new affordable houses which meets that criteria. Imposing a Premium Tax on second home properties will not solve the affordable housing issue.

Welsh language - I am a welsh speaker and I am proud that I have learnt the language, however, the exclusion of English speaking home buyers in Flintshire is not going to encourage more people to speak Welsh. This needs to be encouraged at the 'grass root' level through our schools. The proportion of adults wanting to learn Welsh is minimal compared to a strong education system in our schools, where even in English speaking schools Welsh should be a compulsory subject to GCSE level.

All Councils need to raise money - but in my opinion the main issue you are trying to resolve (local affordable housing) will definitely not be achieved by a higher tax on long term empty houses or second homes. If you think it is, you will not resolve the county's housing issue, but will create an even bigger problem with the local housing market.

In question 10, you have grouped two questions together which have differing answers. The number of second homes and empty houses are not linked. Therefore, the possible answers do not make any sense!

Second homes receive income to cover additional costs.

Owners of empty homes need to either sell them or rent them out. Empty homes can often look neglected. Increase in council May persuade owners to sell

I have said "no impact" for Questions 2-4 above as I believe that the current 50% enhancement negated any financial negative effect.

With regard to Q5 above, I have assumed that this question (like Qs 2-4) relates to Flintshire and I have answered as such. I believe there is a negative impact in primarily Welsh speaking areas of other Welsh counties.

For further comments see box below.

We purchased our property as a retirement home and spend a few days every week there until we retire in a few yrs. We spend our money in the community helping small businesses so feel it's unfair to pay the premium.

I think it's fair to charge council tax if you use a property as a second home because you are using council services for that property but I don't think it's fair for empty properties as long as you can prove the

property is empty and up for sale because in that case council services are not being used and the property is available to someone who might need a home to buy.

Due to bereavement of my late mother, I am being charged full rate of Council tax on the property that I am trying to sell. In spite of the Coronavirus pandemic that is still ongoing, Flintshire County Council have insisted on me paying the full rate of council tax on the property, that because of lockdown measures that have been in place reducing the chance of selling the property. I think in all honesty I think this is disgraceful, I am not a second property owner trying to make money, I am simply trying to sell the house and move on and yet FCC have been no help whatsoever, sending myself letters asking for money that I simply have not got. I think that due to the current global crisis with the pandemic, people trying to sell an empty house should not be penalised with the full asking rate of council tax.

There is an empty home on my street, it needs repairs and gets worse each year. It makes the whole street look unkempt. Whoever own these empty homes should be made to manage their upkeep or be persuaded to sell them on. There is no excuse for keeping a house empty long term.

If people can afford a holiday home they can afford to pay extra tax, a few hundreds of pounds will not make any difference to someone who can afford a second home, which are usually large and luxurious houses. Holiday homes do not contribute to local life and economy.

There are many reasons once occupied dwellings are now empty long term. A major reason could be that they are now no longer economically viable to refurbish and because of location virtually unsellable.

Some empty properties are used for other uses such a hosting local events, the grounds being used for charity purposes etc. Not all 'second-homes' should be considered equal and they can't be used as affordable homes so would not alleviate the housing problem. The extra taxation takes away from being able to use these funds to invest in the area and pay wages

My property is inherited. My family has owned the property in Flintshire since 1954. It is correctly classed as a second home but is neither long term unoccupied nor a holiday home. I inherited the property in 2003 and my family regularly use it, myself included since I am now retired. I am Welsh and grew up in the local community. It seems unreasonable and disproportionate to charge any premium for inherited properties which are regularly used. The Council should make an effort to distinguish between (a) long term empty properties (b) holiday homes and (c) inherited properties which are in regular use. Charging a premium for inherited properties has no relevance to bringing more properties into occupation. It is seen only as a cash raising opportunity.

And a distinction needs to be drawn between an inherited second home and one which was bought solely for holiday use. The former have ties to the community, the latter usually not.

As explained above, the two small barn conversions on my property have always and continue to supply accommodation needs. They cannot be defined as empty. I hence think it unjustifiable to charge any more for them than the 'normal' rate.

To consider doubling normal rates is an unjustifiable abuse of power, and irrational, illogical and wholly subjective.

If a property is classed as 'long term empty' it is probably due to financial restraints and imposing a further burden though Council Tax is counterproductive. An extra £1,000 is half the cost of a new kitchen or bathroom, the Council should be helping to bring houses back into use not hindering.

In my case, I have inherited my late parents' house and am in the process of preparing it for valuation and sale. This has been a lengthy process, mainly due to COVID-19, the lockdowns and restrictions on the collection and disposal of furniture and other items by various charities. My bill for both properties is rising from £383 to £619 per month which is massive and I believe unfair in the circumstances. I will inform you as soon as the property goes on the market as I understand that this should effectively lower the amount I am due to pay. I appreciate that an increasing number of second homes/empty properties in Wales is a

<p>problem and does have consequences but my case is different. The property is empty because it is currently being prepared for valuation and sale.</p>
<p>I have been trying to sell my home for the last 4yrs after moving out, and I am asking less than market value for the property, and yet I am being told by potential buyers that it is still too high. I have had it with several different estate agents, with no joy, and I am now having to spend another £10,000, that I have had to borrow, to completely renovate it to try again to sell it.</p> <p>During this time, it has cosy me hundreds or even thousand's in extra council tax for something I have NO control over, and this should not be allowed. If it was left empty deliberately, and left in poor repair, then this might be a different issue, and would have made me do something about it, but this has never been the case, and so I have been punished by the council all this time, even though they have been kept informed that it is up for sale, and have been given proof of this on several occasions.</p>
<p>It is grossly unfair. My business suffers accordingly. The premium pre-supposes that the property is appropriate to be placed on the market when it is unsuitable for this due to its connection to my office premises.</p>
<p>Properties used as holiday homes bring regular visitors to Flintshire to boost the economy and use of the Welsh language whilst having hardly any effect on Council facilities- e.g. non regular use of bins, no education requirement etc. They are usually well kept and regularly visited, a benefit t neighbours.</p>
<p>The long term empty property is not using any of the statutory facilities that the council provides.</p>
<p>To encourage the owners to use or sell their dwellings</p>
<p>Increasing the council tax charge on long term empty properties provides no incentive at all to the home owner. They will be paying extra costs for services that they don't actually use. It would be far better to provide alternative incentives to encourage people to either sell or rent their property.</p>
<p>The circumstances as to why a property is long term empty aren't taken into consideration, Someone chooses to own a second home.</p> <p>From my own experience as a first time buyer, renovating a property for myself,</p> <p>If a property is empty due to needing work, especially in the light of the pandemic, 12 months may not be enough time to complete it, especially on a limited budget,</p> <p>The premium won't convince someone who's property is in negative equity due to its condition to sell it, they're stuck paying up to twice as much for council tax (as in my case, single occupancy)</p> <p>Using me as an example, I'm living with my parents, I'm not taking up another property, I plan on living in my house that's empty.</p> <p>The premium is reducing my available income, forcing me to work more hours to pay for materials for work I haven't got time to do.</p>
<p>I have a holiday home. When I and my family visit we put money into the shops, pubs and all local facilities including restaurants and cafes. We do not use the bin collection service all rubbish including garden rubbish we take home with us. I therefore feel it is so unfair of the council to think as you obviously are thinking of raising the council tax even higher. My husband and I worked long hours at a very hard job to acquire this property we aren't wealthy so to increase the charges will hit us very hard to the point of having to sell the house. In our area there are many properties for sale so the usual "we are keeping a house off the market and depriving local people of housing" is way off the mark. We will be very upset to have to sell up but will have no other alternative but to do so.</p>
<p>Some properties are empty for very different reasons and the council treats these houses all the same which is wrong</p> <p>a second holiday home is very different, if a person can afford to purchase a second home then they are quite likely to be able to afford the council tax premium</p>
<p>We originate from Mold and this property is our planned retirement house. Today we really do spend 50% of our time in Wales. We will likely move permanently in the next year or so. We totally agree properties in</p>



<p>Flintshire should not be left unoccupied long term but there should be some recognition where 2nd homes are frequently used which ours is. That said we would agree premiums are necessary but would also like to know if many property owners are not paying the premium when they should be.</p>
<p>To be fair to everyone in the local community</p>
<p>Long term empty dwellings are a real issue and I do feel owners of such properties should be taxed accordingly.</p> <p>I do feel that properties of a certain band, say A-D are more likely the type that are in demand or social/affordable housing - higher rate tax bands are unlikely to be affordable for most, so I think the tax on second homes that are in the higher brackets is fine, the 50% should be the max in my opinion (on 2nd homes).</p>
<p>I currently pay council tax on a property that I live in. I have an empty house on my land in poor state of repair which I pay a premium. I don't think that I should be forced by any council to have to make a decision on an empty property that I own. It will either be demolished or a member of my family will take over ownership. I think the council should get their own house in order to make affordable housing for residents in Flintshire not rely on others and penalize them for not doing so</p>
<p>No charge if being updated this has been difficult this year to get trades and materials due to Covid</p>
<p>The situation at the moment is HEATING OR EATING, the way things are going, and it's only going to get worse. Increasing the premium, only makes life more difficult.</p>
<p>I understand the principle of charging extra for second homes and empty properties, but think it would be unfair to increase the percentage. As second home owners we contribute to the local economy when we visit the area and our use of the council services is minimal.</p>
<p>It takes longer for an empty property to be brought back into use when council tax is charged more. It decreases the monthly budget to renovate and bring the property back into use. Flintshire should be encouraging of bringing the homes back into use rather than penalising.</p>
<p>The flat I own is above my shop and is being used as a stockroom.</p>
<p>I am currently renting a property, which I pay full council tax on, but I have recently inherited my late mother's house, which I also pay full council tax on, even though it's empty.</p>
<p>Our second home was obtained when we were unable to sell it when my mother moved Family and friends stay in it which brings tourists to the area and therefore income It would not be part of the local homes available for those in social housing as it did not sell I am updating my Welsh language skills as a result of continuing to return to wales</p>
<p>I live abroad, my Flintshire house is where I grew up, part of my identity. For the past 2 years I have been unable to visit, due to Corona and I am currently using my inheritance from my parents to cover running costs. I would like to rent the house out to friends to help me financially and to give foreigners the chance to discover this little known part of the country. This has been impossible, because of Corona.</p> <p>During this period, the house has been occupied by young local people, „housesitting “in return for rent free accommodation- the house has been making its contribution to socially affordable accommodation. I am happy to pay normal Council tax to support the community I grew up in, but feel strongly that I am being unfairly penalised by your proposed action.</p>
<p>I would agree that long term empty property is contributing to a lack of affordable accommodation, but holiday homes attract business from outside and bring money into the county.</p>
<p>There are too many buy to let landlords who do not vet the tenants - When I first moved to my house a block of 6 houses - 5 were owner occupiers now that is down to just 3.</p>
<p>You have not disaggregated LT empty homes from second homes in your policy making. 2nd homes make up only 20% of the total and have a different impact on local communities and the housing issues you are seeking to address. You have not given a breakdown of LT empty homes by privately owned versus social housing. I assume there are LT social empty stock held by the LA and RSLs.</p>

You haven't given me an analysis of the impact of the 50% surcharge on housing in Flintshire since 2017. By now you should have a view of the impact of your policy and whether it has discouraged 2nd home ownership.

You give no separate figures for holiday homes/air bnb properties which from my local knowledge are far more numerous in my area of Flintshire than 2nd homes used by one family. Surely if you're going to have policies to prevent the housing supply scarcity in local communities you must address this issue too. From media reports in popular tourist destinations such as Cornwall locals are selling out to bnb landlords or doing it themselves. Local estate agents are encouraging this trend and pushing up house prices.

Recent research by Swansea University for the Welsh Government makes it clear that the impact of 2nd home ownership varies massively across Wales and that it is currently affecting 3 or 4 localities to the greatest degree. These are the traditional holiday areas including SW Pembrokeshire, Gwynedd, Anglesey and parts of Ceredigion. It is not a significant issue in other areas - including Flintshire.

#### 2nd Homes

From your figures, 2nd home ownership in Flintshire affects about 0.2% of the county's housing stock - which is negligible. For this reason I don't see it having an adverse impact on local communities and on Welsh language speaking in Flintshire. For the same reason I also don't see it having an impact on housing availability.

If there are over 2000 families on housing waiting lists, obviously one key policy should be to increase the supply of new housing. This is constrained by government funding admittedly. But putting waiting list families in private rented accommodation encourages private landlords to buy more houses crowding out prospective home owners.

2nd home ownership isn't of a single type - for instance I grew up in Flintshire, have family locally and may well live here when my wife has retired. I use my 2nd home over 40% of the year. I contribute to local life and spend money locally. I don't speak Welsh fluently but most people in my village speak less Welsh than me! Flintshire is not a big Welsh speaking area.

Not all 2nd home owners are urban families who flit in and out of their rural retreat for a few weekends a year.

Keeping the 50% surcharge or increasing it becomes factored into the cost of ownership for families thinking of buying a second home. Only owners at the margins will be discouraged from owning a 2nd home. Bigger societal forces such as growing wealth disparity and the growing attraction for many people in access to rural living following the COVID pandemic are more important drivers of 2nd home ownership. In this context, council tax surcharges are not that significant. For the same reasons reducing it won't lead to a significant increase in 2nd home ownership rates. Creating a national park out of the Clwydian hills and Dee valley will encourage 2nd home ownership much more by altering people's perception of Flintshire as having beautiful countryside to be enjoyed.

#### Long Term Empties

Long term empty properties are by definition a negative influence on local communities and an inefficient use of resources and all measures should be used to bring them back into use. They can be a blight on local communities. A financial penalty through a council tax surcharge is one tool but Flintshire should use all the tools at its disposal to reduce these empties.

Second homes are looked after and lived in, the owner's bring income into the local community. Second homes are not necessarily holiday homes, In my case I'm Holywell born and bred, I inherited my mother's modest family home, that give me a place to frequently stay when coming home to visit family and friends which is at least twice a month.

Properties that are long-term empty will go to ruin and deteriorate, I can see how that has a negative impact on the area.

Long term empty homes and second homes are a blight on most communities. They deprive others of housing.

I moved two years ago from a Housing Association flat in Mold which I owned as a Leaseholder to an Almshouse Charity flat in Surrey. If I had moved into full time care I would not have been required to pay Council Tax. However, because of the technicality of my being a Charitable Almshouse Resident and not a Care Home Resident I have been required to pay Council Tax plus the 50% Premium for two years. Since my income is limited I have gone into debt through continuing to pay Council Tax (and Housing Association Maintenance Charges) without receiving any benefit from them whatever. At last I have managed to find a buyer for the flat, and completion is due this week. All proceeds from the sale will go to pay off the debt I have incurred in making payments in respect of the flat over the past two years. I am sure that this was not what the premium scheme was intended to achieve, and I hope that it will cease so that others in my position will not be unfairly penalized in the future.

I am a serving soldier and currently posted down south, I bought my first home July last year in Flintshire I am now being charged a 50 premium for having a second home I do not own a second home and been told by the tax office I am in a loop hole I cannot get out of

You have 2000 people waiting for housing yet the property I bought had been derelict for a number of years, because the people waiting for housing cannot afford to buy, I have currently spent £20,000 renovating my property over the last year, people waiting for affordable housing do not have this money that is why there is empty homes...

There needs to be an incentive for people with second homes to want to rent them out a reasonable price rather than a tax increase which is surely going to push them the other way?? There is no logic behind the tax premium

Second homes provide additional income to the area. Meals out, retail sales in the area and maintenance on a property which looking at the statistics may well be empty if it was not a second home. An empty property provides none of the above.

The present system is not flexible enough. The property I inherited was never going to be a long term empty property. The sale was held up for 3 years due to legal reasons but this was not deemed a reason for not paying a premium. Sometimes sales may not go through within a year which makes it unfair that the seller is penalized when they are actually trying to sell the house.

I do sometimes query why the council should have the right to interfere with private property but if they do, the circumstances involved should be taken into consideration.

Also, if the seller does not live in the area, they are not using the services paid for with the Council Tax so are paying huge sums of money for nothing.

Once again, it seems the easy targets are hit - the ones who are trying to act responsibly and are given further bills to meet.

I do not think the issue is as simple as using financial penalties to discourage long term empty or second home purchase with the assumption that stock could be released back to the local community to solve social or affordable housing waiting lists. The issue is having appropriate stock for the waitlist that can be managed within the budget of any resident that may take it on.

Tourism is a key economy within Wales and the Welsh culture (of which language is part) is central to that. Everything should be done to protect and grow that culture because of its commercial and emotional value. However I find the inference behind question 5 a very dangerous one. It seems to assume that by allowing non-Welsh speakers to own property within Flintshire they may be having a detrimental impact on the growth of the Welsh language. For cultures to thrive they need to interact with other cultures.

In my opinion when you have worked hard all your life you should not be penalised for having more than the next person, in life we all make choices, some good some bad, but why should I who have worked all my life pay for someone who wants to lie in bed all day on their PlayStation or CHOOSE to take drugs, not everyone has mental health, but this now is the new bad back and the government need to get a grip on the situation

Stop punishing people for trying to get on in life, I will hazard a guess most of these empty properties are owned by people who work hard and try to improve their quality of life, I know because I am one of them my second property used to be my main residence it lay empty while I tried to renovate it (very awkward during covid pandemic) but all the time the council punishing me with this ridiculous premium

I have lived all my life in Flintshire and pay Council Tax. However, I find the whole system of taxing second homes very, very unfair. If it is to continue then each case should be subject to a mandatory review by another person not employed within the Council Tax department.

I am currently trying to clear out and renovate a property which I inherited, and I have also paid a substantial amount of Inheritance tax on the property. The house has huge sentimental value to me and my family and we do not want to sell it.

Finding the time to do this work whilst also employed is difficult, and I don't have the capital to pay tradesmen to do the work on the property, so the house has remained empty for a long time. The burden of the extra 50% Council tax has made the situation worse, and has contributed to the length of time the property has been empty. I intend to let the property in 2022. I don't think the local community has been hugely negatively impacted by my property remaining empty, and I hope to bring it back to permanent occupation soon.

I do feel that having a large number of second homes can adversely affect a community, especially outside of the holiday season, when properties are empty for several months.

Property on market for sale following a death, property sold subject to contract. property sold subject to obtaining planning consent to develop site to increase housing stock there is long delays in Flintshire planning department

In my opinion, long term empty houses would be more attractive for repair /returning to sale or letting if there less restraints on repair especially on listed buildings owners should be encouraged to refurbish and re-let.

There are empty houses and people needing homes, this is just a reasonable financial incentive to push the owners of vacant properties in the direction of using them. Failing that presumably the additional funds provided by this can be used to benefit communities?

Second homes bring in additional income into the county via the owners contribution to the community taxes. Tourism should be embraced and supported as it offers additional income streams to local businesses. As Flintshire is not a 'seasonal county' like Gwynedd, then the use of holiday homes supports the local economy all year around. This is one of the benefits of developing a tourism sector in Flintshire, which until fairly recently has been side-lined in place of industry in around Deeside.

In relation to empty properties - there needs to be a better look at why those properties are empty, rather than a carte blanche charging policy. In some cases empty houses will require planning permissions to upgrade, replace or extend to make the property worthwhile and fit for human habitation. Properties that sit along rivers and streams, in a time of climate change, need to have support from Flintshire to upgrade so that they can then be offered for rent. The age of the property needs to be taken into account with some lateral out of the box thinking could actually bring the property back into the housing market. This should involve a much more transparent discussion with property owners who would welcome help in making it easier to renovate and develop properties that are fit for habitation again. Often finances will be the biggest hurdle to overcome in trying to bring old vacant properties that have damp issues back into the housing stock. Without discussions with empty property owners on what options and financial support there is for helping restore properties to meet the stringent Landlord and Tenant Act regulations - properties will remain empty. In the advent of less council owned properties, all help should be made available to support property owners (advice and financial) to get the properties fit for the rental market. This would be a more supportive role and preferable to berating the owners of empty properties which is the current system by charging extra council tax. In addition empty shops in high streets should be viewed

as potential housing stock that offers life blood to the High Street. There are many empty buildings in town centres crying out for renovation/upgrade/change of use for residential opportunities which in many cases will be more appropriate, taking into account accessibility and community interests instead of pursuing owners of empty rural properties far away from amenities.

In other words Flintshire should consider how they work with different empty property owners on a case by case merit basis, taking into account location and what assistance can be provided to bring the empty property back into the rental arena or not. The process should be easy and understandable with easily explained options. Not all property owners have a choice as to why a building is empty - these are the issues that need to be analysed on a case by case basis. Although Flintshire has 605 empty properties on their books - in reality how many of these would be worthwhile (financially and location wise) in bringing them back into Landlord and Tenant occupation.

It shouldn't be a case of Flintshire thinking - we can charge more and get more, because not everyone can afford it and in many cases they may not be saleable either.

My property was charged premium for long term empty home straight away after I bought it because previous owner use all the exemptions for empty properties. It was not my fault that the house was empty for 2 years so why I have to pay premium council tax when I do not own it long term. Besides I bought it to rent not to keep for myself. Because of the pandemic I had to wait 6 months for planning department (that is Council) to make a decision to refuse my application for change of use from C3 to C4. Now I struggle to find builders to do just basic work to the house again because of the pandemic. Everything takes so long starting from the Council decisions to finding people to do the work, and then the same Council deciding to put premium on empty property. I think that Council does not care about personal circumstances, we are all put into the same basket

My late mum's property I now own. This is not going to be used as a second home in my case

I can only speak for my own family and my answers to the questionnaire reflect this. The property we have, in Talacre, is very small and would not accommodate a family. Initially we had a static caravan but, for several reasons, this no longer met our needs. We had many friends in the area and did not want to move far away. We were aware that second properties were becoming a problem in some Welsh towns and villages so we sought a property which we thought would not add to this problem. Our property is leasehold and we pay our ground rent to Talacre Holiday Homes. These properties were built as holiday homes hence the small size and when we initially started to look in the area they did not have residency throughout the year. The road is not adopted by the local authority so our lighting, road repairs etc. have to be paid by the residents. These costs, together with our ground rent, amount to over £1,000 per annum which could be prohibitive to many. In fact these properties can take some time to sell, the property next door took 3 years to sell and, in the end, was not purchased by a resident of Wales. They are not really suitable as social housing nor is it possible to use them as a holiday business. We have a contract with the freeholder which prevents us from letting our property other than occasionally to immediate family, neither are we allowed to sublet. We are retired and are at our property for about 2 weeks per month with the exception of December when we don't visit and July when we are there for the whole month. We are very much part of the community and help with events which take place at our local community centre. I am learning the Welsh language (some of my family originally came from Anglesey and I feel this is part of my heritage) I can't comment on any detrimental impact on the Welsh language as I don't know how many of the properties in question are owned by people from other parts of Wales. Additionally we always support local businesses so I don't think that our presence is reducing the property pool or detracting from the community. I understand, however, the reason for the premium and the need to raise money for social/affordable housing. In my opinion the current "one size fits all" is flawed and should be reviewed, although I realise that this would cause more work. Our property, and it's usage, is very different from a 3/4 bedroom property which, when built, was intended as a family home or is in a remote area where

<p>young people cannot get a foothold in the property market and such properties are standing empty for months at a time. We don't really want to pay any premium at all but, given the situation, feel that up to 50% is reasonable in our case.</p>
<p>House was inherited in 2019 due to parental death, but Covid, lockdowns, closure of Wales to travel from England has made emptying house and getting it on market very slow. Also means that period of grace due to inheritance expired and Council Tax was increased on property because we weren't allowed into Wales. Hope to get on market soon, half-way through trying to recycle/donate everything to charities rather than just taking it to the dump.</p> <p>Fully appreciate that empty dwellings detract from an area and community, and are antisocial when there is a shortage of property on the market.</p>
<p>It is the responsibility of the Council and the Welsh government to build more affordable social housing. Not all second home owners wish to rent out their home (which they may have inherited) to families etc. They may wish to sell.</p>
<p>As I was left the property after my father's passing and then Covid hit, so I could not get up to the property as I live in the Midlands, I am yet to decide what to do with the property</p>
<p>There are many and varied reasons as to why dwellings become and remain long term empty. It may be family/personal circumstances or, as in my particular case, a requirement for the property to be modernised to today's standard of living. This can require investment of a considerable amount of time and money. From experience, the 12 months exemption from Council tax (+50% premium) is helpful but sometimes the project involved cannot be satisfactorily completed in that 12 month window of opportunity. WAG and the Local Authorities need to take on board the complete distinction between second homes and long term empty properties. If I owned a second home as a property I spent some considerable part of my time living there (e.g. Holiday home) then I would expect to pay double the Council Tax compared to my main residence. I say this because I believe the impact of second home ownership in Wales on local communities is serious and well catalogued. That is not to say that Long Term Empty Properties do not also have an impact, albeit somewhat different in nature. Local Authorities would do well to incentivize rather than penalise the owners of this type of property to restore them as residential properties as quickly as is possible. The current system, as it stands, in my opinion, does not achieve this and, instead, has left Council Tax payers like myself, feeling let down.</p>
<p>Fairness for all</p>
<p>If people are already paying 100% they shouldn't be charged more for the pleasure of owning a second property.</p>
<p>If a property is empty for any reason then there is no drain on public services so why charge a premium on council tax? If it is a second/holiday home then the owners spend money in the locality when they visit, this helping local businesses.</p>
<p>If somebody can afford a second home they can afford to pay a premium for the privilege. Some long term empty properties are in a very poor condition and require a considerable amount of work and therefore finance. Making the owners pay a premium on top of normal council tax just increases the finance required to put the property into a habitable condition. The recent pandemic has also restricted the ability to continue work on many properties.</p>
<p>Second homes do not have a negative impact on the services that council tax pays for (you don't collect bins any more frequently). I would suggest that holiday goers have a positive impact on the services paid for by council tax. They bring revenue to Talacre.</p>
<p>While house is renovated council tax should be same as normal. House could then be let out. renovations take time ,covid has had impact on work .plaster hard to get etc.</p>
<p>We have been charge this twice for two separate dwellings.</p>

The first was as we lived in a caravan while our house was being built. Once we moved into the new house, the caravan was sold. Unfortunately, because of Covid, the caravan was delayed being taken off site, so we were charged 150%. It was never going to be a home for anyone else to live in at the property, so it did not affect local housing and we were penalised because of Covid. I think that where the 'home' is never going to be used as an extra home in Flintshire because it is obviously an annex, then there should be no charge. The second time was because we bought a house to rent out. This house needed serious renovation and had been empty for some time. The previous owners had claimed the empty property relief but had done no work to make it fit for habitation. When we bought it we started renovation works straight away, but was still charged 150%. This was not fair as we were doing our best to make the house fit for the local rental market and maybe you should penalise the previous owners for claiming relief with no intention of renovating.

Maybe charge the same owners a long term empty property charge after 12 months, but if the house is sold, then the new owners should get the exemption again.

This will give better opportunities for local people who live and work in Flintshire to purchase properties

The use of second homes reduces the number of visitors staying in hotels and other tourist accommodation.

Presumably long-term empty homes are not those whose owners have recently gone into residential care or owners who have moved out of their home for extensive renovations of say not more than 18 months? On that basis, longer-term empty homes should be returned to frequent use, if not for the owner then for someone locally who needs a home.

I consider that the increase would make people consider whether it is viable to maintain a second home or keep an empty property and possibly make more homes available for the local population.

There is a need to reduce second homes and also to improve occupancy of empty properties in my opinion

People with second homes are reducing the number of houses available for local people.

Long term empty dwellings may go on the market sooner if the owners have to pay full tax on them and this would in turn make more affordable housing available.

There can be very valid reasons for empty dwellings and second homes. People should not be tarnished because of this. I think your question regarding impact on Wales's language is wrong as it is very leading - like you want people to say that it is detrimental. I'm Welsh and proud of that but unfortunately, even though I have tried I am unable to speak and read more than a few words - do I negatively impact my country? You should just have left people to make comments if they wanted to.

Empty homes/second homes reduce the availability of affordable homes to people in need and have a negative impact on local communities. Increasing the level of council tax on such properties would prove a disincentive to such property owners and increase the council's income for local services

To have unoccupied property in any area for a long term is severely detrimental on the basis that they attract anti-social behaviour and their upkeep is not always what you might want. To have empty or rarely used property in this area where we have a housing shortage beggars belief and therefore I feel at least full council tax should be paid and I would even prefer an extra charge for long term unoccupied

As long as second homes are well maintained I can't see it has an adverse effect on the community but the owners should pay a proportion of tax for the council services.

Long term empty does have an effect on the community as not maintained the same, gardens overgrown, trees overgrown and looks untidy next to well-maintained properties.

People who own second homes probably overall contribute positively to the local economy, however, long term empty houses and their owners probably don't.

<p>Vacant properties have an impact on local shops as revenue is only for certain periods of the year instead of throughout the year. There is also an issue of vandalism if a property is left vacant for long periods and if derelict can encourage vermin. I feel there is no impact on the Welsh language as there is a large population of migrants that do not speak English and therefore would not learn Welsh.</p>
<p>Second homes should pay more council tax to discourage people taking properties from those looking for housing. Owners Long term empty dwellings should be penalised for council tax BUT it does depend on a) the reason for the long term b) what period defines long term</p>
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Make those that afford second homes pay for the privilege.</li> <li>2. Apply more financial discipline to the present outmoded system of property ownership payment.</li> </ol>
<p>A very high premium would negatively penalise owners of properties that are empty through no fault of the owner.</p>
<p>I don't believe that owning a second property has a negative impact in this particular area where house prices are generally fairly low for the UK. As an accidental landlord who has tried to sell their 2nd property I feel it very unfair to have to pay a council tax premium on an empty property that I've been attempting to sell for less money than I bought it for just because it's been on the market for too long.</p>
<p>Houses which are left empty need to be forced back onto the market either through sale, or renovation and rented or sold. There are fair to many properties left empty and in states of disrepair that could be purchased by someone and renovated and put back into the market. Holiday homes are purchased by people from out of the area and taken from the market for locals, this pushes up housing prices in certain areas.</p>
<p>In an age when there are too many people waiting for housing, it really upsets me to see empty homes. If these were available to purchase it may lead to those currently in social housing to consider buying homes and it may free up more social housing for those who need it. Those with second homes really should be paying for the privilege of stopping locals from buying homes in their area. I would prefer to see a 500% council tax surcharge on second homes.</p>
<p>Any empty home is an opportunity lost for a local person in need to have a place that they can call home. If the property is vacant without a valid reason I see no reason why the owner should not pay a large premium. Second homes and holiday homes have a place in any area where tourism is part of the local economy. It is fair to assume that anyone who can afford to own such property also has the means to pay a premium to help support the communities that they enjoy visiting.</p>
<p>You assume those with 2nd properties in Flintshire are habitable and have an effect on housing waiting lists but when planning is asked to convert the property into homes you reject it....short sighted as there are only 167 then you should merit each circumstance individually without a "one size fits all" approach.</p>
<p>Given the numbers, the impact would appear to be minimal. The money raised would not appear to be meaningful either. There should be a process where long term empty houses could be brought back into use. I disapprove of second homes in principle.</p>
<p>Young generation are struggling to get local housing and forced into rental market</p>
<p>The Welsh economy relies heavily on tourism and people from other areas spending their hard earned cash in Wales. We need to attract new visitors into Wales and encourage them to invest in Wales. Putting a premium tax on second homes does nothing towards this and implies discrimination which is illegal. Please stop this discrimination and show a much more neutral position</p>
<p>Second homes: in a county where so many do not have a proper first home it seem unreasonable that a small minority of people who presumably are not residents in the county (?) are able to use all our facilities</p>



<p>when they stay here. Charging this amount might also cause the second home owners to sell up and make their property available to those who need them more.</p> <p>Empty homes: others need these homes. Charging this rate of tax would be a significant incentive to sell up and make them available to those who need them.</p>
<p>Second homes reduce housing available for local residents ,many young families cannot afford a house where they have been brought up</p>
<p>Everyone who wants to own their own home should have opportunity to do so. Empty homes and second homes reduces this opportunity. The greater the number of homes not paying full council tax, the less money available to local authorities to provide important services. For all these reasons, empty homes and second homes should pay their full share of council tax. There can be time limited exemptions for homes which are going through probate or sale.</p>
<p>There are too many empty properties in the area, either because the owners do not use them as dwellings or because they are in need of renovation and the work is not being done. They become an eyesore and reduce the attractiveness of the area for other residents and potential residents.</p>
<p>Second homes and empty dwellings do not help local people onto the property ladder. But I don't think a charge should be made on property that is unoccupied and for sale as they are not using any amenities</p>
<p>Council tax has become disproportionate, a secondary taxation system to be topped up from instead of performing efficiently. A top up that not every working person contributes towards. A single person paying 75% is taxed disproportionately higher than a couple in the next door semi-property only paying 100% [at a rate of 50% each].</p> <p>Society has changed since the Poll Tax, we now have a far higher proportion of working taxpayers living in the same property, and this needs to be addressed in order to address the disparity of council tax "top-up" not falling equally.</p> <p>Yes keep the property banding, but set a rate for all, "X"% per working adult in each property, so a single person would pay 50% of a band D, two would pay 100%, three 150% etc. spreading the banded charge equally.</p> <p>Rather than concentrating on empty properties, think laterally, within the changed society there are adults who are escaping from contributing towards council tax, which if calculated could reduce the overall per person percentage rate and generate greater income.</p> <p>Simply taxing empty property's and second homes could well lead to more going on the market out of reach of the persons waiting on lists and reducing the rental stock at the same time.</p>
<p>The empty homes do not have an impact on services or facilities so if empty and not being used what is the rationale for charging for services which are not used?</p>
<p>Long term empty properties and second homes add nothing to the social coherence of local communities. Whilst I should not want them to be made "illegal" I do believe that they should be seriously discouraged and carry a heavy social premium to okay for the privilege.</p>
<p>The proportion of 2nd homes in Flintshire is distinct from long term empty properties and should be treated differently.</p> <p>Exemptions should continue to apply for properties for sale and to let.</p>
<p>These empty homes could be sold or used for social housing and second homes should be discouraged where there are long waiting lists for social housing</p>
<p>Increased council tax on currently empty homes should make the owners think harder about what to do with the property. The council used to have a compulsory improvement/short term rental scheme for empty properties and I would like to see this introduced to help people into affordable housing.</p> <p>I feel that if someone can afford a second home they should pay full council tax charges. Otherwise they are taking from the housing pool without contributing to the local economy.</p>

A higher premium on long term empty dwellings might increase pressure on owners to resolve long term emptiness more quickly. This does not apply to second homes.
In my opinion if someone can afford to have more than 1 property then I think they should pay more taxes on all properties above their main one and I think it should be 100% above the standard rate for that band of property.
Because there are over 2,000 people on the waiting list and over 600 empty and not being lived in properties, I think the council should have powers to commandeer these property's or at the very least charge 100% council tax.
Make more cash available for social housing and reduce the waiting lists for social housing
People have different reasons for their property being empty, it's their property to do what they want with not the Welsh Government
With so many people in need of low cost housing every empty property should be brought up to standard and let.
The cause of people being on a waiting list for housing is the very poor record of the council and housing associations failure to build enough new homes. If you wish to get the list down then build more houses. If people have enough money to have a second home then they will just pay the extra with no benefit to the local community except a few extra pounds in the kitty, and the waiting list will be just as long. Perhaps the council should offer to buy long term empty homes from their owners at a fair price or get their fingers out and build more housing. Also they shouldn't write off council tax debt, and rent debt and instead they should chase debtors for what they owe, if they don't pay up then evict them and let the house to others who will pay their rent. The trouble at the moment is that some people think that the world owes them a living, I for one am fed up of paying to feed others kids, paying for their transport, and paying higher council tax whilst many others pay nothing at all.
I am not sure what you mean between Positive impact and Negative impact, but I do know that while we have all the empty property`s the waiting list for people is going to get longer.
Because of the negative impact.
Long term empty dwellings are no benefit for anyone who needs a home. If they are kept empty so the owners can make money as the empty home increases in value then they can pay a premium. If people can afford second homes then they can afford to pay a premium. There should be an appeals process for empty homes, e.g. if someone is working abroad and intends to return when the work is finished or in the armed forces based elsewhere then there may be some grounds for not charging the full premium, it would depend on the individual circumstances.
Next door to me property has been empty for over eight years garden overgrown, property in poor disrepair, outside boundary wall down, bringing house prices down in area ,talked to owner about wall he knocked down with jcb while clearing trees from front garden over a year ago no response from him
Difficult to define positive & negative impact as long term empty houses deteriorate & therefore neighbouring properties can be affected as well as reducing availability.
Second homes can have positive impact by bringing some income to local businesses but also negative impact in that reduce availability of housing stock for local people particularly if buying lower priced houses & therefore lower more affordable "tax bands
If can afford 2 homes should pay increased tax
Why should people who own second properties be penalised due to the local councils Flintshire (Labour) government inept councillors (Mark Tami ) & co to provide housing for local people and ex veterans who are having to live on beachside benches they really need to get their act together when approving planning to make sure there are sufficient first time buyer low cost properties rather than approving planning to big building firms to build 4/5 bed properties that are selling in excess of £400,000 pounds

<p>A premium should not be charged on 2nd homes as the owners make minimal use of council services, so the council is already gaining. The amount of 2nd homes in Flintshire is so small so as to not make any impact on the waiting list for affordable homes.</p>
<p>I have experienced a council levying a 200% premium on empty properties, most recently during the pandemic, when my tenant vacated the property of his own volition and compelled me by default to a deal of maintenance to restore the property to good order. I had let the property only because of difficulties in previously trying to sell it and being let down by a potential buyer.</p> <p>Recently after a protracted period when all involved parties seemed to drag out the process I have successfully sold the property and am in the process of purchasing a replacement nearer my main residence.</p> <p>I would live with a premium after a property has been vacant for 12 months , as long as there is a reset if the property becomes occupied once again</p>
<p>I feel the current charge is more than enough to charge people</p>
<p>The UK, including Wales is in a housing crisis. Encouraging people to give up second/empty properties will help this.</p>
<p>Anybody with a vacant property (and no valid reason for it to be empty) or with a second home can afford the increased Council Tax and the extra money can be put to good use by the Council.</p>
<p>The Welsh Government and Welsh local councils are trying to blame someone other than themselves for not investing in the basics for Welsh people, education, housing, the health service and jobs, do more to move Wales out of poverty and stop blaming others !!!</p>
<p>empty homes kill communities</p> <p>We need Wales to be a vibrant living country, not a theme park.</p>
<p>Why should empty homes exist when there is a shortage of available homes? Total waste of houses.</p>
<p>Anybody who owns second/empty homes should be able to afford 100% premium. This may provide a stimulus for the owners to sell empty properties.</p>
<p>Second homes bring revenue to the local area. I suspect the increased spending in local businesses is more than revenue generated by a second home surcharge. Therefore I suspect that increasing the premium would in fact have a negative effect on the revenue spent in the local community, thus I don't believe a premium should be charged for a second home.</p>
<p>There is a desperate shortage of housing so any measures to discourage properties being left empty or being used as 2nd homes should be put in place.</p>
<p>If you can afford a second home you should be able to afford full council tax.</p> <p>Hopefully it would encourage owners of empty dwellings to rent them out.</p>
<p>To me, dwellings are rarely empty long-term without good reason. The current level of 50% incentivises those that can to get a move on but above this amount could be penalising people unjustly. Although empty dwellings and second properties obviously have a negative effect on housing stock, this is by no means, the sole thing responsible for the waiting time for affordable housing.</p>
<p>I own a property that you currently class as a second home, as my main permanent residence is in Luton. However, the house in Flintshire is fully furnished and always has been since my mother's death three years ago. It is not an investment property or a holiday home. It has never been empty. It is not something that I will ever profit from in that sense. I accept that there are higher costs for insurance, but I object to the higher costs for council tax when I am not here all of the time. It is my second home, my family home, that I am intending to move back to and that I have always been clear with you that I would return to. COVID has delayed me selling my house in Luton, but that is currently on the market and as soon as that is sold, my house on Flintshire will be my only home.</p> <p>I always object to the fact that second home owners are not a part of the community. I am very much part of this local community, I go to church here and I volunteer here. I do most of my food shopping here and</p>

buy at least 50% of my fuel here. I go on holiday to other parts of north Wales more often than I holiday in other parts of the UK, so I hope that I have a positive impact on the local community and wider. As I am not here every weekend I also struggle to get my bins collected regularly, as drivers often don't bother to drive a few metres into our lane when I am here. Paying extra for an occasional and unreliable service is not good.

I understand that you have to charge more properties that are long term empty or hardly ever used, but I have never believed that I fitted into those categories.

I seem to have been caught out by the probate process - whilst even though you are generous in allowing free council tax periods during that time - you have penalised me for wanting to keep my family home ever since.

I only pay 75% of the full rate in Luton as a single person and had expected to do the same here as I divide my time quite equally as I work from home.

Some of these second homes may be able to be rented out if they are not used on a regular basis by the owners thus reducing the housing waiting list

If the council tax on second homes is made higher it will deter people from renting a property or the owners renting them out. Our area is a desirable one which borders England with very few people speaking Welsh therefore this will have no impact on the empty properties

I believe people are entitled to have as many homes as they can afford but should pay full rates on them. Holiday homes are limited as to the effect they have on the economic prosperity of an area. Towns can look miserable in areas where there are many second homes in winter. They receive the same services as everyone else when occupied so they should pay the same when unoccupied as the cost to the council doesn't go down because they are not there and using the property.

Many long term empty properties are the result of a family member dying and often the issue of probate takes several months before a property can be put up for sale. My family have had reason to look at purchasing housing in the last few months and many of the properties seem to need a lot of remedial work before the property can be lived in - or before a mortgage is granted. The premium may hopefully encourage the legatees to improve the property and perhaps rent it out or put on the property market. I do not have an issue with second homes requiring an additional premium but neither am I in an advantageous position of being a second home owner so this may come across as sour grapes. Be that as it may, I do believe that in many instances second homes remove the availability for local folk to purchase properties and in doing so keep the local housing chain moving.

Having a 2nd home is a luxury! Having an empty dwelling when people brought in the county are struggling to find houses where they have grown up is a disgrace!

Also it's killing the Welsh language! Place names and house names are being anglicised!

On this subject it's time for the council to propose all new builds use Welsh names!

If they are not up for sale or sold the council is getting no income so the rest of us have to pay extra

If these people can afford to buy holiday homes that are driving up the price of housing in Wales so locals cannot afford to buy or live in the area as the rental pricing goes too high to so they should pay for the full cost of leaving the house empty or profiteering by holiday letting it. Long term empty houses should pay in full as it is the owner's choice to leave empty as is most cases they do not want to spend. Money on them make them pay or if not sell to council to re home homeless people

In terms of second homes, it deprives people of purchasing their first home at affordable prices and secondly, owners of second homes do not contribute as much to the local community. We believe long term empty properties in the main, leave their property to become unsightly and in some cases affecting the value of homes nearby. Again there is a lack of contribution to the local businesses.

If people can afford a second home then they can afford to make a larger contribution to local services

<p>Long term empty properties can be empty for many reasons - the criteria should not penalise anyone for whom it is their only dwelling e.g. they may be ill and away from home for some time.</p>
<p>It is wrong to have homes standing empty, when so many people are on the waiting list for a home in Flintshire.</p>
<p>Also, it is better to use housing stock that is already here, rather than build more.</p>
<p>I think that people who have second homes here, should pay more into the local economy. I would rather local</p>
<p>People had homes than visitors. I think that young people are competing with second home owners for homes, and several</p>
<p>houses in the village where I live (Sychdyn) are now rented properties (also for holidays) , rather than being sold to young people who are trying</p>
<p>To get onto the housing ladder. There is also an impact on the Welsh language and culture.</p>
<p>We are short of accommodation in Flintshire. Empty property should be used. Any empty property needs to be taxed fully and get it used.</p>
<p>Empty homes can sometimes spoil the appearance of a road , not always I agree , but I can think of one in my area where the house owners each side of it must be absolutely fed up as they are working really hard on their own properties and gardens.</p>
<p>Need for diversity (of housing occupiers) to prevent static entrenched communities.</p>
<p>Housing is needed for local communities. Holiday homes should be limited as they inflate house prices out of reach of local workers.</p>
<p>Empty houses are a blight and remove housing stock.</p>
<p>If property (second home or empty dwelling) is not used then owners should be encourage to sell property or offer property to council as long term rent to support council with social housing scheme.</p>
<p>An increase in council tax will help council to offer support to those families waiting for social housing.</p>
<p>At present 167 isn't a big impact but this could increase causing problems for future first time buyers around the county who wish to stay local.</p>
<p>Holiday properties already pay a premium on top of council tax, but also encourage holiday spending that may be spent elsewhere if they are priced out of the county.</p>
<p>The exceptions for long term empty appear to be acceptable but, not knowing the state of the property or the reasons why they are empty, make it difficult to comment in any meaningful way</p>
<p>Empty houses are an eyesore and pal need houses. Houses get left for too long then they just get torn down.</p>
<p>Housing is at a premium. Those who can afford a second home in the area can afford to pay the 100% premium. Long term vacant property should be used to house those in need.</p>
<p>The type of empty homes are most likely for holiday purposes and unlikely to meet social housing needs. Why should owners pay an extra premium? They are not using most of the services that are available for many weeks of the year and if they are then they should pay the same as everyone else.</p>
<p>Why penalise second home owners just because they own a second property. Does it deter people from owning second properties or is it a money raising opportunity?</p>
<p>I live in a select area of Flintshire where there has been a 4 bedroom detached house empty for over 10 years. I have seen the negative impact this has on all the neighbouring properties and the occupants. What a crying shame!!! It's about time things changed.</p>
<p>Housing should be for the benefit of local people. Second home owners should pay more and long term empty property should be returned to the housing stock quickly.</p>
<p>Local residents are unable to buy properties due second home owners and property investors increasing the price of properties. First time buyers and local government workers unable to buy.</p>

<p>I do not believe second homes cause issues for the community. I do feel that long term empty properties do. This denies other people the opportunity to live in the local area.</p> <p>How is a second home that is well kept an issue?</p> <p>When there are plenty of rented homes which are of poor upkeep but being paid for by the disabled.</p>
<p>I feel that second homes and long term empty homes are a blight on local communities for many reasons and the number of such properties should be reduced.</p>
<p>My main property is in Blackpool but I have a second home in Ewloe. The sole purpose of this second home is because I work at Airbus. During the week it is fully occupied by myself and only empty of a weekend. I do not believe that I should pay a premium because it is a work related second home, it is in constant use during the week throughout the year and I'm bringing money into the area.</p> <p>I would imagine that most second homes and long term empty dwelling, if made available, wouldn't fall under the affordable housing bracket so increasing the premium wouldn't help this situation.</p>
<p>I believe that people that have lived In a village/town in Wales for some time should have the right to buy a property that is vacant or for sale - in preference to a buyer wanting to use it as a second home or holiday let</p>
<p>Not sure what should be done for empty properties. I suspect there cannot be a single answer as there will be different reasons why they are empty.</p>
<p>My main reason is that hopefully council tax could then be reduced from it's at present unacceptable high rate.</p> <p>Giving ordinary working class people and pensioners who have only one home scraping by, to have a stress free life worrying where the funds are coming from to subsidise these people. Rant over!!</p>
<p>There is a shortage of affordable housing</p>
<p>Flintshire is not subject to 2nd or holiday homes that effect the local community as much as other Welsh areas. It is an excuse to raise Council Tax and I have no 2nd property or other connection/interest in this scheme that affects me.</p>
<p>Increased taxation level is an unimaginative attempt to solve a problem that will only eventually be solved by engaging with the property owners.</p>
<p>If people can afford a second home, then they can ensure they provision for the full council tax cost.</p>
<p>Reduced because empty houses and households are not utilising the services provided by the County - bin collections, schools etc.</p>
<p>I was born in Flintshire 75 years ago and was educated here and I have worked here as a teacher for all of my working life. Even though I live in a small rural village some 15 miles from the English border I rarely hear Welsh being spoken. Because Welsh is very much the minority spoken language I can see little reason why the presence of unoccupied properties should affect the prevalence of the language. Sad though this is it is nevertheless a fact of life. I learnt Welsh as a second language but rarely get the opportunity to practise my Welsh.</p> <p>I am more concerned about those properties used solely as holiday rental businesses when such use can avoid the payment of council tax at all. Those used as second homes are contributing to the local economy via council tax and supporting local shops and the hospitality industry. Empty properties contribute nothing except council tax.</p>
<p>It is unfair that houses should remain empty when there is a shortage of accommodation for people who need somewhere to live.</p>
<p>These properties damage l8cal communities and make it harder for local people to find housing, either because it is not available or because it has become too expensive. The council's first duty is to its residents.</p>
<p>Empty homes should be sold or made available to rent. Hopefully, a large increase in council tax would persuade owners to do this.</p>

<p>The problem of long term empty dwellings and second homes is nationwide (UK). There is an acute housing shortage in Wales (including Flintshire) and these long term empty properties could be put to positive use if they were put on the market for sale. An increase in Council Tax will encourage that - and produce more income until they are sold. Second homes are often in picturesque or popular locations. These distort the property market as they are bought at premium prices which puts them beyond the reach of local people.</p>	
<p>Those with second home have the financial ability to pay full council tax. If you can afford another property, you should pay the same fees as you are receiving the same facilities as everyone else. Empty homes, again long term empty home those have them have made the choice. Therefore should be charged 100%</p>	
<p>The number is relatively low.</p>	
<p>This would be incentive second home ownership and leaving properties empty for people in most income brackets. These properties should be available for local people to buy and live in permanently. This would also benefit the environment by fewer new homes being built losing less land to development and maintaining habitats.</p>	
<p>I am a sole home owner/occupier and dutifully pay my council tax via D/D. An empty property that could be occupied is a waste of vital residential resources and the community might benefit if brought back in to use. Not just any use, but say for a family who can add to the overall wealth of the community and our council area.</p>	
<p>The premium should be abolished. To relate it to opportunities for Welsh speakers or affordable home seekers is a complete non sequitur. It is a tax of envy. Second home owners bring much needed economic activity to the area connected to both the fabric of the property and their everyday requirements whilst they are here. As second home owners they much more likely to be better off and will spend a greater amount in both maintaining their second home and feeding and entertaining themselves when they are here. Flintshire will be missing an opportunity for advancing its cause if this tax continues for the sake of political doctrine.</p>	
<p>Long term empty properties are likely to be subject to estate or probate considerations in many instances - do you really think it just or appropriate to tax these bereaved owners? Instead, why not rebate Council Tax paid for properties which are quickly returned to the local stock, say within two years of probate being granted. If property is being held back for planning reasons deal with it by improving the planning process. For the record, I don't have a second home and never had, I don't have a long-term empty property, and never had.</p>	
<p>If you can afford a second home you should have to pay full council tax. This tax should be considered when buying a second home. If you can't afford the council tax, don't buy a second home. If empty dwellings have to pay full council tax it hopefully would encourage owners to let out the dwellings.</p>	
<p>If people can afford to buy second home then they can afford to pay full rates for services</p>	
<p>The purchasing of second Homes reduces availability for local people to live in their localities especially in rural settings. Those who wish have the privilege/benefit of a second home should be prepared to pay a "premium ", the money from which can go to help providing affordable homes for locals.</p>	
<p>If I have to pay an additional 50% or more on a building that requires work on, then I won't be able to afford to do the work so the building will remain empty longer.</p>	
<p>A second dwelling that is occupied should not be charged more whilst an empty dwelling is a property that could be occupied by someone and perhaps should carry a slightly heavier premium.</p>	
<p>Make owners consider making use of empty property</p>	

Second homes are a luxury, and people should pay a premium to help offset the reduced housing stock they create. There is also no reason to own a house and it remain empty for long periods. Again, a financial disincentive is really the only way without special powers to CPO these properties.

We need to maximise the income and people with second homes it empty homes can obviously afford it. With empty homes it could make landlords let them out or sell them hence increasing the supply.

I think an exemption should be made for people who have to go into long term care.

The empty home period should be reduced to something like 6 months ( or less) where the person lives elsewhere- abroad

Dwellings not occupied represent a reduction in the availability of homes for the community. We need to only build sufficient homes to house everyone and second homes and empty houses puts pressure on the Council to ensure more homes are built than are needed. We need to retain as much open space as possible and not turn them over to unnecessary building, something that also increases the effect on the environment and the climate...

At present the empty property is up for sale at an affordable price. If the council need more affordable housing why not buy properties like this or help those in need to buy. I rented to council tenants for many years and think it's unfair to now charge extra tax when we want to sell. Maybe the tax system should be reviewed for circumstance of property being empty.

Q3 Second homes have a positive impact as they bring additional spending to the County. Second homes have a negative impact as they increase the value of homes above what is affordable by local residents.

Q5 With 2120 residents on a waiting list, their families will be using/learning Welsh in school which has no impact. The 167 holiday homes would have a limited negative impact if they only use English.

I have a house that is for sale. The council could buy the property or help someone in need of affordable housing to buy it. I rented the house to council tenants for many years and don't think it's fair to charge me extra tax while on the market.

Second homes bring income to the county with increased revenue to spend. Empty home do not bring income into the county.

IT IS MORALLY WRONG FOR HOMES TO LAY EMPTY WHEN SO MANY LOCAL PEOPLE NEED A HOME.  
SECOND HOMES HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON OUR COMMUNITIES AND THE WELSH LANGUAGE.  
WALES IS BESET WITH THE PROBLEM OF SECOND HOMES AND LANDLORDS WITH LARGE PORTFOLIOS PURCHASING THE SMALL TERRACED PROPERTIES TO RENT OUT, WHEN ONCE THESE WERE AFFORDABLE HOMES FOR YOUNG PEOPLE.

I understand the reasoning for applying a council tax premium on many long term empty homes, to encourage them to be put back into the housing stock. However properties should be assessed and the premium applied when appropriate. I was in the position of leasing a pub in Flintshire but because the flat above the pub was not large enough for our family, nor was it in a suitable state of repair, we decided not to live at the pub, but to remain living in our existing home. Under the terms of the pub lease we were not allowed to sub-let the flat and the layout meant we couldn't use it as a B&B. After 12 months the flat above the pub was deemed long term unoccupied and we had to pay the CT premium. We were already paying an extortionate amount of business rates and after a while both these charges together contributed to us giving up the pub because it just wasn't profitable. Please consider the property and the circumstances and consider if the premium is fair before imposing the extra cost.

150% council tax after 1 year is incredibly unfair when planning is taking over 1 year and paying extra council tax has delayed the project due to more money spent on tax and less money spent on renovation. financial pressure encourages people to work much faster putting more pressure on in safe practices

The question is, why are these long-term empty properties empty? Do you know who the owners are and are they local?



Long-term empty properties (as opposed to second homes) should be taken into council ownership and used for social housing.

I fully support the principle of discouraging people from using or disposing of empty properties but the premium should not apply if a property is being actively marketed for sale.

I have recent experience of trying to sell a retirement flat (as Executor for the deceased owner and not in Flintshire) and was shocked at how difficult it was to sell, even at a vastly reduced price. No doubt other properties would present similar challenges and the owner/seller should not be penalised through a Council Tax premium

Second homes are a luxury and in our area not contributing to the health or wealth of our county. They remove housing from the grasp of local people seeking to stay and work within the locality they were brought up in.

Empty homes are often held by families with deep local connections.

Many generations have been brought up in the area and very often since the building was first lived in. The current owners may well have a desire to assist their family members achieve affordable housing within their locality.

If a local resident leaves their property to a relative with a view that the building should provide housing for their relative's offspring, thereby providing family continuity within the area and providing affordable housing for the youngsters then the family looking after the property shouldn't be penalised.

I had to move from Sir Fon to Flintshire back in the 70's when property was quickly being bought up as holiday homes and the areas I was brought up in have very few locals left. I have family left on the island who have no choice other than to pay heavy rent or leave their home area.

We have a responsibility to look after our local residents and their offspring both with regard to housing and work availability.

It is incumbent on our leaders in the local society, wherever that is, to help as much as possible to achieve this.

Those people who can afford to purchase second homes for holidays or occasional use bring nothing to local communities. Occasional use of local shops perhaps but they still enjoy the provision of council services. I believe that an increased contribution to 100% would enable increased support for council services for schools and full time residents.

We Moved from the area just over 12 months ago, however, it has taken the 12 months just to get plaster on the walls due to a national shortage of materials. This has been affected by Covid-19 and brexit.

We have not allowed the property to stand empty for any other reason, We told the council that it was being renovated, if as stated above, if there is a genuine attempt to sell the property but the renovations are taking longer than the current 12 months there should be a review if its realistic to charge an extra 50%-100% of the council tax.

As soon as we have the property in a good standing to be sold we will sell.

I am classed as having a second home but this is not really the case. Sadly my dad passed away in which 2019 and I was left the house.

We applied for planning permission to put an extension on so we could move in to it and sell the home I am living in now.

Due to Flintshire Planning been so slowly and then us going in to lock down with COVID it was only February this year 2021 that we had our plans passed.

There is no kitchen or bathroom in the house and no gas or electricity so why should be paying council tax?????

I am now having to pay two lots of Council Tax through no fault of my own and it is crippling me I am not on a massive salary and it is a struggle.

All the reasons listed above. There is a housing crisis in the UK which is due to a number of factors, but the large number of housing units that are unavailable to those who need homes has to be a significant factor. I personally would like to see that nobody owns a second home while there are people who are homeless or forced to live in inadequate accommodation, but I realise that this is untenable. I also see increasing acres of green land being swallowed to build new homes in areas where good quality houses are sitting empty for much of the time. I recognise that this is less of a problem in Flintshire than in other areas, but the figures provided for this survey show that second homes and in particular long term empty properties are a significant factor here too. The least the owners of these properties can do is to make an increased contribution to the costs of housing local residents, and if it helps to discourage the ownership of these properties so much the better.

When a house has been bought and paid for by the occupant, who then passes that property on to a family member, it should not have to pay extra council tax. As the property is empty, it is not even getting the services for which council tax is being paid at the fixed rate.

Higher tax would encourage productive use of property.

I do not feel empty or second homes have a positive impact upon the community. It will also be a way to reduce empty properties as well as raise more funds for essential services.

Long term empty dwellings do not help anyone so By charging extra Council Tax it will deter owners from keeping them empty. Some investors may just be hoping to make a quick profit.

But I do think that the Council should consider specific circumstances for a property remaining empty and make due allowance in genuine cases.

You are going on about Social Housing. People who have worked hard and purchased private properties do not want Social housing near them

You are also aware that arrears are mostly from Social housed people so put your house in order and make sure people pay their debts and stop trying to subsidise your inadequacy by trying to get more money from people who pay their bills

Second homes are a luxury and should be treated as such.

Empty homes should have rate increased over time up to the max 100% over time

Prices have risen making it impossible for Welsh people to buy houses as others are offering more money.

2/ Long term empty usually poor condition, encouragement required to bring them back into use, rental or sold, and rental could be via council intervention.

3/ so few second homes not to be an issue, usually kept in good order, renovations by locals bringing extra money in area, don't use full range of services i.e. bins, health care, schools etc. but pay into. Many of the cheaper places have been for sale a long time, locals haven't bought them despite being keenly priced so don't believe it's an issue

4/ Question worded poorly, should be split into long term then second homes. Long term empty isn't good, hence no repeal when Law of property act updated re adverse possession, council should make contact with owners encouraging selling or rental or lease to council for some of the homeless. Again second homes are not high in number, many in holiday areas that were cheaper but people can't buy no matter how cheap if they have no regular job, investment needed for jobs so locals can afford houses plus more council housing needs to be built

5/ Don't see either as an issue in Flintshire, many locals don't continue the language, however if long term empty back I. Use it'd give families homes so kids will do better at school. Second home users will often try and learn the language if their neighbours speak it as neighbours are genuinely friendly , it's certain aspects of news on second homes that stirred up hatred, i.e. Governments blaming second home owners on their policy failings on house building and jobs. Abandoned property owners aren't there to get the hate message. It doesn't go down well when locals aren't housed when needed yet councils bear the cost of looking after immigrants as locals see this as they've been forgotten and are on the street when

immigrants get housed and looked after, yet Governments blame it all on second home owners, some areas may have issues but Flintshire has such a low number it surely can't be an issue.

6/ Extra charges for very little service seems unfair but most would probably be ok with a small charge, if too high it will make owners change to business rates and pay nothing to council and little to Government, the lady close to me isn't rated for council tax in her let bungalow, most second home owners are not rich, some inherit a family property, others save very hard and go without to afford their second home, using locals for works required.

7/ Long term empty really needs to be brought back into use so continue to charge and if not got one already get an empty homes officer on the case!

If you can afford a 2nd home, you should be able to pay for its up keep and the associated costs. That includes council tax, council tax is not just about collecting bins, the money is also for the local area, schools, and the local environment etc. It is not fair that those who live permanently in the local area have less money coming into the area through council tax due to it being someone's second home. Long term empty properties should also not disadvantage the local community by bring in less money into the area. Those houses would be better used to accommodate people on housing waiting lists.

There is no evidence to suggest that charging second home owners an additional premium is likely to free up stock for rent or purchase (as first homes). In addition the additional monies provided are not adequately ring-fenced for creation of new affordable property, nor are the sums of money thus provided likely to make any significant impact on the need for same. Frankly it appears to be merely a political device by the Welsh Government to pretend that it is doing something about the housing crisis and is effectively just a tax.

No interest has been taken on why people own second homes and how they use them. There may be very good reasons on an individual basis for this and to impose this tax retrospectively is particularly unfair. More effort should be placed on identifying where local housing needs are particularly acute and needing attention, with a view to working with those communities to free up land at agricultural land values (plus a small premium) for the creation of new affordable housing and facilitate planning consent. To fail to do so merely underlines that this mechanism is simply a cash cow for local authorities.

The situation regarding long term empties is different, although the understanding of why the situation exists is equally missing. At least there is time for such individuals to prepare to meet the costs or make other arrangements. Since there MAY be evidence that empty homes are a source of disrepair and unsightly in the community, some 'encouragement' to get the owners to rectify this may be useful

Depending on the reason for the empty property - they should be let out to help reduce the waiting list for affordable housing

I currently pay a premium rate on an empty property of £243 which I have to pay until the property is sold. It is not a 2nd home so I get no benefit from the property. 2nd homes can recover their bills by renting out properties and so should be charged more to balance out the payments for people like myself that has no choice but to pay this premium.

These homes are depriving local people the chance of acquiring a home. Empty houses can bring the area down and if not maintained can attract vermin etc. and also squatters

I believe that second home or holiday homes bring much needed money into the community.

Is not fair to charge additional money for a second home, our boy is disabled and need adopted holiday house. To find one in UK cost a fortune why is much easier for us to have a second home close to our main house.

With regard to second homes, to be able to provide an accurate answer to the impact they have on affordable housing in Flintshire it would be useful to have a breakdown of the council tax banding of these properties. If they are the lower type banding, i.e. affordable to purchase and rent, then they will have an impact on affordable housing, however, if they are in the higher bands I do not think they would have an

impact as someone on a low income would not be able to afford to buy or rent them. For the higher bands, this would be an opportunity for the council to receive additional income in the form of council tax payments, but the people using them as a second home would probably not be using Flintshire's services, such as schools, waste collection etc.

With regard to empty homes, it depends upon the reason why they are empty. Some may be empty due to death of a relative but due to legal problems, they may be unable to sell or rent the property and by increasing payments for these people it may cause them to become destitute. Some may be empty due to long term sickness, for example previously occupied by single person who has a stroke and needing to go into respite care, again this would cause significant distress having additional expenditure on top of any fees for care. If however the property was empty out of choice then the owner should be made to pay council tax on it. It's not just privately owned houses though that are empty, I have seen such houses boarded up on council housing estates in Holway and the strand) and so Flintshire need to get their own stock in order too!

167 properties in Flintshire are second homes out of a total housing stock of approx. 70,000 - this equates to a mere 0.24%. Such a tiny proportion, perhaps one home in this village and two homes in another village for example, can have absolutely no impact on the sustainability of local communities. This is unlike some Welsh counties, such as Gwynedd, where over 10% of the housing stock comprises second homes and Long term empty properties are in many cases, neglected and poorly maintained and are a blight on the local community. Second homes tend to be far better maintained and cared for. The two groups of properties should be treated quite differently for taxation purposes.

Keep the English 2nd home owners out of Wales and allow Welsh locals to buy affordable properties in their own villages/towns similar to policies adopted in the Lakes.

Stop penalising people who are genuinely trying to make and improve a home for themselves by adding an additional % to further slow the process of completing i.e. apply common sense not greed

second homes raised to 100% as they are using the facilities available bins etc. - reduce empty dwellings as they are not using facilities available

Second homes may be used for people who work locally where their families live or work further afield. I think it would be unfair to discriminate against hard working people.

Owners of long term empty properties need the encouragement to sell or renovate and rent out. They don't benefit anyone whilst being empty and long term become derelict and hotspots for squatters and vandals

Given the social housing crisis at the moment and the number of families on the waiting list to be housed; it is sickening that there are a wealth of empty properties and second homes sitting empty for the majority of the year. People using Wales as a holiday destination should be supporting the community and the Welsh economy by utilising hotels and local guest houses rather than buying up property and stopping young Welsh people getting on the property ladder. This is more of an issues in more "touristy" parts of Wales but the outcomes are the same and they are negative for the people of Wales.

I feel that in the present housing shortage to have properties left empty is unfair to local people who cannot find or cannot afford accommodation. Empty properties, which are often not well maintained make towns and villages look rundown.

We own a small terraced cottage in Holywell. This has been repaired and renovated using local craftsmen and materials. The property is tiny and has steep twisting stairs. It is not a property that would be suitable for families or accessible or anyone with mobility problems. Our main home is in Nottinghamshire, our daughter married a Welshmen and they have two children who are fluent Welsh speakers. We bought this property in order to spend time with our grandchildren. It is not a holiday property. We spend money in the local area and support local schools. We do not however use any great amount of local services yet we

pay more in Council tax for this property than we do for our main property where we spend a larger part of our time. This does not seem fair to us.

This property has never been vacant for 12 months. I do not regard this as a second property or holiday home. Indeed this is my family home where I was actually born. The longest this property has been vacant was during the pandemic lockdown when I was not allowed to enter Wales.

Before applying the premium have to be checked the reasons why the property is empty.

There are hardly any houses for people to buy who are local.

Renting out homes as holiday let's also needs looking into.

Owners of a second home in areas of the country where it negatively impacts the local population (increased house prices and less availability of housing to the indigenous population) should generate a higher contribution to that area. Long term empty accommodation deteriorates which has negative impacts (from a health and safety perspective as well as aesthetically not to mention the waste of housing space)... a higher rate of contribution from the owners should prompt them to either do something about it or at least penalise them for not doing anything about it.

Not all long term empty are second homes, if a property is attached to a business and would not be used as a house again why you would have to pay the premium. If you inherit a home due to bereavement and it doesn't sell you have the premium added.

Should not be charged....IN CERTAIN CIRCUMSTANCES. There needs to be clear distinction between habitable second homes lying empty and homes, such as mine, which are quite uninhabitable, having been extensively vandalised over the last few years. The bungalow, built c.1925, was already quite unsuitable for letting when we inherited it on the death of my father and it is some years now since I first instructed an architect with a view to rebuilding as the property has a major structural fault and underpinning the foundations is prohibited by a TPO on an oak tree whose canopy extends partially over the building. Several sets of plans have been drawn up in discussion with FCC Planning Department and a full Planning Application submitted over a year ago. I realise that the Covid19 pandemic can reduce the operational efficiency of public bodies but, as a pensioner mostly reliant on basic State Pension, I already struggle to meet the monthly Council Tax fee of £262. Hence my suggestion that the levy on uninhabitable properties should cease once real steps have been taken and continue to be made to bring a property to habitable status.

if a person through no fault of their own inherits a property for e.g. from their parents it is disgraceful that they should have to pay such a high premium simply because the property is empty it appears to me that the councils in wales see this as a money grabbing exercise in order to fund their incompetence in their management of housing issues and are simply taking the easy option

Long term empty properties need to have a reason for being empty. If they are not used at all, they should be considered for residency.

I am proposing to purchase a flat which will be used to help our family, who now have a small child. They live in a small cottage and both work to make ends meet. We need somewhere to be able to come from southern UK to be able to help them at times.

A second home needs to have a purpose, or let out. If our needs are met, we would certainly aim to let it for local people.

People should have the right to do what they want with a property they own. Not tax on tax on tax.

I inherited my property when my mother died. My father built it and I grew up in it. The neighbours all watched me grow up there. I have a great deal of affection for the property and the area, and I am usually at the property once a month, work permitting. For all the Council Tax I pay in Flintshire, I don't even get my bin emptied.

It's not my fault it was decided to sell off Council Houses. That's the problem.

The pandemic has changed our mobility. For almost two years it has been impossible for next-of-kin of a deceased Flintshire resident to travel there safely to clear an empty house and put it up for sale. This is not the time to make things even more difficult by imposing unnecessary fees. The ordinary council tax should suffice, especially since empty houses are not using the facilities supplied by the council such as rubbish collection. In my case, a friend of my late brother's has been staying at the house on a regular basis to mow the lawn and check on the house, so it is not long-term empty.

It is the property that is being taxed not the people that live in it or their circumstances, so why should anyone property be taxed more than another in the same band.

This format does not allow for individual circumstances so I have responded as it applies just to us. It does not even differentiate between second home owners who profit through rent and those like us who don't. There is a big difference between second homes in Flintshire and those in coastal, holiday areas in Gwynedd and Anglesey. There is also a difference between long term empty properties that may be in poor repair and 'second homes' that are not. In our case we have kept my late mother's bungalow in Hawarden for the time being. It is not rented out and the time will come when we will sell, even though we might prefer not to. It is already unfair to charge us a 50% premium as we only use refuse collection services occasionally. To charge a further 50% would be immoral. Clearly we would not be prepared to continue as a "cash cow" for the council. 605 long term empty homes need a different approach to 167 'second homes', quite a small number across the whole county. As things stand, the fact that we continue to own this property makes no difference to the amount of Welsh spoken in the area, has no bearing on 'affordable' or social housing and does not affect the character of the community. Trying to make all properties and areas fit into these categories is unacceptable.

It is not fair on council tax payers who are financially supporting owners of second or empty homes. Lost revenue could be utilised for the benefit of Flintshire residents.

Mitigating circumstances should be rigorously investigated

If we are fortunate to invest in an empty property which is unoccupied and neglected, surely whilst undergoing improvements both externally and internally, why we should be penalised by paying 50% over and above any council tax whatsoever!

If the external works are dealt with in the first instance surely this is for the better of the Flintshire area and maybe I would highly recommend the following;

0 % in year 1, then 50% year 2, to an absolute MAXIMUM 75% year 3 to year 5 as the property is NOT using local authority services then more interest would be given to these empty properties.

Second homes are used by people who can afford to have a second home in North Wales for personal reasons such as Welsh roots and the intention to return to Wales.

Second homes are rarely in the category of affordable houses.

I live next door to a property that has been empty for almost 4 years and has fallen into a state of disrepair. Its appearance is a blight on the neighbourhood and presents an environmental hazard as rats from the property have encroached onto my own property.

Also, there is a large tree in the front garden, the roots of which are lifting my block-paved drive and also present a danger to the stability of my property's foundations.

We have tried to get some action on this problem but so far nothing seems to get done.

Our late mother left our family home, in Hawarden, to my sister and me. We both lived there full time until our 20's, visited and stayed regularly over the last 40 years. We have owned the house since 2018. All the family spoke Welsh. Hawarden remains a largely non-Welsh speaking area. Our home is not a 'second home' in the sense of a holiday home, we don't allow anyone else to stay, nor do we raise income from the house. Nor is it long-term empty. Due to the pandemic, and the restrictions on travel at certain times, we have been unable to visit or stay as long as we would have under normal circumstances. There is no rationale for applying a premium to a home of this kind which does nothing to negatively impact on the

area or the community, doesn't help with increasing affordable homes, or support the Welsh language. The council has discretion to vary its thinking on this and should consider far more nuanced categories of property and should consider far more nuanced exemptions.
2nd homes and empty properties remove needed properties for local communities. This can lead to inflated house prices as availability is less.
Second homes are fully furnished. Long term empty - I can't afford to bring my property up to standard, saving hard as can't get a lone. Sadly the council tax is eating into my savings setting me back.
Second home owners bring revenue to Flintshire and Very often improve run down properties. Whereas long term empty properties are very often a flight on the community in which it is situated.
long term empty do not access CC infrastructure, whereas second homes do when occupied
It would deter home Indra from leaving their properties sensory for long term nd normally thee re ones that end up in disrepair and Na eye sore on local communities s I don't think Flintshire second home sis bad of. A problem as other local neighbouring authorities
Still awaiting a response from my letter dated 6th July 2021 Acc Ref 800363621 with regards to your second home policy
The charge is limiting available funds to bring the properties back into use. You are frustrating the property owner by applying this charge. How much additional revenue has the Local Authority made by charging this 'tax'? What has the Local Authority used this money for and has it made a difference to the issue?
I would recommend consultation with the owners of long term empty properties to establish the reasons why, and the forward plan as in many cases they are undergoing renovation, it could financial, or illness or recently the pandemic causing supply difficulties. I would also class long term as over 10 years. As for second homes there are ready for use at any time. Long term empty and second homes are a total different entity. The council class them the same when they're not. I would also suggest if the properties have been abandoned they should be auctioned off as they stand.
Whoever owns the property and if it has been empty for a long period of time obviously has no intention of either renting or selling it should pay the very top premium council tax if not more in my opinion.
An increase will provide extra revenue for local use
The welsh government have repeatedly failed to build affordable housing across Wales, question 4 illustrates this... "4. In Flintshire there are currently 2,120 people on the waiting list for social/affordable housing. In your opinion, what impact do long-term empty dwellings and second homes currently have on the availability of affordable housing in Flintshire?" The impact is negligible, The reason for people waiting to be housed is government failure to build affordable housing, if they are going ahead with this Charge anyway, will they spend the proceeds on affordable housing? Probably not.
If the properties are low value they need to be used, if possible for social purposes. If they are very high value the owners should not escape paying. However if the properties are remote or would suit the tourism business further consideration should be used.
Long term empty homes and second homes are skewing the housing market and making it more difficult for locals, especially younger locals, to remain here.
Greedy second home owner's hoards properties when there aren't enough to go around. Tax them till the pips squeak, 100% is not enough.
Flintshire Council need to sort themselves out and address the issue of how long it takes to fill a vacant council house.

<p>Flintshire need to urgently address the circa £5m they have failed to collect in Council Tax arrears.</p> <p>Flintshire need to engage in addressing the issue of creating more affordable housing stock (private and Council) instead of blaming or targeting so called second home owners.</p> <p>Flintshire need to publish how much Council Tax they have lost and include in this survey by introducing the premium and property owners moving their property out of domestic rating.</p>
<p>Many reasons for owning second homes its unfair and greedy to charge more than local residents</p>
<p>I think 50 per cent premium on 2nd homes and empty homes is sufficiently punitive to prompt these owners into feeding such homes back onto the market to house those in need of a roof over their heads.</p>
<p>If people can afford the luxury of a second home then they should also expect to pay a premium towards the wider community to which they only stay in part time, because if the property was a permanent residence the wider economy would benefit year round and this needs to be compensated for. Empty properties should incur a premium to incentivise owners to bring them back into use or sell them on.</p>
<p>Rich vs Poor</p> <p>Pay the same as we all do</p>
<p>If you can afford a second home, you can afford to pay full council tax, why should a second home owner be treated differently?</p>
<p>Empty properties empty for over 12 months unless for sale, could house the people on the waiting list.</p>
<p>Why has there been two council houses empty for nearly 6 months on Inglefield Avenue in Conchs Quay</p>
<p>Second home owners have the opportunity to use all services offered, including parks, refuse services, medical emergency services, etc. The local authority needs to raise funding from all of the residents, if we choose to buy property here, we should contribute.</p>
<p>Too many young people are being driven out of the towns and villages they grew up in due to the affordability of housing. The building of new housing estates is not least the solution.</p>
<p>Charging for empty buildings only removes funds from their owners and does not get the buildings back in use.</p>
<p>Second home ownership shouldn't be a penalty or seen as a social evil or penalised.</p> <p>People work hard to own second homes. They are places of retreat and needed income for some.</p> <p>Why should they be penalised for being fortunate or working hard.</p> <p>The council should release more land for affordable homes to be built.</p> <p>The council should legally define a value in pound sterling for what is affordable and it should legally require developers to provide at least 20% of their developments at that price or lower.</p> <p>NOT charge private owners more money.</p> <p>The 163 or so second homes in Flintshire are not going to fill the housing shortage... at all. It's a tiny proportion of the number of luxury houses built each year... Not even 2%.</p> <p>So why are they being targeted. These bring in jobs in tourism where used as summer lets and holiday lets. They bring people to wales to enjoy the culture and the country. All targeting second homes is doing is pushing people away from wales.</p>
<p>FCC should reduce council tax on empty property. To allow the owners to invest in their property and not in paying the bills.</p>
<p>There are not enough affordable homes, and even people that can afford nice ones struggle to find one</p>
<p>The single person allowance is only 25% and some struggle to pay it as not everyone receives benefits. If a home is empty - it should attract the full tax. If it is a second home - the owners will be better placed to contribute the full amount of council tax. Especially if they rent it out we should think more about the people who live in and contribute to the local economy</p>
<p>Empty houses should be used to facilitate bringing down the high level of people on the waiting list for affordable housing.</p>



<p>Premium on second homes is allowed to be charged on chalet properties where planning permission says they cannot be used as a residential property but can be occupied any time through the year. Such holiday properties should be excluded from second home premium (as static caravans are) as they could never be part of housing stock.</p>
<p>I have an empty property in Flintshire with it being long term empty. I am struggling enough as it is and to pay the tax that is double I am leaving my family with no heating and less food in order to pay it. It's in a dilapidated state as it is.</p>
<p>I live in a tiny village which has at least 4 holiday lets/ 2nd homes. These properties are taking affordable rental properties off the market so there is limited availability.</p>
<p>Both these subjects have a negative impact on the ability and opportunities for young people especially together onto the housing ladder and remain in their place of birth close to family. Second home ownership in particular will impact on cost of housing in some localities again to the disadvantage of local residents and can impact on the viability of local services.</p>
<p>Case by case basis. Not all homes are empty by choice... delays in probate resolution for example.</p>
<p>Your questions are leading questions to fit an agenda/ narrative of inadequate social housing of your making. Perhaps you shouldn't have sold off your stock all those years ago and especially at below market value rates. First refusal for sitting tenants yes, but at market value. Hence why you now have a major problem.</p>
<p>We have a 2nd home in Flintshire and it has remained empty a lot longer than usual due to Covid, lockdown etc. preventing works. The whole property has needed a total strip out to renovate and again, as this takes time, coupled with lockdown, we feel the 50% should not have been charged and waived. The extra tax is crippling those who want to get an empty home up to a saleable standard.</p>
<p>The premium merely serves as a financial penalty rather than encourages properties to come into use etc.</p>
<p>Long term empty properties have no influence on affordable housing. There are also many reasons why a property may remain empty which the current system makes no allowance for.</p>
<p>Rather than penalised long term empty owners should be incentivised to make them available. If the true aim is to reduce the no. Of empty properties then incentivise this. For example if brought back into use with 12 months Council Tax refunded</p>
<p>PLEASE SEE SECTION 13</p>
<p>We bought our present property some 47 years ago and spent many enjoyable times there. The property was derelict and condemned and the only living things were some sheep. We spent 3 years modernising the cottage and the surrounding area without altering the appearance or size. We have improved the area and everybody is extremely friendly.</p>
<p>The couple next door had always lived in the area and we asked them if they cared us being there. They were delighted to have us live next door.</p>
<p>For many years we spent every weekend and holiday there until you stopped us going to Wales due to Covid.</p>
<p>We always use local labour, bought all the furnishings and carpets and always shop locally for all our food and other requirements. Therefore we are giving to Wales and not taking away. We have many friends in the Area, in fact our daughter's main friends. Are in Wales as she grew up with them.</p>
<p>some empty properties are been renovated by the owners and an increase of 50% after the first 12 months is a lot of money that could be used on the renovation the people who use homes as holiday homes should pay at least 100%</p>
<p>I don't believe that a premium charge should be made as the facilities are not used 50% more than other households.</p>
<p>Unlike local authorities in West Wales in Flintshire we do not have the number of second homes that they have so they do not present the same problems they do in those areas e.g. where many or most of the</p>

houses are holiday homes which are unoccupied for much of the year and young local people are priced out of the market by those from more prosperous areas who are able and willing to pay inflated prices for a second home.

Similarly with only 6% of Welsh speakers in the county, the presence of holiday homes occupied by mainly English speakers does not dilute or adversely affect the Welsh language except in a few village locations in the county where the proportion of Welsh speakers is higher.

Obviously, those who buy and own second homes are wealthy enough to run two homes and are therefore wealthy enough to afford paying additional Council Tax on their second home and are obviously quite prepared to do so. In addition they receive local services when they are in residence and because they are not in residence 24/7 they are not making any substantial contribution in support of other local businesses and services. A 50% premium has been applied in the past and I think that this should be increased not to 100% here. 60 or 65% would be more appropriate.

Many are bought as holiday homes and are let on that basis the owners do not pay Council tax at all because they are part of the hospitality business and not subject to Council tax at all which cannot be right since the owners and occupiers are not paying anything towards the provision of the local services those using them benefit from such as road repairs and maintenance, street lighting, refuse collection etc.

We have lived for some 47 years in the same property in Flintshire and the original property had been empty for some considerable time and was derelict and in extremely poor condition, the only inhabitants being a few sheep.

We spent 3 years repairing the cottage and maintained its style, size and appearance

We bought all our furnishings, furniture, building materials and goods locally helping the local community and Wales.

We asked the Welsh couple who lived next door (semidetached) if they minded us living next door as 2nd home owners and they were delighted to have some company/neighbours and we help each other...

Our daughter grew up there and has many friends who she keeps in touch with and visits.

People should be allowed to own a home for whatever reason they want it is a free country and not up to yourselves what they should do with something that they have bought with their own money, in particular the charge for an empty home being refurbished is completely wrong. If a property takes longer than 12 months to be refurbished there are usually circumstances causing this most people want to have an income for their property or to occupy but you charging ridiculous amounts of money for council tax where services are not even being used at that property is wrong, that money could be used to bring the property into use sooner.

Holiday homes are often bought by well off people who only stay in them for a small part of the year. I think this is a bad thing as the part time occupants contribute only for a short time in the year to the local area. And as there is a housing shortage in the country any housing should not be for holidays for people that can afford 2 houses!

Homes are to be lived in

Why penalise people for whatever reason their house is empty. If its holiday home money into the area will be lost it's none if council business did privately owned homes and they not using services I'd they not here and as more empty homes why should they be charged down or using services. There could be many reasons the houses are empty. Go charge big house builders more money.

As my wife and I have only our NHS pensions and my Wife also in receipt of her DHS (OAP) pension. Currently we find it difficult to afford our renovation program and to suggest increasing our current 50% "Premium" to 100% will only cause us further personal hardship and delay in completing our renovation program and thereto delaying/preventing our move into our bungalow in Caergwrle.

It has always annoyed me to have to pay. My Flintshire home is the ONLY one I own. If I lived there, I would have a reduction on my Council Tax. I am not using facilities all the time, Police etc. so why should I pay so much more? I get so cross about it.

Questions 2 and 4. Over the past three years or more there have been several long-term empty Flintshire County Council owned properties locally to our property. Perhaps FCC can begin by assessing how the empty properties they own impact on communities, the housing waiting lists and the affect the general appearance the of their empty properties and the unkempt area around the property has on the locality and house prices!

Question 5. The Welsh Language must be protected and promoted at every opportunity. Why it is that new property developments within Flintshire are designed by, constructed and managed by companies from outside Wales and those new properties are not restricted to the SHARP Scheme, but will be offered to applicants outside of the local area and Wales? What evidence can Flintshire County Council provide that they are actively contributing to limiting the impact on the loss of the Welsh language?

Question 6. An increase in premium for Second Homes would help to make their purchase a less attractive option and would help to prevent the "swallowing up" of affordable homes for our young local people.

Question 7. The case of each Long-Term Empty property should be considered on an individual basis, with an assessment of the circumstances and reasons why the property has remained empty being made prior to the charging of an additional poll tax premium. Sometimes there are circumstances beyond the property owner's control which can delay, hinder and prevent the property from being offered for sale or rent. When modernisation and renovation is required to make the property an attractive sale or rental option and a substantial amount of money is being invested by the property owner in such works, the charging of an additional premium on the Poll Tax is not helpful and counterproductive in assisting a property owner in their endeavours to bring onto the sale/rental market a up to standard, ready to move into and comfortable family home.

Long-term empty properties can often be the subject of probate, which can be a lengthy process with a timescale outside the beneficiary's control and until such time as probate is granted the beneficiary/new property owner's hands are tied. Following Granting of Probate it may be that the new property owner will retain the property to offer on the rental market and in doing so will renovate and modernise the property and it may be necessary to employ tradesmen to carry out all the necessary works. The sourcing of good, reliable trades people can be a lengthy process in normal times, however, over the past two years due to the Coronavirus Lockdowns, both national and local, large sections of our working calendar has been lost, with scheduled start dates for works to be undertaken having to be reviewed and delayed. Not only has this had an impact on the timescale to complete necessary works, but so too has the lack of available materials and the considerable price increase for such materials.

All the above matters are relevant in establishing why a property is still empty and should be taken into consideration if the local authority is prepared to demonstrate sympathy for a home owner with a genuine desire to endeavour to provide a comfortable family home. The additional Premium only serves to penalise those who have a genuine desire to provide accommodation of a high standard and a home in which it is hoped a good tenant will wish to live for many years. The charging of this additional Premium not only hinders property owners financially, but must surely promote and encourage the hurried introduction of properties onto the rental market, which may lack the approved standard of accommodation, as property owners hope to avoid the increased premium charges.

- The questionnaire appears to be carefully crafted in keeping with the Council's own policies.
- The questionnaire almost implies that second-home owners, etc. are exclusively responsible for the area's possible housing problems, which could just as easily be owing to previous ineffective Council policies.
- It may be helpful if the Council defined more clearly the relationship it sees between housing policies and linguistic ones. (See 13.)

My main property supports three businesses each of which access the main drive. Yard, outbuildings and land of the property. Our insurance company insists the property is inhabited at night. This has happened without fail. Because my husband has Alzheimer's disease and is unsafe in an isolated property he lives at Brookside Farm which is a long term rental property owned by ourselves. However, his condition is deteriorating and it will necessitate twenty four hour care in the foreseeable future which creates a problem for me for which as yet I have not found a solution. It is my intention, eventually to live, full time at the Galchog and re rent Brookside Farm.

My husband's diagnosis coincided with the fact that Brookside Farm could not be let out because we discovered it was possible to touch the unearthed cable that feeds the top end of Village Road, Northop Hall from a bedroom window. Despite being prioritised by Scottish Power for replacement it took nearly three years to happen.

Galchog is unsuitable for family occupation because it is dangerous and requires a comprehensive renovation scheme. It is too isolated and difficult and unsafe to access by foot.

Sometimes people have specific reasons for not selling or renting out their long term empty property, if the property is in a good state of repair and does not devalue or have a negative impact on the street it is located on by being in a poor state of repair as is sometimes the case with occupied properties with scruffy tenants who dump rubbish why should they pay any more than the normal council tax rate.

If a property is not a second holiday home it is not depriving anyone of an affordable home especially if it is not in a desirable holiday location and located in a normal town, also if it is long term empty it has not been used for profit through rentable income which could justify the extra council tax charge

The premium is unfair as it discriminates against local Welsh residents and penalises them for owning a property in a village where they grew up as a child, attended the local village school and remained in Flintshire for secondary education.

If a home owner lives within Flintshire and also has a second property within Flintshire, they are already paying council tax twice to Flintshire County Council. It is therefore unfair for Flintshire residents to be charged further. It is understandable if home owners that have their primary residence in another county or country are charged the premium to a certain extent as Flintshire County Council does not receive a primary home tax payment.

My property band would not come within the affordable housing bracket and therefore unfortunately would not be of benefit within any affordable housing schemes.

Older properties cost more to maintain, with wages lower in Wales, it is a further penalisation to local residents that own a second property. The premium therefore reduces the amount of money that can be spent on the property to maintain it resulting in a negative impact to the local economy and small businesses within it.

There may be good reasons why a property is long term empty, extensive rebuild due to a fire being one. This is the case with my property. After a fire on September 21st, 2020 the property required an extensive rebuild, including new back door and all windows to the rear, extensive redecoration due to smoke damage and extensive re plastering. This work could not be completed in the twelve months allowed, due primarily to the dilatory efforts of the builder and to their own incompetence.

This house is not a second home for me or anyone else, but an investment property to provide me with extra income, which I need as an O.A.P. Details follow in a letter.

FOR HOLIDAY HOMES AND LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES IN DIFFERING COUNTIES TO THE MAIN RESIDENCE, THERE MAY BE AN ARGUMENT FOR A PREMIUM ON HOLIDAY HOMES. BUT FOR LONG TERM EMPTY PROPERTIES IN THE SAME COUNTY ANY PREMIUM IS RIDICULOUS. I AM ALREADY PAYING TWO FULL COUNCIL TAXES AND GETTING NOTHING EXTRA IN RETURN REGARDING SERVICES. IF THE COUNCIL WERE REALLY SERIOUS IN REDUCING EMPTY HOUSES PERHAPS THEY COULD LOOK TO PURCHASE THEM

My long term empty dwelling will be lived in by a family member when they move back permanently to North Wales from South Wales, which is where they currently work and live.

The answers to some of the questions above with regards to long term empty properties all depend upon the location of the properties, the category of housing stock into which the property(ies) fall(s) and the circumstance surrounding the individual property; some long term empty properties may need to be redeveloped and modernised; not all long term empty properties may be suitable for social / affordable housing.

Second Home properties may also not be appropriate for social / affordable housing.

I was born and brought up in Flintshire, went to school in Flintshire, and have since moved away to attend university and take up subsequent employment some distance away. I am now part self-employed with business interests in Flintshire which provide employment for a number of local people. Although my main residence is outside Flintshire I have inherited property in Flintshire and stay in Flintshire when attending to my business interests there. As I work in two places it makes sense to have accommodation in both places, and I should not be penalised for such. I provide employment in Flintshire and I spend money in Flintshire, which should be encouraged, not discouraged. If council tax costs on property in Wales increase as indicated and ownership becomes more prohibitive then running a business in Wales becomes less viable. This would damage the prospects of investment and employment in the County and Principality. Council tax is supposed to be a tax for services provided by the council – not a stick to punish the householder with. Empty properties and second homes use fewer services than main homes, so cost the council less to serve – so should have less council tax levied, not more. All premiums for these properties should be scrapped. Council tax should be removed altogether and indefinitely from empty properties which are undergoing, or waiting for, renovation.

The proposals to charge any premium, let alone 100% premium for second or empty homes is a disincentive to investment and employment in the Principality and would be damaging to its growth prospects. This is an attack on the business and visitor economy. These homes are unlikely to become available to those requiring affordable accommodation, so would not help the county or country's housing concerns. The Principality should concentrate on building more affordable accommodation, not attempting to pursue an undemocratic policy which was not voted for by the Welsh electorate.

My property had a tenant for 8 years they left and since then due to COVID I have not been able to get another tenant although one is expected soon. My property is available to rent for local people, and whoever is renting the property is contributing to the local community. Therefore I find the financial penalty unfair.

I think the issue around affordable housing is to do with how local and central government prioritise and plan their strategic budgeting and priorities especially in relation to affordable housing.

I feel that second homes are a problem for local people who are looking for an affordable property as it's quite likely that a number of second homes will fall into this category. Although it should also be taken into consideration that waste and recycling removal will be less as the property is not occupied 100% of the time. I do also appreciate that a lot of people with second homes bring all their supplies with them and this obviously affects the local economy. But I don't feel that they should be charged above the band that the property falls into.

As far as long term empty properties are concerned I think these are a different matter. I do own a property that falls into this category. Again the property is not producing waste that needs collecting and also the property does not generate vehicular traffic in the surrounding area. I feel that this type of property should be inspected to ascertain its potential prior to a levy being imposed. In my own case the property is in need of a total refurbishment which I intend to do in the future, The property is not now, and after refurbishment, certainly would not be in the affordable housing bracket. A feel that a fair rate to charge would be 75% of its band.

Individual circumstances should be taken into account as to why someone needs or uses a second home. I was born and brought up in Flintshire and, although I now live a considerable distance away, for many years until recently I was identified by Flintshire County Council as the primary carer for an elderly widowed and childless relative who was housebound and needing care. On their behalf I liaised with social services and care and health agencies, and did shopping and attended to various needs. My relative's house was too small to accommodate me on my frequent visits, and it was appropriate for me to stay in a property which was identified as a second home. Under these circumstances it is wholly unfair and inappropriate to apply a penalty of any premium to the council tax.

If a second-home owner has a genuine reason for needing a home in Flintshire, such as providing care or having business interests locally, then no council tax premium should be levied.

There are not enough council dwellings in Flintshire that's because they decided to sell those years ago. So now anyone else has a second dwelling gets penalised. The council have spent thousands on things like the band stand etc. that never gets used only by people who choose to sit there at night and drink!!

Weithiau mae tai yn wag am fwy na 12 mis oherwydd bod y preswylwyr efallai mewn cartref gofal ac yn methu mynd yn ôl i'w tai am gyfnod. Mae gwahaniaeth rhwng eiddo gwag hirdymor ac eiddo gwag am resymau dilys. **Sometimes houses are empty for more than 12 months because residents may be in a care home and are unable to return home for a while. There is a difference between long-term empty properties and empty properties for valid reasons.**

**Q 11 If you are the owner of a second home or long-term empty property in Flintshire, what action would you be likely to take if the premium was to be increased. Those 67 that selected "Other" included**

Use it as a business	4
Use as holiday let	4
Would continue renovations but extra charge will hamper the speed	8
No single answer	4
Already trying to sell the property	6
Demolish the property/merge with existing	5
Cause financial stress	3
Press planning for quicker decision	2
Sell and invest somewhere else	1
Challenge/lobby the decision	3
Miscellaneous	27

**Q13 We welcome any other comments or suggestions you may have regarding council tax premiums on long term empty properties and second homes.**

185 people provided various additional comments

I am not aware if this premium also applies to commercial property? If not, I think it should. Also, personally, I think the premium should only apply to EMPTY property and NOT second homes.

"A family member of mine bought a house last year, applied for a 12 month council tax exception due to major work required to be carried out, which was accepted.

The 12 month exception has now elapsed, due to COVID the major work was not completed, until the 13th month now the council have placed the 50% premium on the council tax. Which I think is not acceptable."

Where was the money from council house sales spent?

A lot of second homes are left vacant most of the year, these could be lived in by people desperate for a home. Empty properties are liable to deteriorate and either be broken into or end up with vermin problems.

As I said above. A premium might work in the short term but owners need to be encouraged to retrofit their properties and /or sold to the councils concerned. Surely grants could be made available?

There should be a premium of 50% after 6 months increasing to 100% after 12 months especially since property sell very quickly at present.

"What help is available to 2nd home owners who rent out these properties and the tenants don't pay. I have had a disgraceful service from the Flintshire County Court..." "Due to covid" usual excuse for poor service.

I understand you're trying to raise more money and you have run out of options because you have cut services beyond belief but seriously, get someone with an entrepreneur's mentality to run that council or you destined to fail. "

"I agree with the exemption period for empty properties - people often need time to deal with a property they may have inherited for example, or may have recently moved out of due to a new relationship. They may need to clear the property or make repairs to the property prior to marketing or renting out. Usually a 12 month period would be sufficient for them to make a decision on what to do with the property and to carry out the necessary work. These could be looked at on a case by case basis to allow for difficult cases (egg legal issues, vulnerable owners) to be given additional time if needed.

For second properties/ holiday homes - the area could benefit from the additional council tax income to make up for the loss of income usually generated by a permanent resident (spending in local shops/ pubs restaurants etc.)

I am not sure that empty properties and second homes have a direct impact on Welsh language. The implication is that the property owners are non-welsh speakers, which is not necessarily true. "

"This is another additional tax.

Change the rules. Fail to pay and there are consequences that are enforced.

Double the Council Tax on empty properties

No thanks

Doesn't matter what rate is set if the owner of the property cannot be traced. Take ownership of property and rent it out yourselves

The County Council themselves need to act on their own properties and not have any type of property empty for long periods. Example is 10, New Shop Parade, Greenfield. Disgraceful, the Council have not refurbished if unable to sell. Make it more attractive to buyers or for rental.

My personal experience is as a single person who purchased an uninhabitable empty house in Flintshire in a very poor state of repair with the intention of refurbishing and then moving into it as my main residence (and selling my current home). I am on a tight budget and therefore will be doing the majority of the work myself which I estimate will take in the region of 2.5 - 3 years. My thoughts are that, for people in my situation, the premium is actually hindering / delaying my attempts to bring the property back up to a habitable standard. I pay council tax at my current main home + will now have to pay an additional 150% council tax on renovation property. I feel this is overly harsh especially as I am single and not even using any of the service that the council tax fund. I feel the premium is in fact a barrier that may put others in my situation off the idea of trying to renovate empty properties. Additionally, I feel properties that are being renovated to be used as main residences should be treated very differently to holiday homes (for which I think the premium is reasonable). My suggestions are that the premium should not apply to people in my situation for up to 3 years. In fact I feel that you should consider extending the class an exemption to people in my situation as long as we can demonstrate that works are still ongoing. A final suggestion regarding the class A exemption is that the current rules seem totally unfair - If the class A exemption has already been used on the property prior to purchase then any new owner does not qualify, surely they deserve a 'clean slate' and full exemption term to help them take on required works

My thoughts are described in question (8)

I think after 5 yrs. the council should have the right to Compulsory purchase empty properties at market value, if the owners are not prepared to improve them for rental or sale.

Second homes and empty houses are disliked by most permanent residents and deeply resented by those seeking a home of their own

Ask first why it is empty? Has the property become too big to handle? Will it cost too much to bring up to rental standard? If it is not going to be for sale then look at helping get it back onto the rental market? If an older resident owns the property they probably



do not want to update it but also don't want to sell it, help them to bring it up to rental standard and supply tenants then no one will be on our housing list.

Persuasion is always better than compulsion: can FCC find ways to encourage owners of empty properties to bring them back into occupation?

Bins should be emptied. If work is being carried out should be checked then no premium. Reasons for being empty should take into consideration circumstances better and be more lenient

In my opinion you are trying to resolve an issue from completely the wrong end. You have wrongly focused on a negative and inappropriate solution, rather than a positive one, in which you are trying to raise additional money for the County by proposing to apply an increase to the housing tax. This is wrong and very short-sighted.

"I give our reasons for and comments about our owning what we believe is a second but not a holiday home in Flintshire. I am of Flintshire stock & was born and raised there. All my family & most of friends still live in the county. Our 2nd home was my mother's home on a small estate near Queensberry where she lived until her death a few years ago. Until she died I spent 50 % of my time there. While I spend less time there now (this has been affected by Covid) we still spend considerable amount of time in the bungalow & I have hopes of returning to live there as a permanent home at some time in the not too distant future. During my frequent visits to Flintshire I visit and help to care for infirm relatives and friends, this is a significant reason for keeping our Flintshire property. We have been honest in classifying our property as a 2nd home. We have been advised that we should register the bungalow as a business (for letting out as a holiday home to family and friend 'paying' to use the property) as this would confer financial benefit to us rather than incurring the penalties of paying enhanced council tax. We have not done that.

We accept that in general, second and, more especially holiday homes, have a detrimental effect but this is primarily but not exclusively due to the detrimental effects on the Welsh language and the driving up prices in popular tourist locations. We believe our circumstances are completely different. Our modest property is not in a tourist area, we believe we are not depriving locals of the opportunity to own their own home and, as far as the Welsh language issue is concerned, we have considerably more Welsh (written & spoken) than virtually anyone in the area where our 2nd home is situated. We feel that the current 50% premium is fair. It should not be raised or reduced."

As stated above, there are exceptions that are not currently taken into consideration, I feel this is poor on FCC behalf. I do not want to hold onto my late mother's property, yet I am being penalized by FCC because of the pandemic that has slowed the whole house selling process.

It would be a help to understand if and how a change of use could be made.

The Council should explain more clearly how it justifies charging any premium for second home inherited properties which are regularly occupied. Why should families be penalised for continuing to occupy homes which they have inherited?

Continue present level of premium on long term empty second homes.

"If a property is classed as 'long term empty' it is probably due to financial restraints and imposing a further burden though Council Tax is counterproductive. An extra £1,000 is half the cost of a new kitchen or bathroom, the Council should be helping to bring houses back into use not hindering.

More effort could be made to check on empty properties to see if the council could assist in bringing them back into use."

Thank you for asking for my response. I am concerned about the premium and the effect it has had on me personally. I will inform you immediately when the property is put on the market as I have been lead to believe that this should mean that I will have to pay less going forward.

"I believe it would have a negative impact on the owners, as they would have less money to try and either sell or maintain the property while it is empty. The idea of taking more money off people for things out of their control is beyond the joke, but this seems to be how the local council's like to screw people over, be hitting them when things are already hard.

The true housing shortage in Flintshire does not provide any justification for the premium. In truth the premium is seen as merely Flintshire attempting to increase its revenue with the premium being directed elsewhere than the homeless.

"Just because people own a second home does not mean they can afford an increase- I am keeping my family home, which my mother paid council tax on throughout her life, for the continued use of my family so that we can all continue to benefit from my Welsh heritage and culture and to keep open the option of returning to live there in future.

I use a fraction of the services used by my neighbors and so save the council money, and yet pay through the nose for the privilege.

The number of properties being discussed will hardly raise significant extra funds and smacks more of taxing those who might appear to be better off rather than significantly increasing social housing."

With the current Welsh legislation that all Landlords and their agents are required to be licensed there is an increased burden on them to ensure all the i's are dotted and all the t's are crossed. At present this costs in the region of £280 for courses and licenses. Therefore there is no incentive for landlords or agents to rent out properties at the lower end of the market where there would be no profit and end up most of the time when a tenant leaves it ends up as a loss making enterprise. My last tenant left with damages equating to just over £1000 of which I managed to recoup £400.

"We have been charged for long term empty properties while renovating a house. We had the 12 month council tax holiday but this was in the height of the pandemic.

The Main reason for the project being delayed was due to the very slow (12months) decision and correspondence from Flintshire conservation officer because the property is listed.

Seems a very unfair way of raising revenue on a young family with 2 children under 2 living in a house with 1 bedroom and 1 box room. It's not as if we did not want to live in the property. The only reason we were not in was because of the conservation officer and we are then finically penalised for his in ability to do his job! "

I have voiced my opinion earlier in this survey!!!!!!

Our home needed substantial refurbishment and we used lots of trades and suppliers in North Wales. We'd like it recognised we have made, and continue to make, a good contribution to the local economy in North Wales.

I have stated previously around why I think you should not charge a premium around second homes that are in a bad state of repair it is up to the individual what they do with their property. I'm sure we live in a society where freedom of what we want to do with our own property is up to the individual and should not be led by a local council

Sometimes it takes a while to get planning and building passed!

Depends on the individuals circumstances

I was disappointed that no concession was made to second home owners when we could not use our property for 7 months during the recent pandemic and were, therefore, not using any council services.

If it was rented out where would keep some of my stock. Access is through the shop which would be impossible.

"There is no evidence the cost of property is rising and that empty property or second homes add to the lack of social housing. Indeed property remains hard to sell

It appears this policy is just a way of councils adding to their income unjustly"

Corona times have been difficult. I have been denied access to my house and charged a premium for unused services. I have accepted this as socially necessary. To choose this time to threaten me with even higher costs, makes me feel angry and helpless. I can understand that people leave homes empty especially if you have neighbor harassment - we have thought out that we leave the property, take the roof off and then fill it with concrete so it is not habitable

"Flintshire should separate out the 3 connected but distinct issues in the supply of housing of

1. 2nd home ownership levels

2. Private landlords - especially air bnb/holiday lets

3. Long term empty properties

You need to clearly understand the drivers behind each issue and use a variety of tools to manage and influence them. Council tax surcharges are a blunt instrument which work better in the case of long term empty properties than 2nd homes.

Beware the law of unintended consequences- the surcharge of 2017 led a neighbour whose parents had owned their 2nd home since the 1960s to sell the house. It sold to a couple from outside Wales. How did that help the local community wanting local homes and to protect the Welsh language?

I saw the 2017 surcharge decision as opportunistic - it wasn't needed then or now. And it raised very little for the general fund.

A second home currently pays more council tax than residents. Yet it brings income into the local area. But costs the council far less, for example- fewer refuse collections. Less traffic damage to roads.

People might need at least up to 2yrs to complete renovation, as not everyone can afford few thousand every month to complete the property, and have it completed in 12 months.

I will state my own case. I have lived in my current property for twenty-six years. My wife and I extended the house so that my wife's elderly parents could live with us. My father-in-law lived with us for eighteen years. Before he died we were visited by a surveyor from the Council Tax department, who decided that we were occupying two homes, being our house and a 'flat'. The result of this is that we have had to pay a second-home premium tax on the 'flat'. This is despite the fact that the 'flat' can only be accessed by first entering our house via a single lockable external door; the bedroom of the flat is one of the rooms within our own house (which it has been for two-hundred years). If we turn off our water, the flat has no water; similarly, gas. The electricity meter for our entire property - house and 'flat', is within the flat itself so that, technically, if someone were to turn off the power in the flat we would have no power in our house. Within our house the entrance to the 'flat' is from our own utility room. The surveyor classed this as the flat kitchen because it once had a gas-ring fitted. This was rarely used by anyone and was removed several years ago because it was dangerous when in the proximity of people with dementia. But, we are still paying Council Tax. The situation is further complicated by the fact that my wife and I are now in our seventies. We have bought a bungalow to move into next year, when building modifications have been carried out. In order to avoid a second-home premium on this property also, we have allowed friends to live in it temporarily, otherwise we would have had to pay two second-home premiums. We have appealed our Council Tax assessment for the 'flat', but the matter seems to drag along very slowly. So, our current situation requires an answer to a very appropriate question - How do we go about selling two properties, with

two amounts of Council Tax, rather than one? Who is going to want to buy 'two' properties?

"I answered 'I do not know' on questions 10 & 12 as I feel empty properties and second homes should be treated differently.

Second homes used for holidays are a luxury, and their owners should pay a premium for the privilege of owning one.

Empty properties remain empty for different reasons, and owners should be helped and encouraged to bring their property back into permanent habitation, not burdened with increasing Council Tax bills."

This Premium Tax is a "Political Tax" introduced by the Welsh Government and it is wrong. Welsh speakers can't abide the English wanting to live in Wales, they only accept the English when they spend money in Wales.

Property owners should be encouraged to refurbish and relist or sell. However properties owners should be allowed to refurb in a cost effective manner. I know of a couple of properties in another county that have been listed grade 2 this has discouraged the owner from refurb as the cost would be well in excess of £100k and considerably more than the end value.

Tax them till the pips squeak.

"Pandemic makes much more difficult to make long term empty houses habitable.

People's circumstances differ so not everyone with empty house does not want to rent it,

Affordability issues to make the house rentable."

As previously mentioned I would review the current "one size fits all" situation. Second homes can fall into different categories (some are simply not suitable to be family or even retirement homes) and empty properties can take a long time to sell through no fault of the vendor. I would also look at "loopholes" for example people who let their property for the minimum amount of time to avoid a premium. Additionally some people avoid the premium as it is their only property in the UK but they spend over half the year in a property abroad.

What qualifies for an exception? We didn't get one during a pandemic & access ban !It's a different situation if you're a landlord and making money, as the property was left to me in a will, I feel I shouldn't have to pay as I'm not making any money

On a personal note, given that I have paid the premium 150% Council Tax on my Long Term Empty Property for the last 2 years following the 12 month exemption period, I would carry on paying Council Tax on this property whether it stayed the same, increased or decreased. I feel that the current system is not fit-for-purpose and I respectively suggest that WAG and the Local Authorities end the conflation and

confusion around Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties. I want to modernise the long term empty property that I own in order for a family to live there - I never had a time limit for this work to be completed and the imposition of the Council Tax 50% premium has not changed my approach in any way. It has just annoyed me as it has many other people in the same position as myself. I see it as a tax grab, nothing more and I doubt whether it has helped speed up the system. In that sense it has been counter-productive.

I would leave rates as they are and chase up arrears in other areas.

An empty property has no impact on anyone other than the owner and therefore the owner should not be penalised. The council should only intervene where a property falls into disrepair and could become dangerous.

Maybe use the money from Council Tax premiums to give grants to people attempting to repair and refurbish empty properties.

I can't afford the cost of refurbishment of the long term empty property.

"I think that you need to keep an eye on people claiming exemptions for renovations and if they are not renovating then the exemption should be taken away from them.

I also think that caravans should not be included."

Housing is scarce at this time and empty homes and second homes has a negative impact on local people who live and work in Flintshire

N/A

This is a sensible move and should be implemented as soon as possible. There is an urgent need to increase the availability of affordable homes to rent in all communities and I believe that appropriate action should be taken to discourage second homes and properties remaining empty for longer than a relatively short period without good reason

We have a couple of properties that have remained totally unoccupied since they were built in my village. The property was presumably purchased as an investment. This does nothing for the local area and quite frankly I feel that compulsory purchase should be an option when perfectly good houses are left empty for long periods.

Increased premiums could be put back into the community to ensure local shops and amenities stayed open.

Unless the money raised from the council tax premium can be shown to have demonstrable effect on the community it will naturally become unnoticed.

"Question 9 should be chargeable by the owner immediately.

Houses should not be able to be left to rack and ruin"

There are far too many empty homes in the whole of North Wales, and too many locals being priced out of the housing market. I think a more concerted effort is required by local government to stop so many second homes being purchased, by making sure that there is a very heavy surcharge on buying a second home. These second homes do nothing to help a community and local services.

You cannot include empty homes and second homes under the same banner, they should be dealt with as two separate issues. Second homes are a much needed tourism boost and should not be the subject of political bias.

"This is a good initiative. I can see no downside in it for Flintshire council taxpayers who do not own an empty or second home or for the homeless in the county. It should lead to more homes becoming available to those who most need them

Is there any way the money raised could be used to assist those without a home to afford to buy or rent one in the county? This would also show that the initiative is a principled one, not one simply aimed to raise more money for the council (Although I know you need more money for essential services.)"

People who buy property and land as investments to make themselves richer should pay more...property developers are pushing up house prices. .And local young people have virtually no chance of getting on the property ladder, we have seen this happen all over the country and it's not right,

See item 8

"Because a house is empty - what makes you think you could make use if it as part of local authority housing???"

It might be unsuitable and not owned by the local authorities so how will it help you rehouse anyone???"

Just do it

"There are only 772 empty properties of which a mere 167 are holiday homes. This seems such a small number to make much difference at all to the number of affordable homes which are available.

I am concerned that this has simply turned into a way for the local authorities to bring in more money, without causing any change.

How, in fact, have these numbers changed since 2017? Has the 50% premium actually made a difference to the numbers of properties involved?

Alternatives? A licence to own a second home with a limit on numbers of licences available and a lower premium is a possibility. Note that second home owners still pay gas, electricity and water standing charges and pay council taxes for all other services.

Perhaps also, more 'affordable homes' might be built, with a restriction on sale only to permanent residents, might be part of the answer.

Second home owners will simply pay any excess and it will cause resentment among owners and possibly competition between authorities as to where might be cheapest to buy a second home.

A relative recently died although leaving a will it was with the solicitor who had gone out of business, it took a long time to sort out not helped by the thought of council taxes being paid on the property.

It will not make any difference to waiting lists

I think the increase of council tax premiums on us old age pensioners for what we get back is a rip off.

There will be some circumstances when an empty home should not incur an extra premium, see above.

Revenue from Increased premiums could be offered to long term empty homes as loans or grants for incentives to restore/renovate properties which could then be offered as rental properties to people on waiting lists

get a grip, totally political to blame someone for the poor direction the Welsh government

Static caravans are second homes, those who let them out make a huge amount of money. They should pay full council tax too.

"I think that you need to consider the different nature of second homes.

Someone like me trying to hold down a full time job and run two properties, in order to eventually move back to Wales after a family death, is not the same at all as someone keeping a vacant property empty or using it for profit as a holiday home, or a very occasional holiday property for their own use only. "

If you put charges up too high it will deter both the owner from renting/refurbishing a property with the extra cost in many cases being passed onto the renter who cannot afford to pay it as well as the rent therefore the property will stay empty

The long term empty houses option should include not a minimum of 12 months empty but one to pay 100%fee straight away if it is cost g them money they will either do up the property and rent it do up the property and live in it or will not spend the money and sell it all are the most beneficial for the area the longer there e. Pty the faster they look a mess

We do not see any negative points, only positive for local people who currently cannot afford properties in their local community. We believe it should never have got to the point we are at.



"I think that empty properties make an area look uncared for. If homes are lived in permanently, the owner is more likely to

Invest in the upkeep of the property. "

There needs to be collaboration with other 21 local authorities all agreeing the same policy. We value the tourists and they have a place in our community if they have a positive impact. Increase in empty or second home could lead to job losses, school closure, and lack of suitable properties for new first time buyers if current situation become unmanageable.

With the relatively small number of properties involved I don't think that making them pay more would make any meaningful difference to the finances for Flintshire CC

I don't however agree with your policy that if you buy a house that was empty you are still charged these premiums. That's what happened to me and it's not my fault the previous owner left the property empty. Also council has too many house that are in disrepair and people are waiting a year to get in them because they have needed work and they just sat empty. This is happening to s friend of mine now

Should be the same as occupied properties

It all depends on how wisely the money is invested or is it likely to be frittered on unnecessary councilor's expenses.

I feel increasing the premium will impact the area and force some local people who have owned second homes for 30+ years to sell.

Re Question 9, I bought a derelict house in Flintshire in 2013 as a permanent home and requested a suspension of council tax whist refurbishment took place. This was refused as it had already been claimed once. I was very angry, as I felt the previous reduction had nothing to do with me. This needs to be reviewed

There may need to be different council tax rules for long-term empty properties as compared to second homes. Second homes inflate house prices and decrease the housing stock available for local residents or people who wish to move to the area permanently (egg for employment reasons).

Scrap them for this county. They do not affect any community in Flintshire and just a money making excuse.

I think that new buyers should have a set time to bring the property up to standard from the date they purpose the property and the clock reset for them. So even if a property has been empty for 2 years if it is sold on the new buyers should be given the time and opportunity before the costs increase.

"The questions in this survey are not easy to understand and could be more clearly explained.

The council needs to take as much action as is legally allowed to force second home owners to make their properties available for those who need them. Empty second homes are not acceptable."

Please support your residents. Houses are for living in. They should not be used as an investment, nor as a means for getting richer.

"There wasn't an option to reduce the length of time before empty dwellings were required to pay the 50% premium. I think it should be 6 months.

Counties such as Gwynedd are bringing in 100% council tax on second homes, you risk second home owners buying in Flintshire if we are not in line with neighbouring scenic counties. "

We all need public services and the council has a duty to all its tax payers to spend wisely but also generate income wherever legally possible.

I have answered 'Negative impact' to question 12 because to have this tax at all, let alone increase it, will discourage investment and spending within the county - instead it will be spent elsewhere in the UK or overseas. We should be encouraging this inward private investment.

Why should full rate payer's subsidies second home owners especially if they live outside the area?

The premium should be required as a lump sum payment at the beginning of the financial year so as to increase its impact. There should be no facility for the 10 months payment scheme

I feel any money raised by extra premium should be allocated towards funding new affordable housing and also find it unrealistic that there are only 172 holiday homes in Wales

Long term empty properties decline in their standard as they are often not being looked after - this is a particular problem if the property is attached to another as this can affect the neighbour. Houses not lived in can also be a target for vandalism though thanks fully this is rare where I live.

Tax should maybe looked at on more of a case by case basis.

**SECOND HOME PREMIUMS SHOULD BE INCREMENTAL - (YEAR ON YEAR INCREASE)**

Please just humanely consider each individual situation before applying an additional charge like the CT premium, consider the circumstances and the reasons for a property being unoccupied. Yes there are exceptions but they are not wide enough.

The present loophole where owners can avoid the payments should be closed. They should all pay.

The two categories are completely different and should be treated as such. No premium should apply to a property that is being marketed for sale, although I appreciate this may not be a straightforward matter to assess.

"Increase second homes tax premiums to very high levels, at least 100% above current tax level.

There should be no increase on empty homes owned by families residing in Flintshire. They should only be required to pay the normal property tax designated to the building as if it was occupied."

Long term empty properties could be reviewed on an individual basis. We upgraded a 1950s ex-council house to contemporary standards and the project took five years. To pay extra council tax whilst we were using our savings to improve the property would have been difficult.

"I don't know how you can expect people to pay out all this money, people are not made of money.

I wanted to be living in my 2nd house with in twelve months of applying for planning and selling the home I am now living in, That would then take me away from being a 2nd home owner"

A few holiday homes in a thriving village are ok, a lot of holiday homes in a small village kill off village life and services egg schools shops.

Please see above answers

By increasing Tax premiums it would certainly encourage owners to let / refurbish or sell the property but genuine exceptions to me should be fairly considered.

"For long-term empty, compulsory purchase after 5yr.

For second home's 50% of sale gains go to local government. "

"Again second homes and long term empty have been lumped together, I had a long term renovation, the local trades were slow and took ages, it was an absolute nightmare to get trades, 12 months wasn't enough and that's with me wanting to move in as soon as, extra payments would have been most unwelcome given it's probably cost more than the bungalow is worth to bring it up to standard as everything is so expensive, too high could deter empty properties being bought back into use. Re 11, I would not be happy but pay, I had no choice to move into my property unfinished because local trades hadn't finished, messed up the wet room and had to take it out and redo, still not right but because of the extra charge I could afford to wait so living in an unfinished property and the wet room isn't safe as it should be, it was fitted as I'm disabled, so I think 12 months isn't enough for renovation for some people. In South Derbyshire they give 3 months from empty (12 for major renovation) but 3 isn't enough to sort a property if selling or renting so people are unfairly being charged through no fault of their own.

Charging over 50% would put most second home owners into difficulty and force them into business rates, empty long term (as in years) I'm guessing won't care as if they've abandoned a house long term letting it deteriorate they probably have enough to pay, if not this is where the empty homes officer comes in. Communication, fairness and common sense on individual peoples circumstances is a must, remembering rules are for the obedience of fools and the guidance of the wise.

With second homes if charges are increased they may not be used as much or spending in local shops maybe cut, less pub dinners , drinks and general shop spending, for those that don't go onto business rates. Also other maintenance maybe hit so the properties become less well maintained and look tatty and tired, not good for the area.

The second home is only empty whilst work is being undertaken on this to bring it up to a standard to rent out. Once ready our second home is rented out. Additional charges may slow this work down

It is clear that other Council areas in Wales are approaching this subject from a heavily political angle to deflect from their own poor performance in terms of serving the affordable housing needs of their communities. I hope that Flintshire resists the temptation of apparent 'easy' money.

The increase would help support the local communities where people struggle to find places to live and allow building on land suitable for affordable housing. People who are making money out of communities as 2nd homes should pay extra as they are already able to afford to purchase in 1st place. Empty properties that are for sale should be exempt as I have had 3 buyers drop out just as sale was about to proceed and it make it difficult to maintain all the bill and Council tax after 12 month at a premium rate. The internet allows properties to be searched to see if they are on the market.

I believe that listed building in particular should be exempt from the premium as the owners are already spending money on maintaining these treasured buildings.

"It's important to define second homes. To me these are properties which are not used as a business, but a property purely used as a home for the owner to visit whilst on holiday.

Properties such as holiday lets which are used purely as a business, (some only have planning permission to use for holiday accommodation and not residential) should NOT be included in the definition of a second home as it is a genuine business and should be treated the same as other businesses.

I think it is also important to have a varied housing stock, rather than purely concentrating on affordable housing. More expensive housing will bring in income for the council, and allow people to move up the ladder enabling affordable housing to become available."

"In the context of second homes in Flintshire, the imposition of the council tax premium is unfair and unreasonable.

As previously mentioned, there are only 167 second homes across the county and as such, are most unlikely to have a negative impact on the communities in which they are situated.

Therefore, owners like ourselves, who have improved and continue to maintain their properties should only have to pay the standard rate of Council Tax like everyone else. Other, than the benefit of street lighting and refuse collection, we do use any other Council services. We, like others, see ourselves as being used as a cash-cow for another income stream."

I CAN ONLY COMMENT ON LONG TERM EMPTY THESE QUESTIONS ARE APPLIED TO BOTH EMPTY AND SECOND HOMES WHICH ARE SO FAR APART SO THIS DOES NOT GIVE A FAIR REPRESENTATION TO LOCAL. SECOND HOMES IN WALES ARE A BONE OF CONTENTION

Perhaps if Flintshire county council sorted out their planning that would probably help matters - dealing with the planning department is a nightmare

As per above comments

If people have second homes in the area for holidays then a premium would be acceptable in my opinion, but people who have had a property left as part of a will then in my opinion I think that is totally unfair. If the property was the only asset left with no cash it falls on family to cover all costs as in funeral and keeping the house in good repair until sold

In addition to my comments under Question 8, I feel strongly that, as in my case, where unnecessary expenditure has been incurred due to unreasonable delays by Council Planners or misinformation concerning, for example, a TPO that had been imposed but subsequently rescinded without notifying the property owner (resulting in expensive and unnecessary tree surgery), an appropriate element of past Council Tax levies should be refunded or, at least, a moratorium be granted on further payments.

Council tax premiums should be abolished forthwith it is an unfair tax which in my opinion is no better than theft

"If the council can make decisions on why properties are left empty long term and able to do something about it, the situation would improve.

It's just another unjustified money making tax for the council.

I wonder if we would be in this position if it had been decided not to sell off Council Houses. It is crucial that more affordable housing is made available in Flintshire, and I welcome the new developments at Sealand, for instance. My grandparents lived in a

council house that is now a private residence. Why is it a private residence? Why should I pay for a housing shortage? Build more homes!

My late brother's house would not classify as social/affordable housing, so I doubt very much that it contributes to the lack of affordable housing. The house is not long-term empty, as a friend of my brother's visits it twice a month to ensure it is tidy and the lawn is mowed, and stays two to three days.

It appears that Councils are targeting one small sector to try and find a solution to their housing problems. Instead of diverting the attention onto a sector, where people are paying their Council taxes and contributing to the local community, the Councils should be looking at their own Buildings and assets to provide affordable housing. Stopping targeting one area of the community; the people who have second homes do contribute to the local area, often far more than a full time resident and they are not using local council services that are already stretched; those who have empty properties are more often trying to update them, again contributing to the local area, before selling them on or renting them. Why penalize people who are paying their fair share and not needing to use already depleted council services. This practice is wrong, wrong, wrong and Councils should rethink this bias ways.

"I can only reiterate - different approaches are needed for long term empty properties and 'second homes'.

- Different approaches are needed for 'second homes' that are rented out and those that aren't making a profit;

- Different approaches are needed for holiday, coastal areas;

- The 50% premium is already unfair given the minimal use of services;

- An additional 50% would-be immoral and would amount to 'legalized robbery';

- whether we keep or sell the property makes no difference to the amount of Welsh used in the area, the amount of social or

Affordable 'housing, or the character of the community."

I think if a property can't be habitable within 3 years then a compulsory purchase order at the purchase price should be implemented.

When we were able to visit our second home, we would go out to eat at restaurants and visit all tourists' sites and spend as much as we liked to help the local shops. With the lockdowns of the past two years, we have been prevented from visiting our second home but have continued to be charged in full for council tax.

"I have outlined some suggestions above. In this consultation, the council has not provided its own assessment of what difference premiums make in reality nor has it demonstrated how premiums contribute to the problems councils are trying to solve. I think that a premium is the wrong word to describe what is intended. I think it is an additional tax or levy.

"The property was left to me for my children, I have paid the increased charge for the last two years and it is crippling! The property is uninhabitable, no heating, no kitchen, no bathroom and an outside toilet, it is literally a shell yet still I had to pay the increase the council. unable to get a loan I save so that the work can be completed in one go, the council tax eats into my fund which really doesn't help it moves the finish line further away.

New properties have been built near to me, the value of their homes much greater than mine, yet in my band and paying the same as me. Yet Flintshire Bands would put them in a higher band due to value. How can that be? With more new homes and people moving into Wales from far surely this is where the council should be making an increase, putting these into the correct band.

Second homes are making it impossible for the younger generation within communities to get on the property ladder."

"Personally I would set the premium at 250% which would really make empty property owner think long and hard as to why they are leaving them vacant.

I live in Gwespyr and we have councilor or possibly ex councilor who owns a property in the village which has been vacant for over six years, the current policy has done nothing to make him feel with this total eyesore."

"It seems empty properties are being penalised, they should pay but not an extra 50 or 100%.

Second homes should however pay at least half. "

Second homes are proportionally very small in number to the overall housing stock

"The charge is limiting available funds to bring the properties back into use.

You are frustrating the property owner by applying this charge.

How much additional revenue has the Local Authority made by charging this 'tax'?

What has the Local Authority used this money for and has it made a difference to the issue?"

I myself has been a subject of premium tax on a partially occupied home whilst renovating the property throughout the pandemic. I would also like to know if empty commercial properties (some have houses on the land) are also subject to the same premium - thanks

In my case any increase in council tax premium would reduce the amount of money I would have available to spend in local shops and for local services

Tax them more, if they can afford to let the property stay empty then penalise them heavily as people need social housing badly in these tough times, which will only get worse in time.

"Probably treat each property on its own unique merit.

I'm sure ""one size doesn't fit all""

Maybe the local community leaders should have a big say based on their local knowledge.

Has anyone looked at reinstating?

The once opulent living spaces above the shops in most High Streets?"

Better services for the vast majority who are full-time occupants in Flintshire.

"I purchased this property in 1986.

As I had to move away for work my mother moved into the property and lived there until she passed away.

I have spent a great deal of money refurbishing the property and have been unable to visit due to COVID rules.

I do not wish to rent the property as it is intended for my retirement in a few years' time. It might prove difficult to get a tenant removed. We use the property for visits to see family. Paying 100% would have a massive impact on my salary as we are also paying to keep the electricity on and heating costs so it doesn't fall into disrepair."

Flintshire need to get in the real world and stop this failed policy. It is apparent the biggest issue that is driving house prices up in Wales the affluence within the Welsh communities from those who come from those originally from the traditional Welsh Communities - ask the estate agents who are selling the properties who is paying the higher prices for these properties. Welsh property prices have gone up the highest in the UK during the last 12 months, its nothing to do with alleged second home owners. I would double the premiums on both, there is enough holiday accommodation in Wales! Second home owners can afford the premium and empty homes get a reduction if put into the rental sector.

Look at yourself as landlords

The more you charge the more the owner will charge if ever rented in future to get cost back therefore preventing some persons from renting. I would reduce charges & encourage owners to rent at lower premiums by guaranteeing rent & covering any damage caused.



Raising the premium would not reduce the number of 2nd homes, but it would increase the income raised. Charging for parking in Wepre Park for visitors by way of parking meters with permits for locals or disabled would be helpful.

The council should consider whether it has the power to force landlords to bring long term empty properties back into good repair.

The focus should not be on long term empty property but on the building of actually affordable homes by developers... 20% below market price isn't affordable in any way.

The council tax system shouldn't be used for social engineering or to discriminate against a fortunate few. It shouldn't penalise second home ownership.

WHY are properties left empty for years? If you don't live in the property- let someone else have use of it. Especially if it's run down and blights the area. If you can afford a second home - you can afford the council tax. We need to restore village communities where neighbours look out for each other - not strangers coming in as and when they feel like it.

Holiday chalets that have planning permission allowing them to be used throughout the year but not allowing them to be used as residential property need to be included in exclusions from the second home premium charge as there is no impact on housing stock availability. It is unfair for Chalet owners to be treated as though they are removing houses from local housing stock when they could never be used as residential property as they are on a holiday park with specific planning permission.

"I have an uninhabitable long term empty property and I can't afford the council tax with it being double.

My young children are without food and heating in order to pay the double council tax  
"Perhaps you should survey the 605 owners as to why they are empty for so long - probably mortgage covenants prohibiting it or elderly family members who own but can't live without assisted living as examples and then actually see what the root cause is rather than this unfair and biased approach.

Also these second homes and empty dwellings are being scapegoated for lack of foresight and poor policy implementation. Charging owners more does not make the village/town better regardless of the additional premiums charged, as you don't target the money back to the residential area its specifically from so you are misleading the public.

I would just like to clarify I own one property and pay council tax. This issue does not affect me. It's just poor leadership historically."

Please reconsider a tax break to those who were trying to renovate during lockdown. Many months delay has been caused and projects have been delayed despite expectancy to still find the extra council tax

"I am not in good health and wish to decide my options in the near future. The news that a review of the Premium Scheme is to take place comes as no surprise to me, due to how this once great country has become, for those like myself who provide for our futures and not become a drain on Governments and Councils. Whilst I agree there are people who are in difficulty, those like me are punished by the State to provide for those who chose not to provide for themselves, but instead, play the Benefits System and that is why the word `punished` applies.

During my schooldays I underwent several operations that involved both lungs, resulting with my having 50% capacity ever since. Despite that I worked for 59 years in Full employment, but the emphysema that developed over the years finally caught up with me, so I gave up working well past when I reached the official retirement age.

With regard to all the above, I now find I am at risk of further depletion of Savings and Pension. This I contend is a very `great official injustice` and also to the other people facing your review. The total number of properties under review must be tiny considering the thousands of properties within Flintshire CC boundaries.

I hope you will take into account the above, for those of us who think of the future and have taken appropriate action in the year past.

As a second home owner we are contributing to the economy of Wales.

"No allowances are given for genuine home owners who have purchased/inherited property and are renovating to make the dwelling habitable and which will become the main residence. Also given the fact that any building works have been greatly impacted by Covid-19 I think the current system is unfair.

Councils would be aware of anyone who is genuinely make home improvements as plans/building regulations would have to be approved by you."

Whilst the charge of a Council Tax premium is not the entire answer to getting these empty properties turned around, sold, made habitable and let to those in need of housing, I think it does help and is therefore a useful tool in the box to achieve this. I have at least four long term empty properties in my own Ward and they are a nuisance to those living in neighbouring properties and the untidiness if they affect the property values of those neighbouring properties. Despite attempts by the Empty Homes Officer to work with the owners and offering help with grants to refurbish them and get them sold or made habitable for letting, the owners have shown reluctance to co-operate and they remain empty and a nuisance. This has convinced me that we do need to increase the premium above the current 50% and indeed to raise it every couple of years for those who are still not prepared to co-operate and sell their properties or rent them out. It is really unethical in my book to allow such properties to continue unoccupied when

we have so many families, couples and individuals homeless locally and nationally. This would be a great help in enabling us to tackle the homeless problem which besets so many.

The question is already answered

As stated above it is an unfair charge as people sometimes take longer than anticipated to refurbish a property, why do you think you should decide how long it should take? Some people refurbish properties as a hobby, on a weekend or evenings and sometimes things crop up that take more time or cost more money than you thought and you are penalising people for that, the money you are charging could be used to finish the property off. Maybe consider a visit to the property after 12 months to see how it is progressing then visits every 3 months or so to see if progress is being made or ask people to send progress photos to make sure they are actually doing the work instead of just a big charge.

Firstly understand more about why the property is empty. My daughter was renovating for 2 years and living with us and has to start paying die an inhabitant house.

"To place ""Long term empty properties"" in the same category as ""second HOME"", is to say the least incompatible.

A ""second home"" is furnished and therefore able to be lived in, at any time day or night, weeks or months.

A ""long term empty property"" will be empty for any number of reasons.

In our case, (as an example) due only to our limited funds in achieving our renovation goals. To be frustrated with the threat of ever increasing costs of building materials, the continuing covid restrictions and the consequences therein and now with the possible increase in our Council tax from 50 to 100%.

Delaying completion of our renovations to our bungalow by?? Months!"

I just wish I could talk to someone face to face who would understand and listen but nobody will!!!!

"It has been stated by Flintshire County Council that there are currently 2,120 people on a waiting list for social/affordable housing and yet Flintshire County Council have not sought to reduce this figure by renovating their current property assets which they own and which remain empty and unkempt!

There are two Flintshire County Council owned shops in Mostyn, both of which already have established living accommodation on the first floor. The ground floor is of the same size as the first floor and could easily be converted into living accommodation, with an entrance via the existing door into the shop at the front of the property. Both shops could provide four self-contained flats, both of which could have parking near to the property on the existing Council own land. However, Flintshire County Council to

date have chosen NOT to utilise these already LONG-TERM EMPTY properties, which they own and presumably do not generate any income for the authority! Perhaps Flintshire County Council should answer their own question of ""What impact do these long-term empty properties have on the community?""

These shops have remained unoccupied, with the frontage unkempt for over 3 plus years and over the past 12 months a council owned bungalow has remained vacant, following the resident leaving. The interior of the property was in very good order and presumably could be made ready for a new tenant without much effort on the part of Flintshire County Council, and yet it has remained empty for a year when there is an obvious demand!

It is obvious that Flintshire County Council need to address the long-term empty properties in their ownership, before seeking to further penalise tax payers doing their best for their potential future tenants.

"To a certain extent the tax premium is a housing policy which conceals a degree of mild harassment towards second-home owners and empty property owners and, furthermore, being of doubtful effectiveness, in turn leads one to suspect a degree of tax collection eagerness, in addition to asking oneself the question: ""Is this the only way of solving Flintshire's housing problems?"" And this, very quickly, followed by: ""Do the second-home owners - many with Welsh connections - pull up stakes and cross the Dee?"" Be careful not to suggest what you may not really mean.

In a bilingual area or nation, if an authority wishes to encourage outsiders to integrate linguistically, it is essential to actively avoid identifying the bilingual nature of the country with other social or economic issues."

"My two properties are within one mile of each other and so neither are holiday homes. Some one sleeps in both properties each night.

I think there should be more categories to cover council tax rates. Firstly, those supporting businesses should qualify for a reduced rate. Secondly, those qualifying as second/holiday homes should warrant a higher band council tax. Thirdly, those classified as empty houses should qualify for financial assistance of some kind. Fourthly, it should not be assumed that all empty properties are suitable for family occupation. A comprehensive, independent assessment is required. "

"Perhaps you should look at the area the second home is in, is it depriving anyone of affordable housing because it is in a desirable holiday location , does it have a negative impact on the area by being scruffy and unkempt and if it generates a profit for the owner. Perhaps you should give a council tax discount to people who have to live next to scruffy tenants with unkempt houses who cause a nuisance and dump rubbish everywhere

Individual circumstances should be taken more into consideration"

Council tax premium should not be charged on local Welsh ownership on two properties within the same county. Local people cannot afford to buy properties when they are on the market and increasing the premium would only encourage wealthier paid individuals from across the border to move into the area, thus impacting on a loss of culture, language and heritage in our villages.

I support the Council in their desire to fill long term empty properties. Such a policy can only strengthen small communities, in particular. Though I do not think the Council tax level has a large bearing on the intentions of second homeowners, they can usually afford to pay any increase. Though properties may be unintentionally long term empty for other reasons as described above. These properties should not incur an extra charge

Looking after your own family has to be the only option.

"Council Tax is payable for the provision of a range of services such as education, refuse collection, sports & leisure facilities, libraries, etc. ; police, fire brigade, ; town and parish councils.

The owners of long term empty properties cannot avail themselves of the benefits provided by council services as they are not residents so to impose any additional premium in addition to the basic council tax band is wholly unfair and inequitable - why pay a large after tax amount of money for nothing? The addition of any premium adds insult to injury as it is merely increasing the amount of the subsidy and a diversion of personal resources that could be applied to improve the property. COVID has also resulted in at least a minimum 18 month delay on projects.

This is in complete contrast to the second home properties , where the owner (resident - if a holiday let) can enjoy the services provided and can clearly afford to pay either out of their own pockets (or holiday let income)!!"

"In addition to my previous comments, regarding council tax premiums on long-term empty properties / second homes I would suggest the following:

For second homes, if the home-owner has business connections to Flintshire and contributes to the local economy by being employed, or providing employment, and / or spending locally, no council tax premium should be levied as these home owners already contribute to the local economy and local community. If a council tax premium drives away these second-home owners this will be detrimental to the local economy and local community.

For long-term empty properties it is better to offer a carrot of encouragement in the form of grants and tax relief to refurbish these properties and bring them back to habitable use than to make a stick of premium council tax to beat the owner with. Council tax should be removed completely from these properties during the refurbishment process. Encouraging refurbishment in this way will bring positive benefits to the local

community; punishing the owner by increasing the council tax premium will not necessarily bring any change, so will add nothing locally.

Neither second homes, nor empty properties are likely to add to the council's stock of affordable housing if relinquished by their owners.

I have to pay the premium even though it is not a second home which is unfair therefore people in my situation should not be treated in the same way as those with second homes.

As I have said earlier, individual circumstances should be taken into account as to why someone needs or uses a second home in Flintshire. If a second-home owner has a genuine reason for needing a home in Flintshire, such as providing care or working or having business interests locally, then no council tax premium should be levied. As someone who grew up in Flintshire I regard this as my home as much as anywhere else, and I spend considerable time in the county on business and family matters. I would like to extend my business interests in Flintshire, but need a home to stay in – which is not necessarily my main residence – in the county to facilitate this. Any council tax premium would be a deterrent to this, and detrimental to the local economy and community.

**Appendix 3 – Level of Council Tax Premiums Set Throughout Wales for Second Homes and Long Term Empty Properties**

**Council Tax Premiums for Second Homes**

<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022-23</b>
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Denbighshire	-	-	-	50%	50%	50%
Wrexham	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Conwy	-	-	25%	25%	25%	25%
Gwynedd	-	50%	50%	50%	100%	100%
Isle of Anglesey	25%	25%	35%	35%	35%	50%
Powys	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Ceredigion	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Pembrokeshire	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	100%
Swansea	-	-	-	-	100%	100%
Cardiff	-	-	-	-	-	-

**Council Tax Premiums for Long Term Empty Properties**


<b>Local Authority</b>	<b>2017-18</b>	<b>2018-19</b>	<b>2019-20</b>	<b>2020-21</b>	<b>2021-22</b>	<b>2022/23</b>
<b>Flintshire</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>	<b>50%</b>
Denbighshire	-	-	50%	50%	50%	50%
Wrexham	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Conwy	-	-	25%	25%	50%	50%
Gwynedd	-	50%	50%	50%	100%	100%
Isle of Anglesey	25%	25%	100%	100%	100%	100%
Powys	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%	50%
Ceredigion	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%	25%
Pembrokeshire	-	-	25%	50%	25-100%*	25-100%*
Swansea	-	-	-	100%	100%	100%
Cardiff	-	-	50%	50%	50%	50%

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**Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) (including equality, environment, health, human rights, socio-economic Duty, United Nations Conventions the Rights of the Child and Welsh language**

<b>Name of Policy or Practice</b>	Consideration of Variation of Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties		
<b>Responsible Officer</b> (responsible for the Policy or Practice)	Chief Officer, Governance		
<b>Service / Portfolio</b>	Governance - Revenues	<b>Start Date of Assessment</b>	6 <sup>th</sup> July 2022

<b>Name of officer(s) (and partners) completing the IIA</b>		
<b>Name(s)</b>	<b>Job Title(s)</b>	<b>Signature(s)</b>
David Barnes	Revenues and Procurement Manager	
Andrew Taylor	Lead Revenue Officer	

\*Consider including only job titles when publishing

<b>Document Version</b>	<b>Revision Date</b>	<b>Briefly Describe the Changes</b>

<b>IIA Approved by Responsible Officer / Portfolio / Service / Committee</b>	
<b>Date IIA Concluded</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Job Title</b>	
<b>Signature</b>	

## Introduction

This document is a multi-purpose tool ensuring the appropriate steps are taken to comply with the [Public Sector Equality Duty \(PSED\)](#) Equality Impact Assessment legislation and to demonstrate that we have shown due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage when taking strategic decisions under the [Socio-economic Duty](#). It also incorporates [Welsh Language impacts](#), environmental and bio-diversity impacts, health impacts and United Nations Conventions Rights of a Child.

When we plan to introduce a new, or revise an existing, policy, strategy or practice, develop a new service, make changes or cuts to a service or make strategic decisions, we are required to consider if the decision would have a disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more [protected characteristic](#) or whether it could create inequalities of outcome around socio-economic disadvantage. Where this is likely to be the case, we must take appropriate action. The IIA process is not intended to prevent us doing things but to ensure we have considered the impact. It helps us focus on the actions we can take to remove and/or mitigate any disproportionate or discriminatory impact and introduce measures to advance equality of opportunity.

To comply with the PSED [General Duty](#) and [Socio-economic Duty](#), we must have 'due regard' (or consciously consider the need) to: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations and to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. The greater the relevance and potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. The General Duty will be more relevant to some functions than others and they may also be more relevant to some protected characteristics than others. Our duty must be exercised with rigour, an open mind and considered at a time when it can make a difference to our decisions. Policies with high relevance, such as strategic budgetary decisions, grant-making programmes, changes to service delivery (including withdrawal or reorganisation of services), and recruitment or pay policies should always be subject to an assessment for impact. For further guidance see [EHRC Assessing Impact Guidance](#). Our duty to comply with this legislation cannot be delegated.

This form should demonstrate the steps taken to carry out the assessment including relevant engagement/consultation, the information taken into account, the results of the assessment and any decisions taken in relation to those results. The IIA should be published where it shows a substantial (or likely) impact on our ability to meet the PSED.

### Benefits of undertaking an IIA:

- Gain a better understanding of those who may be impacted by the policy or practice
- Better meet differing needs and become more accessible and inclusive
- Enable planning for success – identifies potential pitfalls and unintended consequences before any damage is done
- Enable improved planning that will make decisions proactive rather than reactive, avoid having to reverse decisions which could have cost and reputational implications
- Demonstrate decisions are thought through and have taken into account the views of those affected
- Enable us to manage expectations by explaining the limitations within which we are working (e.g. budget)

- Help avoid risks and improve outcomes for individuals
- Remove inappropriate or harmful practices and eliminate institutional discrimination
- Ensure we put Welsh and English Language on an equal footing. and that decisions are made that safeguard and promote the use of the Welsh language
- Improve and protect health, maximising health benefits and reducing health risks
- Be more open and transparent
- Use our resources more effectively

Whilst this document may seem lengthy, as well as containing the necessary steps in the process, it also contains guidance notes in the key areas to assist you in undertaking the IIA. Additional links to further information are also included for assistance. Further information can be found on NHS/ WLGA PSED/ EIA [here](#).

The Welsh Government<sup>1</sup> guidance states that:

Impact assessment prompts and guides us to gather, and if necessary, seek evidence so as to improve the development of a policy or delivery plan, or inform a change of direction in policy or delivery. It is a methodology to help in the development and implementation of policy, rather than templates with tick boxes and checklists.

## Integrated Impact Assessment Steps

- Step 1 - Identify the Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice
- Step 2 - Data, Engagement and Assessing the Impact
- Step 3 - Procurement and Partnerships
- Step 4 - Dealing with Adverse or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice
- Step 5 - Decision to Proceed
- Step 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data
- Step 7 - Publishing the Integrated Impact Assessment

## Important Note to Completing Officer(s):

It is important that the IIA is completed when the policy or practice is being developed so that the findings from the IIA can be used to influence and shape the policy or practice. It is recommended as a minimum, it is completed by a lead officer who is responsible for the policy or practice, a subject matter expert and a critical friend with at least one who has received formal IIA training. This document needs to be presented to the decision makers along with the draft policy or practice as part of the decision making process.

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<sup>1</sup> Welsh Government Integrated Impact Assessment Guidance

Where you are developing a high level strategy or plan that does not contain sufficient detail to show how it will impact on individuals or groups (i.e. where there will be plans and actions sitting beneath the strategy that will determine this), you should still undertake the Impact Assessment. You may also need to complete additional IIA(s) on the plans and actions beneath the high level strategy. This will ensure you demonstrate that you have shown due regard to complying with the General Duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Welsh Language Standards the Socio-economic Duty, the Human Rights Act, the United Nations Conventions, Rights of the Child.

If your policy or practice is as a result of a UK, Welsh Government or Local Authority wide directive, you should still assess the impact of this locally to identify any differential impact due to local difference.

You should consider whether other events, e.g. COVID-19, Brexit, Black Lives Matter, etc. have highlighted or exacerbated inequalities that need to be addressed as you work through the IIA.

## STEP 1 – Identify the Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice

### 1. What is being assessed? *(Please double click on the relevant box(es) (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)*

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures (which modify service delivery or employment practices)
- Service review or re-organisation proposals which affect the community and/or staff, e.g. early years provision, care, education
- Efficiency or saving proposals, e.g., resulting in a change in community facilities, activities, support or employment opportunities
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- Decisions affecting service users, employees or the wider community including (de)commissioning or revised services
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, e.g. new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, self-service, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation (refer to any national IIA and consider local impact)
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other please explain in the box below:

### 2. What are the overall aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy or practice?

When considering whether or not to amend the premium levels, the discretion given to local authorities to charge a premium is intended to be a tool to help local authorities to:

- bring long-term empty homes back into use to provide safe, secure and affordable homes; and
- increase the supply of affordable housing; and
- enhance the sustainability of local communities.

### 3. Who are the main consultative groups (stakeholders)?

*Note: Consider communities of interest or place (where people are grouped together because of specific characteristics or where they live)*  
Every household within Flintshire and those who live outside Flintshire, but own a property in the Residential Rating, but especially those impacted by the proposed changes i.e. those who have second homes and long term empty properties within the county who would be potentially impacted by any variation to the current premium scheme.

The scheme was open to all the general public to ensure anyone who currently or in the future may be subject to the premium were able to respond including groups such as first time buyers.

Therefore a full public consultation was undertaken for a period of 4 weeks from 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 to capture the views of all potentially affected parties with the Council receiving 522 full or partial responses in both English and Welsh.

#### 4. Is the policy related to, influenced by, or affected by other policies or areas of work (internal or external), e.g. strategic IIAs if this is an operational IIA and vice versa?

*Note: Consider this in terms of statutory requirements, local policies, regional (partnership) decisions, national policies, welfare reforms.*

This is linked to local and national objectives to bring empty houses and periodically occupied properties back into housing stock for local communities.

Page 134

## STEP 2 - Data, Engagement and Assessing the Impact

When completing this section, you need to consider if you have sufficient information with which to complete your IIA, or whether you need to undertake a period of engagement/consultation before continuing. The legislation relating to the IIA process requires you to **engage and involve people who represent the interests of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and with those who have an interest in the way you carry out your functions**. The socio economic duty also requires us to **take into account the voices of those in the community including those with lived experience of socio economic disadvantage**. You should undertake engagement with communities of interest or communities of place to understand if they are more affected or disadvantaged by your proposals. This needs to be proportionate to the policy or practice being assessed. Remember that stakeholders can also include our own workforce as well as partner organisations.

Before carrying out particular engagement activities, you should first look to data from recent consultations, engagement and research. This could be on a recent related policy or recent assessments undertaken by colleagues or other sources, e.g., [Is Wales Fairer?](#), [North Wales Background Data Document](#), Info Base Cymru, WIMD. This can help to build confidence among groups and communities, who can see that what they have said is being acted on. If you have very little or no information from previous engagement that is relevant to this IIA, you should undertake some engagement work with your stakeholders and with relevant representative groups to ensure that you do not unwittingly overlook the needs of each

protected group. It is seldom acceptable to state simply that a policy will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone, and therefore individuals will be affected equally whatever their characteristics. The analysis should be more robust than this, demonstrating consideration of all of the available evidence and addressing any gaps or disparities. Specific steps may be required to address an existing disadvantage or meet different needs.

**The Gunning Principles**, established from past court cases, can be helpful in ensuring we apply fairness in engagement and consultation:

- Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.
- Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?
- Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?
- Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision.

**5. Have you complied with the duty to engage as described above and are you sufficiently informed to proceed?**

Yes  No  *(please cross as appropriate X)*

**6. If Yes, what engagement activities did you undertake and who with?**

We undertook a full 4 week consultation with the general public which was promoted on our website and via press release. The Council received 522 full or partial responses in both English and Welsh from across the spectrum of the public from both living inside and outside of Flintshire.

**7. If No, you may wish to consider pausing at this point while you undertake (further) engagement activities which you can include in the action plan below.** Please incorporate any information obtained from this additional activity in the boxes in question 8.

Action	Dates	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Information added to IIA (✓)

Page 5

8. **What information do you hold about the impact on each of the following characteristic and statutory considerations / duties from your experience of current service delivery and recent engagement or consultation?** Include any additional relevant data; research and performance management information; surveys; Government, professional body or organisation studies; Census data; Is Wales Fairer? (EHRC<sup>2</sup> data); complaints/compliments; service user data and feedback; inspections/ audits; socio-economic data including WIMD<sup>3</sup> data. You may wish to include sub-headings showing where each element of your data has come from, e.g. national data, local data, organisation data, general or specific engagement exercises, etc.

Consider any positive or negative impact including trends in data, geography (urban or rural issues), demography, access issues, barriers, etc. Also include any areas where there are inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage or other relevant issues identified by communities of interest or communities of place (i.e. where stakeholders, service users, staff, representative bodies, etc. are grouped together because of specific characteristics or where they live) and any issues identified for people living in less favourable social and/or economic circumstances.



Prompts for  
Equality Impact Asses

Page 130

Equality and Human Rights			
Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
Age	<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p> <p>This would allow more opportunity for those presently seeking a home and currently sharing with another household to obtain a</p>	Positive	<p>Older People Children Young People Working Age People Young Families Demographics</p>

<sup>2</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission

<sup>3</sup> Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation



## Equality and Human Rights

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	home of their own. Those finding themselves in this position may predominantly be first time buyers or younger people and increasing the housing stock would provide more opportunity local young residents to obtain their own home to own or rent.		NB: Where children / young people are affected complete the <a href="#">Childrens Rights Checklist</a> <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)</a> Caring responsibilities
<b>Disability</b>	<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p> <p>People who have a disability may need to find alternative more suitable accommodation at short notice. An increase in available housing stock would increase their choice and opportunity to move for local disabled residents.</p>	Positive	Mobility / Dexterity Blind or Visually impaired Deaf or Hearing impaired Mental Health Learning Disabilities Dementia Neurological difference / Autism Access to buildings/ facilities, induction loops, signage Access to communication methods, use of British Sign Language, Easy Read Carers Dietary requirements Other Long Term Health Conditions <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)</a>
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to gender reassignment.	No Impact	A person who proposes to, starts or has changed their gender identity Transgender Appropriate language use, i.e. gender neutral language, appropriate pronouns Gender neutral changing facilities and toilets confidentiality


## Equality and Human Rights

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>	<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p> <p>This would increase the opportunities for those who are married or in a civil partnership to buy or rent their own home.</p>	Positive	<p>Marital status Civil Partnership status Reference to partners and not assuming husband and wife relationships /terminology</p>
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>	<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p> <p>This would increase the opportunities for those who are pregnant or on maternity leave to have more options to a more suitable home as their change in personal circumstances requires them to do so.</p>	Positive	<p>Pregnant mothers Those entitled to maternity and paternity leave Foster/Adoption Breastfeeding mothers Access to breast feeding facilities Dress codes/uniforms- do they accommodate pregnant women</p>
<b>Race</b>	<p>The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to race. It would however increase the availability of housing in Flintshire and potentially attract more diversification in our community.</p>	Neutral	<p>Consider Ethnicity Nationality Gypsies / Travellers Language: interpreter provision Use of plain language Refugee / Asylum Seekers Migrants Positive Action Awareness events <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD)</a></p>
<b>Religion &amp; Belief</b>	<p>The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to religious belief.</p>	Neutral	<p>Faith Communities Non Beliefs Dietary requirements Vegetarianism/Veganism</p>

## Equality and Human Rights


Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
			Other philosophical beliefs Dress code/uniforms Religious festivals/activities Buildings – access to prayer room facilities
<b>Sex</b>	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to their sex.	Neutral	Men / Women Gender Identity Toilet facilities/baby changing Childcare Gender Pay Gap Sex workers <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UNCEDAW)</a>
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	The policy outcome would have no specific impact to a person due only to sexual orientation.	Neutral	Gay Lesbian Bi-sexual Heterosexual Terminology - Avoid making assumptions about a person's sexual orientation use gender-neutral terms such as partner(s). Confidentiality about sexuality Further resources available from <a href="#">Stonewall Cymru</a>
<b>Socio-economic Considerations- Reducing inequalities caused by socio-economic disadvantage</b>	If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.	Positive	People living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. Disadvantage may be exacerbated by many factors of daily life, not just urban or rural boundaries.

**Equality and Human Rights**

<b>Protected Characteristic /Group</b>	<b>Relevant Data</b>	<b>Positive and / or Negative Impact</b>	<b>Prompts</b> (not an exhaustive list)
	<p>Those that are subject to the premium as either second home owners or owners of long-term empty properties are generally not a group subject to socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>The evidence of our consultation indicates a large percentage of owners of long term empty properties would sell them, rent them or bring them up to a higher standard. All of these outcomes will bring a degree of “levelling up” with those with a primary residence and a long term empty residence ensuring that the empty residency is instead brought into use for a potentially homeless, vulnerable or socio-economically disadvantaged person/household.</p> <p>In addition to providing additional housing stock in Flintshire, maintaining or increasing the premium also increases income to the authority by raising additional council tax.</p> <p>These additional funds can reduce the burden of council tax across residents of all socio economic standing, but also be used to fund initiatives designed specifically to support socio-economically disadvantaged people with all aspects of their life.</p>		<p>‘Intersectionality’ issues - where identity compounds socio-economic status, e.g., single parents (often women), disabled people, some BAME groups. Examples include lower levels of good health, lower paid work, poorer educational attainment and an increased risk of being a victim of crime</p> <p>Further resources available from Welsh Government including examples of <a href="#">inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage</a></p>  <p>Inequalities of outcome.pdf</p>
<b>Human Rights</b>	<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p>	Positive	<p>See Human Rights Articles below. <a href="https://humanrightstracker.com/en/">https://humanrightstracker.com/en/</a> on EHRC website</p>

Equality and Human Rights			
Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	This will support the Human Rights Act Article 11.1 <i>“The right to choose one’s residence, to determine where to live and to freedom of movement.”</i>		
Other (please state)  Homeless	<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p> <p>This would contribute to allowing Flintshire to reduce issues of being homeless or living in unsuitable accommodation.</p>	Positive	E.g., Modern Slavery, Safeguarding, Other COVID effects, Carers, Ex-offenders, Veterans, Care Leavers, Substance Abuse, Homeless
Welsh Language			
Welsh Language	<p>The outcome of the policy if determined to maintain or increase the premium would continue to ensure that communities have only small numbers of long term empty properties and properties that are only occupied periodically as second homes.</p> <p>This would ensure that there are more local people living within Flintshire in previously empty or periodically occupied homes, promoting a greater use of the Welsh Language in the community.</p>	Positive	<p>Ensuring equal status of both Welsh and English languages. Availability of and access to services, activities and information.</p> <p>Availability of Welsh speaking employees</p> <p>Technology</p> <p>Rights of individuals to ask for WL services.</p> <p>Impact on Welsh speaking communities, including:</p> <p>Positive / negative effects on opportunities to use the WL.</p> <p>Possible changes to number/percentage of Welsh speakers</p> <p>Migration</p>

## Equality and Human Rights

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
			Job opportunities / Staffing changes. Training needs and opportunities Availability of Welsh medium education.   20200921 DG S Policy making stand

### Human Rights Act 1998

- Article 2 Right to life
- Article 3 Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment
- Article 4 Freedom from Slavery and forced labour
- Article 5 Right to liberty and security
- Article 6 Right to a fair trial
- Article 7 No punishment without law

- Article 8 Respect for private life, family, home and correspondence
- Article 9 Freedom of thought, belief and religion
- Article 10 Freedom of expression
- Article 11 Freedom of Assembly and association
- Article 12 Right to marry and start a family
- Article 13 Right to access effective remedy if rights are violated
- Article 14 Protection from discrimination

## Environment and Biodiversity

	Relevant Data/Information	Positive and /or negative impacts	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
<b>Reducing greenhouse gas emissions</b>	If long-term empty properties are incentivised to be brought back into use by maintaining or increasing the premium, this would ensure that properties that require investment are modernised including the fitting of more modern and efficient heating, insulation and appliances.	Positive	Will energy need be met through renewable sources? Will it reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy consumption and the need to travel? * Will it reduce ozone depleting emissions? Will it reduce emissions through retrofitting new technology?

**Environment and Biodiversity**

	<b>Relevant Data/Information</b>	<b>Positive and /or negative impacts</b>	<b>Prompts (not an exhaustive list)</b>
			Will it reduce heat island effects on people and property?
<b>Plan for future climate change</b>	The policy would not impact on the plan for future climate change.		Will it minimise flood risk from all sources of flooding? * Will it reduce property damage due to storm events/heavy rainfall by improving flood resistance and flood resilience? Will it reduce combined sewer overflow events? Will it encourage the re-use of resources? Will it encourage sustainable construction methods and procurement? Will it encourage water efficiency and drought resilience?
<b>Pollution: air, water/ soil/noise and vibration and emissions</b>	If long-term empty properties are incentivised to be brought back into use by maintaining or increasing the premium, this would ensure that properties that are perhaps empty and derelict and causing harm to the environment and visual amenity of an area are brought up to a good standard.	Positive	Will it reduce combined sewer overflow events? Will it improve air quality? * Will it reduce emissions of key pollutants? Will it reduce noise concerns and noise complaints? Will it reduce noise levels?
<b>Integrating biodiversity into decision making</b>	The policy would not impact on integrating biodiversity into decision making.		Have you considered the impacts and opportunities for action for biodiversity at early stages Are the impacts of procurement on biodiversity considered? Are products sourced sustainably? Have the wider benefits of improved biodiversity been considered, flood prevention, health and wellbeing, recreation? Can you link with other strategies and initiatives for biodiversity e.g. FCC Environment and Sustainability policy, FCC Section

DSDG 143

**Environment and Biodiversity**


	<b>Relevant Data/Information</b>	<b>Positive and /or negative impacts</b>	<b>Prompts (not an exhaustive list)</b>
			6 Plan, FCC Urban tree and woodland plan?
<b>Increasing the resilience of our natural environment?</b>	No impact.		Does the proposal work with nature and consider the use of nature based solutions first and foremost? Does your proposal support the creation of new habitats (in addition to any mitigation or compensation habitat) Does it contribute to the restoration of degraded habitats? Does it improve site management to improve nature value?
<b>Improving understanding and raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity</b>	Any decision to maintain or increase the premium would provide a disincentive for a property to be left empty long-term and instead be used as a primary residency. The outside space of a property that is lived in is more likely to be managed in a respectful way to encourage biodiversity.	Positive	Can your proposal promote understanding of biodiversity? Can the delivery of public goods and services such as social care, community health and recreation promote biodiversity? Can your proposal promote biodiversity with partners/beneficiaries
<b>Encouraging resource efficiency (energy, water, materials and minerals)</b>	If long-term empty properties are incentivised to be brought back into use by maintaining or increasing the premium, this would ensure that properties that require investment are modernised including the fitting of more modern and efficient heating, insulation and appliances.  This would mean that resources are protected as the property would use less energy and any remedial works done e.g. fixing of leaks.	Positive	Will it reduce water consumption and improve water efficiency? Will it reduce energy consumption? *
<b>Reducing waste production and</b>	It could be reasonably expected that the outcome of the policy would encourage more recycling from permanent residents who	Positive	Will it reduce consumption of materials and resources? Will it reduce household waste?



**Environment and Biodiversity**


	<b>Relevant Data/Information</b>	<b>Positive and /or negative impacts</b>	<b>Prompts (not an exhaustive list)</b>
<b>increase recycling, recovery and re-use of waste</b>	are familiar and educated in local recycling collections and centres rather than those in periodically occupied properties.		Will it increase recycling, recovery and re-use? Will it reduce construction waste?
<b>Reducing need to travel and promote sustainable forms of transport</b>	By having more available housing, this allows local people to live and work in the community they wish, reducing the requirement to travel long distances for work and social purposes.	Positive	Will it reduce volumes of traffic? Will it encourage walking and cycling?*
<b>Improving the physical environment: housing, public space, access to and quality of green space</b>	<p>By maintaining a premium and potentially increasing the premium would ensure that empty properties in communities are not left to deteriorate into a state of disrepair improving the aesthetics of the area.</p> <p>Furthermore, it would also discourage owners from allowing properties to remain empty in the long term and either selling them or renting them to local people, increasing the number of homes available to local people to rent or buy.</p> <p>This was supported in the public consultation where owners of properties that are currently empty suggested they would sell the property providing opportunity for it to become a residential dwelling once more.</p>	Positive	<p>Will it reduce litter?</p> <p>Will it enhance the quality of public realm?</p> <p>Will it improve access and mobility for all equality groups</p> <p>Will it improve open space?</p> <p>Will it improve landscape character?</p> <p>Will it minimise development on Greenfield sites</p>
<b>Protecting and enhancing the historic environment and architectural, archaeological</b>	The policy would not affect this characteristic.		<p>Will it protect heritage sites and cultural value?</p> <p>Will it protect strategic views?</p> <p>Will it protect listed buildings and their settings?</p> <p>Will it help preserve, enhance and record archaeological features and their settings?</p>


Environment and Biodiversity			
	Relevant Data/Information	Positive and /or negative impacts	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
and cultural heritage			

Health			
Determinants of health	Relevant data /information	Positive and /or negative impacts	Prompts (not an exhaustive list) Guidance from
Lifestyles	The policy will not affect this characteristic.		 HIA_Tool_Kit_V2_W EB.pdf
	Bringing properties back into use and increasing local housing stock means that families can continue to live in the communities in which they grew up creating close family networks and a sense of belonging.	Positive	Family organisation and roles Citizen power and influence Social support and social networks Neighbourliness Sense of belonging Local pride Divisions in community Social isolation Peer pressure Community identity Language/Cultural and spiritual ethos Racism Other social exclusion

Page 146

**Health**

<b>Determinants of health</b>	<b>Relevant data /information</b>	<b>Positive and /or negative impacts</b>	<b>Prompts</b> (not an exhaustive list) Guidance from   HIA_Tool_Kit_V2_W EB.pdf
<b>Mental well-being</b>	The policy will not affect this characteristic		Does this proposal support sense of control? Does it enable participation in community and economic life? Does it impact on emotional wellbeing and resilience?
<b>Living/environmental conditions affecting health</b>	Properties that are left empty long-term often fall into disrepair and can be a blight on the attractiveness of an area.  By incentivising properties to be brought back into use improves the appearance of communities and provides incentive for others to maintain their properties to a higher standard.	Positive	Built environment Neighbourhood design Housing Indoor environment Noise Air and water quality Attractiveness of area Green space Community safety Smell/odour Waste disposal Road hazards Injury hazards Quality and safety of play areas
<b>Economic conditions affecting health</b>	The policy will not affect this characteristic.		Unemployment Income Economic inactivity <input type="checkbox"/> Type of employment Workplace conditions
<b>Access and quality of services</b>	The policy will not affect this characteristic.		Medical services

Health			
<b>Determinants of health</b>	<b>Relevant data /information</b>	<b>Positive and /or negative impacts</b>	<b>Prompts</b> (not an exhaustive list) Guidance from   HIA_Tool_Kit_V2_W EB.pdf
			Other caring services Shops and commercial services Public amenities Transport including parking Education and training Information technology
<b>Page 148</b> <b>Macr-economic, environmental and sustainability factors</b>	The policy will not affect this characteristic.		Government policies Gross Domestic Product Economic development Biological diversity Climate

United Nations Conventions on the Rights of the child			
	<b>Relevant data or information</b>	<b>Positive and/or negative impacts</b>	<b>Prompts</b> (not exhaustive)
<b>Relevant Article</b>	None identified	N/A	<a href="#">Summary of conventions</a>

There are four articles in the convention that are seen as special. They're known as the "General Principles" and they help to interpret all the other articles and play a fundamental role in realising all the rights in the Convention for all children. They are:	
Article 2	The Convention applies to every child without discrimination, whatever their ethnicity, sex, religion, language, abilities or any other status, whatever they think or say, whatever their family background
Article 3	(best interests of the child) The best interests of the child must be a top priority in all decisions and actions that affect children.
Article 6	(life, survival and development) Every child has the right to life. Governments must do all they can to ensure that children survive and develop to their full potential

Article 12	2 (respect for the views of the child) Every child has the right to express their views, feelings and wishes in all matters affecting them, and to have their views considered and taken seriously. This right applies at all times, for example during immigration proceedings, housing decisions or the child's day-to-day home life
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**9. Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?**

There are not considered to be any data gaps in this assessment as a full public consultation was undertaken on the specific proposal to potentially vary the present Council Tax Premium Policy. The engagement process was carefully planned, administered and communicated to ensure maximum engagement and ensure there are no gaps in data or sections of the community not consulted.

A 4 week consultation with the general public was undertaken from 8<sup>th</sup> November 2021 to 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 which was promoted on our website and via press release. The Council received 522 full or partial responses in both English and Welsh from across the spectrum of the public from both living inside and outside of Flintshire.

Page 149

Note: If it is not possible to obtain this information now, you should include this in your action plan in Step 6 so that this information is available for future IIAs.

**10. How does your proposal ensure that you are working in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and that every opportunity is taken to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?**

Our consultation results show that 23.8% of respondents consider that long term empty properties and second homes have a negative effect on the treatment of the Welsh Language compared with just 2.7% who felt they have a positive impact. Therefore any decision to maintain or increase the level of premium would contribute to fewer empty or periodically used properties and allow for the development of Welsh language in communities.

**11. If this IIA is being updated from a previous version of a similar policy or practice, were the intended outcomes of the proposal last time achieved or were there other outcomes? (Please provide details, for example, was the impact confined to the people you initially thought would be affected, or were other people affected and if so, how?)**

Not applicable

12. **What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions affecting these groups made by the organisation?** (You may need to discuss this with your Chief Officer or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making, e.g., financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, e.g., disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc.)

The cumulative impact of any decision to maintain or increase the premium will continue to ensure owners of long-term empty properties and second homes into use and increase the availability of local housing for local residents – this links with one of the Strategic Priorities of the Council as set on the Council Plan:

Theme: Affordable and Accessible Housing

Priority: Empty Properties – bringing empty homes back into use to enhance the local housing market and improve our local communities.

13. **How does this proposal meet with each of the 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015?**

For more information, please see: <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

**A Prosperous Wales** – having more available housing would encourage local residents and talent to stay in the county/wales and contribute to future prosperity. Having a capped level of premium still encourages visitors and non-residents to come to the county, as they will want to use their second homes more often to obtain "value" and will bring their spending power to the county more frequently.

**A Resilient Wales** – by addressing the issue of shortage of housing stock, this will ensure Wales and the County are in a strong position to be able to provide suitable housing to residents who wish to live there meaning they do not have to seek alternative solutions outside the county/country.

**A More Equal Wales** – the policy will proactively support those at a socio-economic disadvantage to secure themselves a home in the county as owners of long-term empty properties will have more incentive to make them suitable for sale and let into the local housing market. Therefore those who have an empty property who are typically not at a socio-economic disadvantage will be encouraged to take action.

**A Healthier Wales** – adequate provision and availability of housing is recognised as a key enabler to good health.

**A Wales of Cohesive Communities** – having more properties lived in permanently rather than being left empty or used as holiday homes will ensure communities remain vibrant and cohesive without the potential blight of unoccupied properties. The premium scheme could have a positive impact by encouraging owners to bring empty properties back into use and thereby helping to develop strong and cohesive communities by addressing housing needs.

**A Wales of Vibrant Culture and Thriving Welsh Language** – the policy disincentives properties being left empty or being periodically occupied and instead encourages properties to be lived in full time as a primary residence. Having a higher percentage of properties being permanent residences will encourage the uptake, maintenance of the Welsh language in the community. It will also provide more opportunity for local residents to have access to housing stock when they require in order to stay living local and contribute to the local culture of the area rather than migrating away.

**14. How does this proposal meet with the 5 ways of working of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 ?**

For more information, please see: <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>

**Long term, Integration, Involvement, Collaboration, Prevention**

Any potential increase to the premium will not bring overnight radical solutions to the shortage of housing in Flintshire or Wales, however it will dovetail and support other initiatives as part of a long-term integrated plan to ensure we make maximum use of existing housing stock in addition to new development to encourage inward investment in collaboration with strategic partners. This will lead to a focus on the prevention of homelessness and overcrowding in homes in Flintshire.

**15. Describe any intended negative impact identified and explain why you believe this is justified (for example, on the grounds of advancing equality of opportunity or fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or because of an objective justification<sup>1</sup> or positive action<sup>2</sup>)**

No negative impact on protected characteristics

**Note<sup>1</sup>: Objective Justification** - gives a defence for applying a policy, rule or practice that would otherwise be unlawful direct or indirect discrimination. To rely on the objective justification defence, the employer, service provider or other organisation must show that its policy or rule was for a good reason – that is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A **legitimate aim** is the reason behind the discrimination which must not be discriminatory in itself and must be a genuine or real reason, e.g., health, safety or welfare of individuals. If the aim is simply to reduce costs because it is cheaper to discriminate, this will not be legitimate. Consider if the importance of the aim outweighs any discriminatory effects of the unfavourable treatment and be sure that there are no alternative measures available that would meet the aim without too much difficulty (proportionate) and would avoid the discriminatory effect.

**Note<sup>2</sup>: Positive Action** - Where an employer takes specific steps to improve equality in the workplace to address any imbalance of opportunity, lessen a disadvantage or increase participation in a particular activity, for example, increasing the number of disabled people in senior roles where they are under-represented by targeting specific groups with job adverts or offering training to help create opportunities for certain groups. The public sector is expected to consider the use of positive action to help them comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**16. Could any of the negative impacts identified amount to unlawful discrimination but are perceived to be unavoidable (e.g., reduction in funding)?**

Yes       No       Not Sure       *(Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)*

**17. If you answered Yes or Not Sure to question 15, please state below, which protected group(s) this applies to and explain why (including likely impact or effects of this proposed change)**

**18. If you answered No to question 15, are there any barriers identified which amount to a differential impact for certain groups and what are they?**

None

### STEP 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires all public authorities to consider the needs of protected characteristics when designing and delivering public services, including where this is done in partnership with other organisations or through procurement of services. The Welsh Language Standards also require all public authorities to consider the effects of any policy decision, or change in service delivery, on the Welsh language, which includes any work done in partnership or by third parties. We must also ensure we consider the Socio-economic Duty when



planning major procurement and commissioning decisions to consider how such arrangements can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

When procuring works, goods or services from other organisations (on the basis of a relevant agreement), we must have due regard to whether it would be appropriate :

- for the award criteria for that contract to include considerations to help meet the General Duty (to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations);
- to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the General Duty.

This only applies to contractual arrangements that are “relevant agreements” which means either the award of a ‘public contract’ or the conclusion of a ‘framework agreement’, both of which are regulated by the Public Sector Directive (Directive 2004/18/EC) which regulates the specified EU thresholds. Further information can be found [here](#).

We must consider how such arrangements can improve equal opportunities and reduce inequalities of outcome due to protected characteristics and caused by socio-economic disadvantage, particularly on major procurement and commissioning decisions. The PSED applies to the work that private sector organisations undertake when delivering a public function on our behalf. We therefore need to ensure that those organisations exercise those functions by ensuring our procurement and monitoring of those services complies with the General Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In the same way, the Welsh Language Standards applies to any work undertaken on behalf of, and in the name of, public bodies that are themselves subject to the Standards, and so consideration should be given to how these requirements are monitored and communicated through the procurement documents. The Socio Economic Duty does not pass to a third party through procurement, commissioning or outsourcing. Therefore when we work in partnership with bodies not covered by the Socio Economic Duty, the duty only applies to us as the relevant public body.

**19 Is this policy or practice to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or in partnership with another organisation(s)?**

Yes  No  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select ‘checked’ as appropriate)

If No, please proceed to Step 4

**20. If Yes, what steps will you take to comply with the General Equality Duty, Human Rights and Welsh Language Legislation and the Socio-Economic Duty in regard to procurement and/or partnerships? Think about :**

**Procurement**

- Setting out clear equality expectations in Tendering and Specification documentation, showing how promotion of equality may be built into individual procurement projects

**Partnerships**

Be clear about who is responsible for :

- Equality Monitoring relevant data

- On what you based your decisions in the award process, including consideration of ethnical employment and supply chain code of practice
- Ensure that contract clauses cover the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and socio-economic requirements as well as Welsh Language Duties (remember that any duties from the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards are also applicable to services provided on your behalf under contract by external bodies).
- Performance and Monitoring measures are included to monitor compliance, managing and enforcing contracts

- Equality Impact Assessments
- Delivering the actions from the IIA
- Ensuring that equality, human rights and Welsh Language legislation is complied with by all partners
- Demonstrating due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Socio-Economic duty

Not applicable

**STEP 4 - Dealing with Adverse or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice**

**1. When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?**  
(Please give brief details)

Significantly positive impact	Significantly negative impact
<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market increasing the supply of housing stock within the county.</p> <p>Those that are subject to the premium as either second home owners or owners of long-term empty properties are generally not a group subject to socio-economic disadvantage.</p> <p>The evidence of our consultation indicates a large percentage of owners of long term empty properties would sell them, rent them or bring them up to a higher standard. This would bring properties into use for a potentially homeless, vulnerable or socio-economically disadvantaged person/household.</p>	

<p>In addition to providing additional housing stock in Flintshire, maintaining or increasing the premium also increases income to the authority by raising additional council tax.</p> <p>These additional funds can reduce the burden of council tax across residents of all socio economic standing, but also be used to fund initiatives designed specifically to support socio-economically disadvantaged people with all aspects of their life.</p> <p>Finally, increasing the supply of housing in Flintshire would prevent migration of Flintshire residents to other areas allowing close family and community cohesion to continue.</p>	
<p>If the present Premium Scheme set at 50% is maintained or increased it is expected that more properties not presently occupied on a residential basis would become available to the sales or rental market.</p> <p>This will support the Human Rights Act Article 11.1 <b><i>“The right to choose one’s residence, to determine where to live and to freedom of movement.”</i></b></p>	

**22. It is important that you record the mitigating actions you will take in developing your final policy/practice draft. Record here what measures or changes you will introduce to the policy or practice in the final draft which could reduce or remove any unlawful or negative impact or disadvantage and/or improve equality of opportunity/introduce positive change; or reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage? (This could also inform the Action Plan in Q30)**

Unlawful or Negative Impact Identified	Mitigation / Positive Actions Taken in the Policy/Practice	Completed (✓)
Not applicable		

**23. Will these measures remove any unlawful impact or disadvantage?**

Yes  No  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)

**24. If No, what actions could you take to achieve the same goal by an alternative means?**

Not applicable

25.

Wh

at measures or changes in the following important legislative areas have you included to strengthen or change the policy/practice:

- a) to foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity as covered by the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010;
- b) to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage;
- c) to increase opportunities to use the Welsh language and in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language as set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

Not applicable

Page 156

**26. Do you have enough information to make an informed judgement?**

Yes  No  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)

**27. If you answered Yes, please justify:**

We have not identified any negative impacts with respect to the detailed characteristics.

**28. If you answered No, what information do you require and what do you need to do to make a decision?**

(Note: Should data collection be included in the action plan (Step 6)?)

Not applicable

**[You may need to stop here until you have obtained the additional information]**

## STEP 5 - Decision to Proceed

29. Using the information you have gathered in Steps 1 – 4 above, please state on the table below whether you are able to proceed with the policy or practice and if so, on what basis?

*(Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)*

Decision	
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue with policy or practice in its current form
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue with policy or practice but with amendments for improvement or to remove any areas of adverse impact identified in Step 4
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue with the plan as any detrimental impact can be justified
<input type="checkbox"/> No	Do not continue with this policy or practice as it is not possible to address the adverse impact. Consider alternative ways of addressing the issues.

30. Are there any final recommendations in relation to the outcome of this Equality Impact Assessment?

No

## STEP 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data

The IIA process is an ongoing one that doesn't end when the policy/practice and IIA is agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify if the outcomes have changed since you introduced or amended this new policy or practice. If you do not hold relevant data, then you should be taking steps to rectify this in your action plan. To review the EHRC guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#).

31. Please outline below any actions identified in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection that will help you monitor your policy/practice once implemented:

Action	Dates	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan (✓)

32. Please outline below what arrangements you will make to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or practice including timescales for when it should be formally reviewed:

Monitoring and Review arrangements (including where outcomes will be recorded)	Timeframe & Frequency	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan (✓)

Page 158

### STEP 7 - Publishing the Integrated Impact Assessment

Please arrange for this completed IIA to be agreed by your Chief Officer and arrange for translation and publishing with a copy sent to Stephanie Aldridge: [stephanie.aldrige@flintshire.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.aldrige@flintshire.gov.uk).

## APPENDIX 5 - ANALYSIS OF COUNCIL TAX PREMIUM CASES

Community	Total Number of Properties	Second Homes Premiums	Long Term Empty Premiums	Total Premiums	Proportion of Premium Cases
Argoed	2,515	3	11	14	1.81%
Bagillt	1,794	5	15	20	2.59%
Broughton & Bretton	2,894	1	17	18	2.33%
Brynford	434	1	3	4	0.52%
Buckley	7,403	4	49	53	6.87%
Caerwys	622	3	9	12	1.55%
Cilcain	602	7	7	14	1.81%
Connahs Quay	7,290	6	59	65	8.42%
Flint	6,078	13	34	47	6.09%
Gwernaffield & Pantymwyn	869	4	10	14	1.81%
Gwernymynydd	526	4	7	11	1.42%
Halkyn	1,278	2	8	10	1.30%
Hawarden	6,296	11	30	41	5.31%
Higher Kinnerton	753	0	2	2	0.26%
Holywell	4,296	16	45	61	7.90%
Hope	1,886	4	21	25	3.24%
Leeswood	977	1	16	17	2.20%
Llanasa	2,182	20	48	68	8.81%
Llanfynydd	822	2	8	10	1.30%
Mold	4,830	11	40	51	6.61%
Mostyn	837	1	8	9	1.17%
Nannerch	214	7	6	13	1.68%
Nercwys	264	0	5	5	0.65%
Northop	1,386	1	16	17	2.20%
Northop Hall	762	1	5	6	0.78%
Penyffordd	2,003	2	8	10	1.30%
Queensferry	966	1	25	26	3.37%
Saltney	2,346	5	14	19	2.46%
Sealand	1,481	2	29	31	4.02%
Shotton	2,979	11	21	32	4.15%
Trelawnyd & Gwaenysgor	413	3	5	8	1.04%
Treuddyn	746	1	5	6	0.78%
Whitford	1,033	11	11	22	2.85%
Ysceifiog	548	3	8	11	1.42%
<b>Total Band 'D'</b>					
<b>Equivalent Properties</b>	<b>70,325</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>605</b>	<b>772</b>	

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	North Wales North Wales Market Stability Report
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Social Services)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Strategic

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

To provide an overview of the North Wales Market Stability Report 2022 [MSR] which has been produced as a requirement of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014.

A single regional MSR report must be produced for the North Wales Region and be approved by Full Council for each of the local authority areas (Gwynedd, Ynys Mon, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham) and the Board of the Local Health Board.

The assessment of the care market should be produced and published by June 2022. A draft of this report has been shared with Welsh Government. However it has been made very clear to Welsh Government that this is an early draft that has not been approved yet by the full Councils of each Local Authority and the Health Board. This approval process is taking place July – October 2022 with the final version of the MSR going to the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) at their November 2022 meeting before being submitted to Welsh Government.

The final MSR report must be published on all local authority websites, the health board website and the regional partnership website in both English and Welsh. A copy of the report will be submitted to Welsh Ministers. The Full Regional MSR is a lengthy document and summary reports, and an executive summary and accessible formats will also be made available in order to make the content and key messages more accessible and digestible.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet approve the North Wales Market Stability Report 2022
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE MARKET STABILITY REPORT</b>
1.01	The Welsh Government has introduced the Code of Practice for the preparation of Market Stability Reports to support this requirement stated in the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (2014).
1.02	<p>The MSR Code of Practice requires that local authorities and local health boards work in partnership to prepare and publish market stability reports based on data for each local authority area, as well as an aggregated version on a Regional Partnership Board (RPB) footprint. The Code of Practice states that:</p> <p><i>“The duty to prepare and publish a market stability report, as set out in the 2014 Act, sits with each local authority, but the Regulations require them to carry out this function on a regional footprint and in partnership with the Local Health Board, so that one market stability report will be prepared for each of the seven RPB areas across Wales”</i> [CoP Section 3.11]</p>
1.03	However, local authorities must ensure that the market stability report also contains an assessment of the market for care and support within each local authority area as well as across the RPB area as a whole [CoP Section 3.13].
1.04	In this way, the report will inform both regional and local decision-making around commissioning care and support (especially, but not exclusively, regulated services), feeding into the strategic area plan for the RPB area and helping shape local and regional commissioning strategies [CoP Section 3.14].
1.05	<p>In preparing their market stability reports, local authorities must carry out, in partnership with the Local Health Board and other RPB partners, an assessment of both:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the sufficiency of care and support in meeting the needs and demand for social care as set out in the population needs assessment, and</li><li>• the stability of the market for regulated services providing care and support [ CoP section 4.2].</li></ul> <p>The market stability assessment focuses on regulated services. These are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• care home services (adult and children’s)</li><li>• secure accommodation services (for children)</li><li>• residential family centre services</li><li>• adoption services</li></ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• fostering services</li> <li>• adult placement ('shared lives') services</li> <li>• advocacy services</li> <li>• domiciliary support service</li> </ul>
1.06	The MSR Code of Practice also states that whilst preventative services are not regulated services it requires local authorities and Local Health Boards to set out the range and level of preventative services that will be required to meet those needs identified in the Population Needs Assessment and assess how the availability of preventative services can also have a major impact upon the need for regulated services. Therefore, preventative services must be considered as part of the MSR.
1.07	The Code of Practice also notes other themes that must be considered in the MSR including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social Value</li> <li>• The Welsh Language</li> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Direct Payments and self-funded provision</li> </ul>
1.08	There is a strong link between the MSR and the recently produced North Wales Population Needs Assessment (PNA) 2022, where the population needs assessment sets out current and projected need and demand for care and support, and the range and level of services that will be required to meet that demand. The MSR will assess the sufficiency of the care and support provided in meeting the needs and demand established through the population needs assessment.
1.09	Whilst the MSR is a statutory requirement, this is not the main reason for undertaking the work. The MSR is a vital document that provides an evidence base to support organisations and services across the region, specifically it is to be used for strategic planning cycles underpinning the integration of services and support partnership arrangements.
1.10	Significant officer time has been involved in the production of local information, data analysis and research to inform the regional report. These documents, although not published as part of the regional report, are valuable local planning documents.
1.11	A Flintshire MSR has been developed, which includes the narrative that has been contributed to the development of the regional document, alongside local key messages. This may differ in some areas from the regional MSR, as we have incorporated updated information and results whilst producing the recent Children's Commissioning & Placement Strategy for Welsh Government. The local version is attached as Appendix 2.
1.12	Both the PNA and MSR documents will be used to plan local and regional delivery plan and service development plans going forward.
1.13	It is also vital that both documents are kept up to date and are used as live document for on-going planning. Therefore, the PNA-MSR Steering Group will continue to meet to undertake the updating and ongoing review of both

	documents, with local teams on the development of regional and local implementation/delivery plans.
1.14	The requirement to produce an accessible, regional report in a short timescale has limited what can be included. The work has been carried out during a very challenging time due to the pressures and capacity across the partner organisations. It has involved a significant effort by officers to ensure that a meaningful document was produced.
1.15	It should also be noted that very little national data on the care market was available and thus local and regional commissioning information has been relied upon.
1.16	The regional steering group recommend updating the document as new national data becomes available and more work is carried out locally e.g. the impact of Covid, financial challenges and the impact of re-balancing social care on the on the care market. The regional steering group will develop an on-going process to improve and update the MSR so that it remains meaningful and current. This will also help make it a more manageable process.
1.17	The MSR is a co-produced document and engagement led. Local and regional lead officers undertook data analysis, background literature reviews, service reviews and additional focused local engagement work. The key issues and themes identified are based on consultation and feedback from staff, partner organisations, Public Health Wales and local Health Board colleagues, service users and the general public to identify strategic needs for care and support. This included information from existing commissioning strategies and needs assessments.
1.18	This co-production approach results in a meaningful and informed MSR document that involved a wide variety of people, as opposed to a document created in isolation via a desk-top exercise, which has been the approach employed by some other regions of Wales.
1.19	The full MSR document will be used locally to inform future service planning, particularly in post pandemic recovery. It will be a key document to consider in the development of the Market Stability Report, as well as informing the local Wellbeing Plan and also will feed in to other documents including; the Community Strategy, Tacking Poverty plans and Housing/Housing Support Gateway plans.
1.20	As well as informing local plans, the next phase of the project will also involve using the population assessment and the market stability report to develop an 'area plan' for the region. Future work on the area plan may involve further research and consultation to explore priority areas in more depth before agreeing which areas to prioritise for regional work. The area plan is to be developed and published in 2023.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Services Improvement Collaborative has utilised existing staff to support the development of the MSR. Associated costs, such as translation and for specialist engagement was also funded by the partnership.
2.02	There has been a cost to the local authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Public Health Wales in staff time and resource to support the project. This includes staff to carry out engagement work to support the analysis and writing of the report. The majority of this work took place between December 2021 and July 2022 for the MSR.
2.03	Going forward the MSR will identify regional and local priorities, it may be the case that these priorities require some level of investment at either regional or local level.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	It has not been possible to gain approval from all six councils and the Board of BCUHB by the original date given in the MSR code of practice, of June 2022, due to time needed to capture data and undertake the market analysis, as well as the timetable of governance meetings of each local authority and health board. To mitigate this, we have liaised closely with Welsh Government regarding our revised timescales and have also sent them an early draft of the document for information.
3.02	An Equality Impact Assessment for the regional MSR is attached as Appendix 4

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	The North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Services Improvement Collaborative set up a regional steering group to lead the work for the technical, engagement, data and other theme-based groups to lead on specific tasks. Membership of the groups are from each North Wales local authority, BCUHB, Public Health Wales and other parties with an interest in the needs assessment such as officers for the Public Services Board (PSB). The Governance structure can be found in Appendix 3
4.02	Engagement for the MSR included: a questionnaire for organisations that asks for their views and evidence; engagement with different sector providers e.g. third sector and also local workshops with providers. This has provided rich qualitative data to inform the MSR. 38% of respondents operated in the Flintshire area.
4.03	Locally, workshops were held with Responsible Individuals across residential, domiciliary care and supported living services to understand where they felt the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats were

	to the market. The feedback from these events is embedded in Appendix 2.
4.04	Feedback was sought from senior managers and colleagues in Social Services to ensure a wealth of information has been submitted.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 - North Wales Market Stability Report 2022
5.02	Appendix 2 - Flintshire Market Stability Report
5.03	Appendix 3 – North Wales Market Stability Report Approach and Governance Structure
5.04	Appendix 4 – Equality Impact Assessment

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Code of Practice <a href="https://gov.wales/market-stability-reports-code-practice-html">https://gov.wales/market-stability-reports-code-practice-html</a>
6.02	North Wales Population Needs Assessment 2022 <a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/North-Wales-Population-Assessment.aspx#:~:text=Undertaking%20the%20Population%20Needs%20Assessment,live%20well%20as%20they%20age.">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/North-Wales-Population-Assessment.aspx#:~:text=Undertaking%20the%20Population%20Needs%20Assessment,live%20well%20as%20they%20age.</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Neil Ayling, Chief Officer (Social Services) <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704511 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:neil.j.ayling@flintshire.gov.uk">neil.j.ayling@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>Area plan</b> - The plan sets out how the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) will respond to the findings of the North Wales population assessment. The plan sets out high level principles, outcomes and priorities for regional working across health and social care in North Wales. It is a starting point for formal regional working under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and sets a framework for health and social care partners to work together to a common agenda. The last area plan was published in 2017.</p> <p><b>Code of Practice</b> - Section 144B of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 ('the 2014 Act') requires local authorities to prepare and publish market stability reports. The document is in two parts:</p>

- Part 1 (chapters 2-5) is a code of practice for local authorities on the exercise of their functions in relation to market stability reports. It sets out the approach that local authorities must take, in collaboration with Local Health Boards and other RPB partners, to prepare and publish a market stability report for their RPB area
- Part 2 (chapter 6) is statutory guidance for local authorities and Local Health Boards on partnership working through the RPBs to prepare and publish market stability reports

**Co-production** - a way of working, whereby everybody works together on an equal basis to create a service or come to a decision which works for them all.

**North Wales Population Needs Assessment 2022** - The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a new duty on local authorities and health boards to develop a joint assessment for the care and support needs of regional populations. It also established Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) to manage and monitor services to ensure partnership working for the delivery of effective services.

The population needs assessment is produced by the North Wales Regional Partnership Board. The first population needs assessment was published in 2017 and has been used as a foundation for the 2022 report.

**North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Services Improvement Collaborative** - includes the six local authorities in North Wales, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and other partners. The aim is to improve services, make the most of the resources available, reduce duplication and make services more consistent across North Wales.

**Preventative services** – These services:

Help prevent or delay the development of people’s needs which require care and support;

- Reduce the needs for care and support for those who have these needs;
- Promote the upbringing of children by their families, when it is consistent with the wellbeing of the child;
- Prevent people from suffering abuse or neglect;
- Enable people to live as independently as possible;
- Reduce the need for,
  - Care of supervision orders under the Children Act 1989
  - Criminal proceedings against children
  - Proceedings with may lead to children being placed into local authority care.

**Regional Partnership Board (RPB)** - RPBs have been established as part of the Social Services and Well Being Act to:

- Improve the well-being of the population
- Improve how health and care services are delivered.

All Regional Partnership Boards must:

- Produce a regional population assessments and produce a regional area plan
- Provide a regional annual report

- Demonstrate citizen engagement and co-production

**Responsible Individuals** - The Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 requires care providers to designate a Responsible Individual (RI) for each place at, from or in relation to which a regulated service is provided as part of the registration process. The RI role is a distinct leadership role to ensure sound governance within the providing organisation.





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**NORTH WALES** SOCIAL CARE AND WELL-BEING  
SERVICES IMPROVEMENT COLLABORATIVE

# North Wales

# Market Stability Report

## Draft 0.4 (June 2022)



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# Contents

1. Introduction .....	4
2. Summary of regional priorities.....	8
3. Residential services (adults) .....	13
4. Domiciliary care services.....	47
5. Residential services (children) .....	83
6. Fostering services .....	111
7. Adoption services .....	133
8. Unpaid carers.....	136
9. Advocacy services.....	143

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Background

The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a new duty on local authorities and health boards to develop a joint assessment of the sufficiency and sustainability of the social care market. The Market Stability Report has been produced by the North Wales Regional Partnership Board in line with the Code of Practice (Welsh Government, 2021a). This is the first Market Stability Report produced and takes into account the findings from the North Wales Population Needs Assessment 2022.

## 1.2 Purpose of the market stability report

The report helps us to understand the social care market in North Wales, so that we can effectively commission and support providers of health and social care services to meet the needs of the population effectively.

The market stability report will assess:

- The sufficiency of care and support in meeting the needs and demand for social care, as set out in the population needs assessment
- stability of the market for regulated services

Regulated services are those listed in The Partnership Arrangements (Amendment) and Regulated Services (Market Stability Reports) (Wales) Regulations 2021.

Currently these are:

- a care home service (adult and children's)
- a secure accommodation service (for children)
- a residential family centre service
- an adoption service
- a fostering service
- an adult placement
- a domiciliary care service
- an advocacy service

The assessment is the basis on which the Regional Partnership Board should make decisions for future planning and commissioning of care and support services. This will include local area plans, strategic commissioning strategy and market position statements.

This assessment has been undertaken as a joint exercise by the six North Wales local councils, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) and Public Health Wales. The six local councils are Wrexham County Borough Council, Flintshire County Council, Denbighshire County Council, Conwy County Borough Council, Gwynedd Council and Isle of Anglesey County Council.

The market stability report aims to improve our understanding of the social care market in North Wales, and how this will evolve and change over the coming years. The findings within this assessment will assist all public service providers within the region in providing better and sufficient services for our citizens who are in need of care and support.

## **1.3 Research methods**

The research methods include:

- Analysis of local and national data sets to identify trends.
- Evidence from the local authorities and health board.
- Evidence from local, regional and national research.
- Priorities from local, regional and national policies / strategies / plans.
- Responses to the regional survey and other consultation exercises from citizens, organisations, staff and providers.

## **1.4 Consultation and engagement**

The Code of Practice (Welsh Government, 2021a) states that local authorities must take reasonable steps to engage with citizens. As a precursor to the market stability report, the population needs assessment had undertaken a large scale regional consultation and engagement exercise based on the national principles for public engagement in Wales and principles of coproduction. This exercise gave an insight of the direct impact of stability and sustainability of the social care market on people with care and support needs, their carers and families. Further details can be found in the population needs assessment.

Registered providers of social care services were engaged via a regional provider’s survey. An invitation to complete the survey was sent via commissioners to all registered providers across the region.63 responses were received.

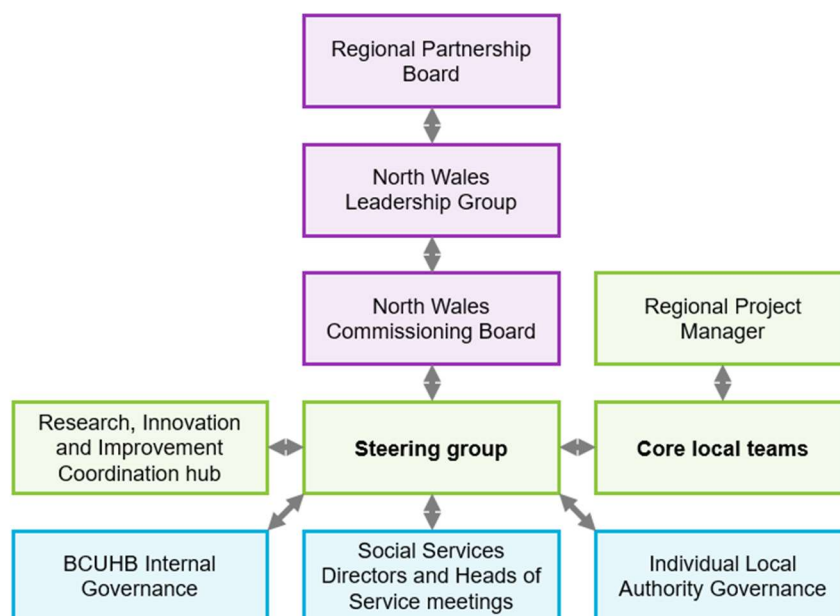
Additionally, local teams have also undertaken their own engagement where this was not being covered at a regional level. Draft chapters were also shared with partners for feedback and comments.

## 1.5 Project governance

The Regional Partnership Board tasked the North Wales Commissioning Board with oversight of the project. They established a regional steering group to coordinate the development of the Market Stability Report, which included representation from the six local authorities, the health board and Public Health Wales. The project management arrangements ensured that there was consistency for all partners in producing a regional report. Regular project reports were produced and shared with the regional boards as necessary.

This report has been approved by the six local authorities, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board and the Regional Partnership Board.

**Diagram 1: Project governance arrangements**



## **1.6 Limitations, lessons learnt and opportunities**

Preparing a single accessible population needs assessment and market stability report across six local authorities and one health board area within the timescales has been a challenging process. Particularly with the additional pressures of Covid-19. Thanks to the efforts of the project team, the project steering group comprising of local leads, the data-sub group, the engagement group, partner organisation teams, people who use services and providers co-produced this report.

One of the main challenges has been access to good quality data about the population and the social care market. The 2021 census data will not be published in time to include in the assessment and many indicators were unavailable due to changes in the way data is collected since the last assessment and because some data collection paused due to Covid-19.

It is recommended that the joint population needs assessment and market stability report steering group continues regularly scheduled meetings to oversee the updates and to make further recommendations about how to improve the quality, availability and coordination of data to inform future needs assessments.

## 2. Summary of regional priorities

Domiciliary care (care in people's own homes) is a priority market identified by commissioners, with current private sector providers unable to fulfil the demand for a significant amount of time now, due to staffing challenges. As such, growth and development of services including general and specialist domiciliary care have been identified as opportunities for the future.

Commissioners are keen to work with providers to increase care capacity to meet population needs. The key themes and priorities for providers and commissioners across social care and health are:

- Recruitment of staff. The employment market is highly competitive and competitive pay rates and employment benefits need to be offered in order to attract people.
- Integrated Domiciliary Care recruitment project between local authorities and the health board and development of integrated cross-organisational roles and career pathways.
- Terms and conditions. These need to reflect and be worthy of the social care role, and its importance in the health and care system as well as reflecting that these are skilled roles in the main.
- Retention of staff is poor due to poor terms and conditions in the social care sector. The cost of fuel and the cost of living crisis is now beginning to be felt in the sector where providers are seeing more staff experiencing in-work poverty. Staff are also leaving the sector due to challenging working conditions and lack of respect for the work they do and the levels of responsibility involved. Staff feel undervalued and overworked.
- Staff who are new to the sector are not staying in the sector long term as they feel overwhelmed by the intensity of the roles particularly those supporting people with complex needs and challenging behaviours. Providers and commissioners need to better support for staff to meet the challenges of working in social care.
- Service transformation programmes are a priority and they should accelerate the focus on enabling flexibility in using commissioned care hours, where providers can be trusted to flex the package of care hours in partnership with the individual who is being cared for. While appreciating budget restraints for all, the flexibility



would improve quality and bring costs savings in terms of reduction in administration costs.

- Development of true partnership working between commissioners and providers was identified as a key focus.
- Providers recognise the benefit of the additional Covid payments and the on-going suitability of the sector is recognised as a key priority due to the important work that home care providers do in keeping people well in their own homes, in enabling hospital discharge and preventing unplanned visits to hospital.
- Develop partnerships with care home providers to provide low level residential care / respite services to ease the pressure on home care domiciliary care provisions.
- Develop opportunities in micro commissioning and direct payments as an alternative to the traditional home care model.
- Increase support for unpaid carers to reduce the pressures on the home care service and look at carer led solutions, such as. increased carer breaks (respite)
- Increase the availability of specialist placements in care homes for older people, adults with mental health needs, learning disability and people with dementia.
- Increase the availability of emergency and longer term accommodation for children and young people with complex needs including mental health, learning disability and emotional behavioural needs.

## **Summary of local themes**

### **Anglesey**

- We are committed to service transformation and modernisation is an area of focus with further ambitions to develop accommodation options, building on the work of the transformation programme.
- We have an aging care workforce on the Island and therefore need to attract and retain new social care staff.
- We want to work with providers to ensure stability, particularly in relation to staffing costs, supply, choice, services and delivery.

## **Gwynedd**

- Recruitment and retention problems are a recurring issue, with all services reporting a real shortage and concern.
- Lack of financial support. All services have raised concerns about the ability to maintain quality services with limited resources. The lack of funding often results in having to use out of county providers which results in higher costs which in itself adds to the problem.
- Significant shortfall in care within the county for children who need to be in residential care compared to other services available to children. There is relatively good provision of foster families within the county and there are many resources and services within the county for supporting disabled children. There appears to be inconsistency in provision.

## **Conwy**

- Recruitment and retention of staff across the sector including social workers, care staff and nursing staff. This is linked to pay and conditions but not exclusively.
- Children's residential services. Provision of accommodation for both emergency and longer term placements is needed urgently and we are considering a range of options to increase provision in county and reduce reliance on costly temporary arrangements and out of county placements that are far from the family.
- Provision of domiciliary care services, with current private sector providers unable to fulfil the demand for a significant amount of time now.

## **Denbighshire**

- We want to increase care capacity to meet population needs within Denbighshire including residential care for children, young people, people with complex disabilities, older people (including those with mental health needs), foster care, domiciliary care and reablement.
- We are committed to improving communication internally across services / teams and with partner organisations and sharing of good practice
- Increasing the availability of overnight respite accommodation is a priority within Denbighshire.

## **Wrexham**

Key priorities within Children's Services in Wrexham are:

- Increased placement stability, reducing the number of children looked after through early intervention and preventative services and removing profit from children's placement market
- Provision of emergency accommodation for people in mental health crisis
- Increase in escalation of mental health needs and concerns of children and young people
- Developing new children's homes
- Improvement in quality of practice and performance across Children's Services

Key priorities within Adult Services in Wrexham are;

- Growth and development of services including; Domiciliary Care (includes homecare/reablement; community living and recovery)
- Day and employment services
- Emergency placements

## **Flintshire**

The Domiciliary Care market is a priority in Flintshire to help rebalance the care sector. Independent care providers continue to work creatively with the local authority to ensure the numbers of people waiting for care at home are the lowest possible.

In Flintshire, there are some critical pressures and key issues faced by social services in the areas of workforce, commissioning and funding criteria.

As of January 2022 in Flintshire, areas of ongoing pressures include:

- double-staffed care
- provision of care in rural areas
- provision of care for patients discharged from hospital
- care packages hand-backs from providers as a result of staffing challenges
- increased business costs – utility bills and insurance
- increased fuel costs, borne in the main by care staff themselves.

Since the pandemic the market for adult residential care services has become extremely unstable with several factors contributing to the availability of independent care home provision. The council are moving forward with plans to increase in house provision for people living with dementia and new model of step down care planned to support the discharge to assess and recover programme developed by the health board.

Half of all children in residential care from Flintshire are placed out of the country in England and Scotland. In-house residential care is being developed to rebalance the market in Flintshire.

Over the next five-year period, in order to ensure stability within the market for residential services for children, the council aims to:

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

# 3. Residential services (adults)

## Population overview

### Demand for care home placements is likely to increase

The population assessment shows that the number of people aged over 65 in North Wales increased by 17% between 2010 and 2020 and is projected to increase by a further 20% over the next 20 years. This is likely to increase the demand for care home services. The table below shows the expected change in each county, with Conwy expected to see the biggest increase and Gwynedd the smallest increase.

Table 1: Estimated number of people aged over 65 in 2020 and projected number in 2040

Local council	2020 number	2040 number	Change number	Change percent
Anglesey	18,650	22,500	3,850	17.2%
Gwynedd	28,550	34,300	5,700	16.7%
Conwy	32,950	43,500	10,550	24.3%
Denbighshire	23,500	30,400	6,900	22.6%
Flintshire	33,300	42,400	9,150	21.5%
Wrexham	27,750	34,500	6,750	19.6%
North Wales	164,700	207,600	42,900	20.7%
Wales	668,600	850,750	182,150	21.4%

Source: Mid-year 2020 population estimates, Office for National Statistics; and 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government

The increasing population of older people is not the only factor affecting demand. There are also changes in expectations and policy which mean demand may not increase at the same rate as the total population. For example, demand can change as people are supported to live in their own homes for longer, or take up extra care accommodation to retain independence with the option of receiving support as needed.

People are tending to move into residential care at a later age and when their needs are more complex, for example, due to dementia. The population assessment

estimated a 64% increase between 2017 and 2035 in the number of people living with dementia in North Wales, around 7,000 more people. Although previous increases have not been as high as expected because the proportion of people developing dementia reduced, perhaps due to improvements in health and more years spent in education (Matthews *et al.*, 2016). It is still likely that the trend for needing increasingly specialist nursing and residential home support for older people’s mental health (EMI) will continue.

## Market overview

There are around 220 residential care homes and 60 nursing homes in North Wales, which provide around 4,100 residential care placements and 2,500 nursing placements.

Table 2: Current number of **adult care homes** (age 18 and over) by type and area

Local council (a, b, c)	Residential	Residential with mental health	Nursing	Nursing with mental health	Total (d)
Anglesey	12	7	3	2	24
Gwynedd	14	9	7	3	33
Conwy	43	12	13	5	73
Denbighshire	46	13	5	5	69
Flintshire	22	12	7	2	35
Wrexham	16	10	9	2	37
North Wales	153	63	44	19	271

Source: Local authority data collection.

(a) In Anglesey most homes have some mental health beds so these have not been separated out.

(b) Denbighshire has 26 specialist residential homes for people with learning disabilities.

(c) Flintshire has 8 specialist homes for people with learning disabilities included in the residential category.

(d) Flintshire has a number of homes with dual registration. Total numbers do not sum.

Table 3: Current number of permanent care home placements available to all **adults aged 18 and over**

Local council (a, b, c)	Residential	Residential with mental health	Nursing	Nursing with mental health	Total
Anglesey	341	98	115	64	618
Gwynedd	351	199	353	175	1,078
Conwy	671	226	441	144	1,482
Denbighshire	802	0	321	0	1,123
Flintshire	416	261	179	44	900
Wrexham	223	490	526	108	1,347
<b>North Wales</b>	<b>2,804</b>	<b>1,274</b>	<b>1,935</b>	<b>535</b>	<b>6,548</b>

Source: Local authority data collection.

Notes:

- (a) The categories of care have become more fluid since the introduction of the
- (b) Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 so these categories
- (c) are only illustrative of the split between types of care.
- (d) In Anglesey and Denbighshire most homes have some mental health beds so these have not been separated out.
- (e) Flintshire have 50 specialist placements for people with Learning Disabilities, included in the residential category

## Care home fees

The need for sustainable and sufficient care home fees was highlighted in the consultation for the Market Stability Report. Fee levels are based on North Wales methodology with each council taking into account local decisions and affordability considerations. There are ongoing discussions around how the sector is funded, recognising the fragility of the sector, including the rebalancing care work and strategic National Framework for care and support being undertaken by Welsh Government (Welsh Government, 2021c).

## Care home vacancies

During the pandemic many care homes have carried higher levels of vacancies than previously. Average vacancy levels would normally be around 10%, which is thought to be sustainable for the sector (Laing, 2020). For some this was due to staff absences or staff vacancies due to recruitment issues, while others have needed to use additional rooms for storage of personal protective equipment (PPE) or for

additional living areas in order to reduce the size of groups of residents sharing facilities. From time to time there have been restrictions on admissions because of Covid-19 outbreaks too.

Care home vacancies were also increasing in Conwy before the pandemic due to the introduction of reablement teams who worked to keep older people in their homes for longer. This work has been less effective during the pandemic as there have been fewer domiciliary care workers out in the community.

Table 4: Percentage of vacant care home placements, 31 March 2021

Local council	Occupied	Unoccupied	Total placements	Percentage unoccupied
Anglesey	548	65	613	11%
Gwynedd	933	122	1,055	12%
Conwy	1,337	115	1452	8%
Denbighshire	1,161	249	1,410	18%
Flintshire	748	152	900	17%
Wrexham	1,059	288	1,347	21%
North Wales	5786	991	6777	15%

Source: Local authority data collection.

### Self-funded care home placements

The total number of people who fund their own care home placements across North Wales is not available due to differing council policy. Flintshire had 194 people self-funding placements in care homes as at 1 February 2022.

Estimates from the Office for National Statistics (2021) found that were around 36.7% self-funded care home residents between 2019 and 2020.

### Isle of Anglesey market overview

Anglesey has identified the following needs:

- Increased dementia care is required.
- Social isolation may be a particular risk for older people on Anglesey, due to rurality, lack of transport, and the distance many are living from their families.
- There is need for additional specialist services on Anglesey.



- There are not enough older people's mental health (EMI) residential and nursing beds on Anglesey.
- There is reduced demand for general residential beds.
- For older people with a learning disability who also have physical health and dementia needs, there is a lack of specialist residential and nursing placements.

## **Gwynedd market overview**

Gwynedd has identified the following areas where there is a struggle to meet demand:

- Lack of specialist residential and nursing placements for older people with a learning disability who also have physical health and dementia needs.
- Lack of support workers in the community, and residential especially Tan y Marian and within day provision. This makes it difficult to start a service for new individuals and many individuals receive fewer support days / hours in the community.
- It is difficult to maintain and develop a service tailored to the person who needs workers who have received training in 'Personal Behaviour Support (PBS)' and Active Support.
- Demand for dementia specialist care (residential and nursing). There is currently no dementia nursing care in the Meirionnydd / Llyn area.
- There is no specialist mental health provision including for autism and severe mental illness, in Gwynedd. Conwy is the nearest location but the provision is non-Welsh speaking.
- We have seen an increase in the demand for temporary residential care as a result of a shortage of domiciliary care.
- We are unable to fill empty beds in some of the Council's homes due to the high dependency level of residents.
- Inappropriate discharges from hospital without sufficient time for recovery can result in increased dependency.
- Sickness absence and recruitment are a problem.

## **Future plans**

There are plans to increase residential older people's mental health (EMI) provision by adapting units in the council's residential homes.

There are currently 33 providers of older people's residential and nursing homes in Gwynedd. Gwynedd Council provides 11 residential homes for older people directly.

Table 5: Gwynedd older people's care home placements

	Total registered placements	Number of dementia placements
Plas Maesincla	23	23
Plas Ogwen	27	-
Plas Pengwaith	31	-
Plas Hedd	28	7
Plas Hafan	30	8
Plas y Don	30	-
Plas Gwilym	27	-
Hafod Mawddach	25	8
Bryn Blodau	41	17
Cefn Rodyn	22	-
Llys Cadfan	33	15

Source: Local authority data

The following provides an update on our efforts to expand the provision of care for people with dementia:

- Plas Hedd. One respite bed unable to open due to construction. New development underway. Plan to change a further 8 bed unit to support people living with dementia.
- Plas Hafan. Used to full potential.
- Bryn Blodau. 9 beds for people living with dementia, due to staffing situation, unable to support individuals living with dementia, but offering a different service.
- Hafod Mawddach. New development will increase registered places to 30 with 8 beds for people living with dementia. Due for completion in September 2022.
- Cefn Rodyn. 5 beds on the first floor unused due to fire safety issues and wait for new lift. New developments completed in 2021. One room has been developed for bariatric use, the others for people with more intensive residential needs.
- Llys Cadfan. Used to full capacity. 1 respite bed for people living with dementia and 1 residential respite bed.

Over the last 5 years the Council has increased the number of older people's mental health (EMI) residential beds in their in-house homes. There were originally 38 beds between Plas Maesincla and the Bryn Blodau and Llys Cadfan units. There are now units at Plas Hafan, Plas Hedd, an additional unit at Llys Cadfan and Bryn Blodau. Further work is underway to create a second unit at Plas Hedd and a new unit at Hafod Mawddach with the hope of opening later this year. While this is significant progress, more needs to be done to change the balance of older people's mental health (EMI) placements in the county and meet needs. There are significant revenue costs associated with each unit changed from residential to older people's mental health (EMI) placements.

The following gaps have been identified:

- Dementia Specialist Care (residential and nursing) in the Meirionnydd area - there is currently no dementia nursing care there.
- Residential / nursing care for young people with physical and sensory needs.

For the future the Council hopes that residential older people's mental health (EMI) provision will be created at Plas Gwilym and Plas Pengwaith. Gwynedd Council is working in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and the Welsh Government to develop the Penrhos site, Pwllheli. It is intended to submit a business case to Gwynedd Council's Cabinet for the development of an on-site care home. The number of individuals with dementia is increasing, and we regularly review need and try to adapt council homes to be flexible and suitable to meet future need.

## **Conwy market overview**

Most placements in Conwy are commissioned from private care home providers who provide 98% of the bed spaces in the county. Provision across the coast is reasonable, but there is a shortage of spaces to the south / rural parts of the county and concerns about the provision available in the Welsh language. The county is well serviced with residential and nursing places, but has a shortage of specialist mental health provision for both residential and nursing needs, in particular for those who need very specialist care. The majority of buildings utilised as Care Homes are older and often converted residential dwellings. On the whole they are well maintained by the providers, but repairs and maintenance can be costly. The physical layout of many such homes made it very difficult for the providers to

manage Covid outbreaks during the pandemic, while at the same time, the purpose built homes found that they were better equipped to manage such outbreaks.

## **Denbighshire market overview**

Over 90% of care home placements are commissioned from external providers. There are two in-house care homes. The council closed one of the three residential homes that it had in 2019. The site, in Ruthin, is now being developed to provide more extra care apartments.

There has been a slight reduction in the overall capacity of the care home sector in Denbighshire in recent years. There is reduced demand for residential care without additional support for mental health or complex physical needs.

The majority of care homes in Denbighshire are older buildings that have been adapted. There have been a few occasions where it has not been possible to accommodate people with bariatric needs because of the structure of the buildings – size of doorways or layout of corridors. Also, few care homes have space for ceiling hoists for moving and handling or larger beds. The requirement for more staff input is also a barrier.

There are very few vacancies at the moment.

There are currently around 18 adults placed in care homes because there is insufficient support available to allow them to return to their own homes.

As of May 2021 there are 32 out of county residential older people's mental health (EMI) placements and 29 nursing placements. There are 33 out of county placements in Denbighshire for older people with mental health needs, mainly due to a lack of suitable local placements

Denbighshire has 282 places for specialist learning disability care home provision. They have identified the following trends.

- **Demography.** The number of people with learning disabilities needing support is increasing and people with learning disabilities are living longer. These demographic trends are likely to continue.
- **Attitudes and expectations.** Most individuals and their families want / expect to have a greater level of independence and to be a key part of their community.

- **Finance.** The level of spend on learning disability services has been increasing but we are now faced with supporting more people with less money (as a result of reducing local authority settlements, Independent Living Fund (ILF) closure and Housing Support Grant restrictions).
- **Existing provision.** Support is generally provided via immediate family members and / or long term paid care staff. Less use is made of informal community based assets.

## **Flintshire market overview**

There has been an overall increase in residential provision in the last few years due to the reopening of three homes and the expansion of Marleyfield house in Buckley. One large home has changed from providing nursing to residential care which has simultaneously increased residential care capacity and decreased nursing home capacity. A general nursing home in Holywell closed in 2019 and another in March 2022 which decreased general nursing placements by 75. One care home is currently undergoing renovation work which has temporarily reduced market capacity.

Marleyfield, Croes Atti, and Llys Gwenffrwd are purpose built care homes, owned by the Council, situated in the towns of Buckley, Flint and Holywell. The buildings require little refurbishment or renovation. Llys Gwenffrwd differs in that provision is provided over three floors, which requires a change in staffing levels to creatively support people with dementia on the top floor.

There has been a historical shortage of placements which has led to placements out of county.

In addition, the complexity of need coupled with the lack of placements locally leads to in delayed transfer of care from hospital. This was evident during the pandemic, where at one point, due to active cases in nursing homes, there were no available nursing placements in Flintshire in to which to discharge people from hospital.

Within the Learning Disabilities and Physical Disabilities sector, due to the small choice of local providers and the specialist nature of support, some of these residential placements may need to be made out of county and this can incur higher costs. This has an impact on individuals and maintaining links with family and friends.

## **Future plans**

New homes accessible to all:

- Marleyfield and Croes Atti have separate units for those with dementia related needs.

Supporting people to live at home for longer:

- Llys Gwenffrwd houses rehabilitation placements and all three homes provide a number of respite, step up / step down and assessments placements rather than permanent residential.
- Marleyfield and Croes Atti have adjoining day-care provision which would be affected with some of the options presented.
- Replace Croes Atti with a new care home on the former Flint Hospital site. The new care home will have an additional 25 beds, 12 of which will be accessible to the Health Board earmarked to provide a new model of step down care to support the discharge to assess and recover programme developed within the Health Board.

## **Provision for people with complex disabilities**

Isle of Anglesey County Council have highlighted the need for specialised physical and sensory beds available locally.

Gwynedd Council have identified a struggle to meet demand for residential and nursing care for young people with physical and sensory needs.

Denbighshire County Council identified a lack of capacity for residential accommodation for people with complex disabilities (physical and learning disabilities), which means many people go out of county, away from family and friends. Currently there are 13 placements out of county which can incur higher costs. This also impacts on families visiting and linking to the individual.

In Denbighshire as individuals with complex needs have moved on from health settings to be supported in the community, ongoing work is required to further embed

Positive Behavioural Support (PBS) methodology within the delivery of support. This will ensure the skills and knowledge is available and maintained within the social care workforce.

## **Extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

Extra care housing includes specially designed self-contained properties for older adults with care and support available at a sufficient level to allow people to remain at home despite frailty, periods of ill-health or disabilities and often without the need to move to residential care.

In supported living or community living people usually live as tenants in a shared house, with formal paid support provided by a registered domiciliary care agency

Sheltered housing also includes self-contained properties for older adults and usually includes help from a scheme manager (warden) or support staff.

### **Anglesey extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

There are two extra care developments in Anglesey, Hafan Cefni and Penucheldre, currently providing a total of 118 extra care units, all of which are currently occupied. In March 2022, the Council committed to progress a new scheme in the Aethwy area and this will provide 40 units along with 15 specialist residential care rooms.

Analysis conducted by the Isle of Anglesey County Council suggests extra care provision is on target to meet demand up to 2025 with an additional 127 units needed by 2035 to meet projected demand. There are currently 12 people on the waiting list for extra care housing.

Evidence from local consultation supports a move toward the provision of extra care and supported housing provision and away from traditional residential care homes.

There are 71 units of supported accommodation and all are currently occupied. These are provided by 7 care providers in addition to an in house service. Demand currently outweighs capacity in regards to Extra Care and Supported Accommodation

## **Gwynedd extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

There are three extra care housing schemes in Gwynedd providing a mix of 1 and 2 bed self-contained apartments:

- Cae Garnedd, Bangor: 42 units all occupied and 37 applicants on the waiting list.
- Awel y Coleg, Bala: 30 units, 1 unoccupied and 3 applicants on the waiting list.
- Hafod y Gest, Porthmadog: 40 units, all occupied and 21 on the waiting list.

Extra care units are also part of the conversation regarding the development of Canolfan Lleu - the health and care hub in Penygroes with Grŵp Cynefin and the development of the Penyberth site in Penrhos, Pwllheli with Clwyd Alyn. Demand currently exceeds supply and there are plans to develop more.

There are 412 units of sheltered accommodation in Gwynedd, with only 30 units having a full time warden. They are all populated and in general demand exceeds the supply in Gwynedd especially for older people who either don't need or don't qualify for warden support services, which is the main criteria for sheltered housing.

There are 78 supported living settings; 39 third sector (50%), 32 private sector (40%) and 7 in-house (10%).

Historically it is difficult to get staff in rural areas, for example, South Gwynedd and supported housing providers have had difficulty with this. Supported accommodation is a priority for the learning disability field with 75 individuals identified as needing accommodation. A high percentage of these individuals will need a supported housing model so we anticipate a need for market flexibility.

Most providers experience the same type of challenges when it comes to recruiting and retaining staff teams. However, over the last few months we have successfully introduced a number of individuals into new supported housing placements and providers are reporting that they are in a position to submit tender bids for new projects. Some external providers are progressing to develop new accommodation and support opportunities in South Gwynedd. Prior to the pandemic, providers were committed to looking at service delivery differently, such as groups sharing support, but the restrictions have had an impact on this development

Providers working within active support models and 'Personal Behaviour Support (PBS)' have been negatively impacted by the pandemic due to staffing constraints / shortages, so it is essential that we urgently address this with our providers to secure



training and mentoring to promote this way of working and ensure an outcomes based and preventative approach.

Providers generally work closely with the multidisciplinary teams to respond to demand if there is a change in needs, to respond to a crisis and so on. We have seen examples of collaboration and prioritisation with providers committing to work flexibly to ensure that individuals receive a care and support service that meets their needs.

Usually need within the service is met by tailor made packages for individuals and small-scale provision, which is not necessarily attractive or sustainable for prospective providers. Recruitment is difficult and dependent on the local population as people are unlikely to move into the region for the work because of the low rates of pay and language requirements. We are aware that some of the current providers are not on the framework so reopening the tender process for potential new providers could be advantageous. We foresee an increase in need for supported housing within the coming years in Gwynedd. We need to consider the possibility of using a '[keyring approach](#)' (KeyRing, 2022) and look at commissioning or providing the support needed within cluster areas. Consideration has been made in the past but further considerations are needed in consultation with individuals/families/providers.

Each provider is different with some having more support needs than others. The pressure on them from time to time means that they may not be in a strong position to respond to tender opportunities or to tender for the Supported Housing Agreement. Providers who support individuals with severe and complex needs regularly contact the Council to report that the level of inflationary increase offered by is not sufficient.

Providers are generally stable and able to maintain the required levels of service to supported housing provision. It is difficult to say if they are in a position to meet the demand and the increase in need as each provider's situation is different. Providing extra hours through support services has been difficult and challenging with not enough experienced staff available. This has put pressure on carers and we have had to work together as a 'wrap around' with a number of providers to meet needs.

Need close collaboration between social workers, individuals and families to ensure all options are explored. Work is ongoing through an accommodation project to identify individual needs and plan ahead to look at the most appropriate model of

support / retention within their communities and as close as possible to their family. Some individuals are receiving support from more than one provider or a combination of direct payments and commissioned provision.

### **Commissioner to provider relationship**

- Relationships are generally good.
- Contact arrangements strengthened over the pandemic.
- Providers attend a two-monthly HR Transformation Group where they can feed into the agenda.
- Regular liaison between the providers / HR Team at different levels to air any issues that arise so that they receive timely attention.
- Providers are integral to planning future services
- Most providers now link in with our Well-being Service- virtual and face-to-face groups.
- Over the last 18 months the structure of the Learning Disabilities Service has changed - there is more emphasis on the areas - strengthening provision by having a lead for South Gwynedd and Arfon. This has strengthened commissioner / provider links.

### **Provider to provider relationships**

Overall the relationship appears to be good although there has probably been less joint planning over the last two years due to the restrictions. We have seen examples where providers have stepped into a crisis situation to support another provider by offering staff to fill gaps. For example, in one case where an individual's situation broke down and needed 24-hour support, up to 4 providers came together to form a rota to support them in temporary accommodation. In another case where a providers had difficulties maintaining a rota when introducing an individual to a new home, another provider stepped in and agreed to work together on a temporary basis to enable needs to be met. We provided support and guidance in relation to the agreement.

### **Conwy extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

There are four extra care housing schemes in Conwy county, providing a total of 185 flats. Hafan Gwydir in Llanrwst, Hafod y Parc in Abergele, Llys y Coed in Llanfairfechan and Tan y Fron in Llandudno. In April 2022, there were 62 people on the waiting list of which 10 were from out of county (two from Denbighshire and eight from elsewhere in the UK but with family links to the area).

There are 46 supported living projects run by various private companies, housing associations and the council.

The majority of supported living projects only cater for several people within each project so even though there are 46 projects there are only spaces for 136 people. Which is not a high proportion especially when the population of Conwy is taken into account. There are around only 8 vacancies at present and a high demand for vacant spaces. There are no supported living projects in the south of the county.

Supported living premises are in very short supply and the council struggles to find enough accommodation for clients.

### **Denbighshire extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

There are three extra care housing schemes in Denbighshire and one soon to open in Denbigh. A recently closed care home in Ruthin will be used as space to expand an extra care housing scheme run by a housing association. There were occasional vacancies due to the pandemic but otherwise it is very rare to have a vacancy in an extra care housing scheme. Although the number of extra care housing flats will be increasing significantly over the year it is expected that demand will continue to increase and exceed the amount of flats available.

Within Denbighshire most people with learning disabilities live in supported housing (community living).

Most new care home placements are viewed as a temporary measure until a suitable tenancy becomes available within a Community Living setting. However, there is still a relatively high number of older people with learning disabilities living in care homes. This is historical and partly a consequence of the closure of the North Wales Hospital. Moving these individuals is not considered feasible or in their best interests.

In Community Living people usually live as tenants in a shared house, with formal paid support provided by a registered domiciliary care agency via block contract with Denbighshire. Within Denbighshire the support service is not provided by (or linked to) the landlord. Support services for all new Community Living schemes are commissioned via an agreed tendering process.

As of September 2021, there are a total of 57 Community Living properties in Denbighshire, delivered between 11 providers. Only 2 of these properties are operated by the Council. There is also a combination of national providers, smaller

local providers and both local and national providers with a charitable status. Contracts are tendered through the regional framework or commissioned through direct payments.

125 people are currently supported (capacity is 136 people), most with over 20 hours of support per week, either shared or 1:1. Most individuals have a tenancy agreement as is usually the case for Supported Living.

There are providers who are able to offer a range of support from low level to more complex needs and 24-hour support.

Recruitment of staff has been problematic for providers during the pandemic and has impacted the number of places offered periodically.

Many existing Community Living contracts have been extended past their original term and there is now considerable pressure for the whole of the scheme to be re-tendered, in line with regulations. Both the providers and the council staff feel this presents a considerable risk to individuals, providers and their staff at the current time. At worst, re-tendering could see many providers losing business, and large numbers of staff leaving the sector at a time where it is almost impossible to recruit. Any uncertainty could have the potential for many staff to leave, even if TUPE applies. This uncertainty could have a devastating effect on the local social care provider market and the citizens they support. Some providers may just hand their contracts back and not wish to bid for more. Especially with such a large number of contracts, ultimately this could all significantly further destabilize the social care provider market in Denbighshire.

### **Flintshire extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

Extra Care continues to be an extremely popular housing choice for older people in Flintshire, which offers them the opportunity to live independently whilst having the support of an on-site care and support team, if and when needed. This in turn, releases capacity and time in community based domiciliary care.

The benefits of living in an Extra Care facility include:

- Staying independent for longer with on-site support, in your own living space.
- Support can be increased and decreased based on needs.
- Emergency support available, including at night.
- Enables couples where one partner is highly dependent to remain living together.

- Opportunities to socialise with other residents in a community setting.

The Council currently has four Extra Care facilities, Llys Eleanor (Deeside), Llys Jasmine (Mold), Llys Raddington (Flint) and the newly occupied Plas yr Ywen (Holywell), with a total of 238 extra care units.

As of August 2021, there are a total of 60 Supported Living properties in Flintshire, delivered between 10 providers. 16 of these properties are operated by the Council. There is also a combination of national providers, smaller local providers and both local and national providers with a charitable status. Contracts are tendered through the regional framework or commissioned through direct payments.

139 people are supported, most with over 20 hours of support per week, either shared or 1:1. Most individuals have a tenancy agreement as is usually the case for 'Supported Living'.

There are providers who are able to support from a low level to more complex needs on the Framework.

When recommissioning existing services, there is a possibility of a transfer of staff (TUPE) to the new company. For new services, the provider has to recruit which can impact on the timescales and attract staff from existing providers who then have to back fill.

### **Wrexham extra care, supported living and sheltered housing**

There are two extra care housing schemes in Wrexham with a total of 116 units. Plas Telford has 56 units and had 5 vacancies at the end of March 2022. Maes Y Dderwen has 60 units and had 10 vacancies at the end of March 2022.

Demand for those with eligible needs is low, work is currently underway to relaunch scheme to attract more applications. Wrexham County Borough Council are currently evaluating their model of extra care housing to inform further service development to ensure its sustainability in meeting changing and increasing needs. Demand is hard to estimate due to current model seemingly not being able to respond to medium and high needs. Population statistics and evidence of older people's aspirations suggest there should be increasing demand for extra care housing. The priority in the short to medium term is to ensure a sustainable model of extra care housing which provides value for money and quality services which offer real alternative to residential care.

In addition to Wrexham's extra care housing schemes, there is a rolling programme of remodelling being delivered by WCBC Housing Department to deliver improved and increasingly accessible accommodation for older people across the in-house Sheltered Housing Service.

At the time of reporting, 126 people with a range of low-level and complex support needs were supported in the independent sector by 9 supported living providers – a mix of charitable and private organisations. There are 19 people with learning disabilities supported in their own homes by the council's internal supported living service across 10 properties. The majority of the services are 24/7 although some are for day-time support only, where staff are available to support people to become more independent.

Referrals are made predominately from the Disability Service working with people with learning disabilities although there are a number of people living with mental health support needs who are supported by the council's own Recovery Service - 10 people are supported in tenanted properties funded by social care.

It is recognised that re-tendering contracts can be disruptive for the lives of the citizens supported within this model so long-term contracts of 7+3 years are used, with regular quality and wellbeing reviews during the term of the contract. The North Wales Supported Living Framework is now in place and has been used for commissioning new contracts. Recruitment and retention proves to be challenging for providers, particularly for staff who are able to drive and use a supported person's mobility vehicle.

## **Market stability**

### **Regional challenges**

There are some common challenges across North Wales and Wales as a whole affecting the stability of the sector listed below:

- Retention and recruitment of care and nursing staff.
- Care home fees need to be set at a sustainable rate. Increasing numbers of providers are reporting that current financial challenges and are working with commissioners to address these issues.
- Increasing demand for services with decreasing budgets.

- Increasing complexity of care needs. People are staying at home longer with a support package so when they do need a care home placement their needs are more complex and involved.

Positives identified during consultation for the market stability report were the Welsh Government funding, which has helped with voids in the residential sector along with work to promote the sector and funding to try to achieve a real living wage.

## **Isle of Anglesey market stability**

### **Home closure**

At the end of the last financial year in March 2022, Caledonia Residential Home (15 beds) closed.

### **Demand for places**

The demand for care home places dropped in the early stages of the pandemic during 2020, but saw an increase in 2021-22 as the early effects of Covid started to pass and as a result of shortfalls in the domiciliary care sector. A significant increase was seen in the number of people presenting and needing an assessment, but the mostly private domiciliary care sector was at the same time losing staff and having to hand back existing care packages.

### **Recruitment**

The largest challenge facing the sector has been the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels. Many care homes have reported vacancies which they report has impacted on their ability to take on new placements. The staff shortfall has been made worse by staff who are unable to work because they have Covid. This has meant a significant reliance on staffing agencies. We have also noted a number of changes across the sector in management staff.

### **Inflation**

Since the beginning of 2022, the rate of inflation has increased at a faster rate and higher than the rate of increase for fees that are paid to care home providers. Utilities, fuel and insurance costs have also increased dramatically. This is proving very challenging for many providers, who, after managing through the pandemic, are finding it difficult to absorb these costs at a time when government financial support for COVID-19 has stopped.

## **Gwynedd market stability**

### **Older people's care homes**

With the increase in demand there are concerns that the market cannot respond sufficiently and quickly enough to demand given the current staffing crisis.

There has been an increase in the number of providers reporting that older people's residential and nursing fees are inadequate. Providers are frustrated when they report cost increases and are not offered higher payments. There is an increase in top-up charges for residential and nursing care. There's also a slowdown in the number of the workforce registering.

The threshold for self-funding has been increasing and is currently at £50,000 which means that less people are self-funding. Self-funders have a right to have their care commissioned through the council which has implications on the ability of care homes to ask for higher fees from self-funders.

### **Physical disability, mental health and learning disability**

Each provider is different with some having more support needs than others. The pressure on them from time to time means that they cannot be in a strong position, for example, to respond to tender opportunities, or to tender for the Supported Housing Agreement. Providers who support individuals with severe and complex needs regularly contact the council to report that the level of inflation offered by the council is insufficient.

### **Impact of Covid-19**

Some nursing providers have made the most of the financial support available, such as voids, general sustainability support, support for staff and visitor testing. It is noted that the largest providers were bidding for support, with smaller providers tending to inquire later and finding it difficult to keep up with the guidelines and guidelines support available. There is concern over the impact that the end of the financial support will have.

### **Flexibility of the market**

There is potential for adaptation within Council care homes. Potential to adapt roles / tasks within domiciliary care plan but need support from provider to implement. Staffing is a major issue at present for domiciliary care providers and care homes.



## **Causes of potential business failure and contingency planning**

Concerns are identified either through information shared by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) or as part of the Quality Assurance Team weekly contact. The team provide early intervention and support if any issues surrounding the viability of businesses arises. Recent financial support (COVID-19 Funds), such as support for additional empty beds due to the pandemic were met by the Hardship Fund and general market sustainability support were offered through a remedial fund through the government's recovery fund. There were no such funds available directly from the council before the pandemic except as a last resort or emergency measures and the current COVID-19 financial aid comes to end at the end of March 2022.

Gwynedd Council are currently looking to start an Open Book Accounting approach with care homes in order to better understand each other's financial obligations/limitations in order to establish whether there are areas we can offer support be that financially or by offering support to the care homes in streamlining their procedures

### **Care home closures**

Gwynedd have had 4 homes close in the last few years. Two residential homes (Llwyn in May 2018 and Foelas in April 2022) and two nursing homes (Penisarwaun in July 2018 and Penrhos in December 2020). It is increasingly difficult for small independent care homes to be financially viable and this may contribute to further closures in the future.

## **Conwy market stability**

### **Home closure**

In the last year two homes have closed in the county. One was a smaller provider and the building maintenance costs of the older converted building exceeded the potential income from residents. The owners tested the market for sale but there were no offers. Conversion to nursing or older people's mental health (EMI) care was considered but the home was not sufficient size or layout to give the required return on investment and the home was closed. The second home that closed was larger and successful. There were no issues with vacant beds or quality of service, but having made enquiries for a lengthy period of time there were no buyers for the business when the owner was ready to retire, so the service closed. In both cases the residents of these homes were successfully re-located to other homes in the county.

## **Demand for places**

Demand for care home places dropped in the early stages of the pandemic during 2020, but saw a significant increase in 2021-22 as the early effects of COVID-19 started to pass and as a result of shortfalls in the domiciliary care sector. We saw a significant increase in the number of people presenting and needing an assessment, but the mostly private domiciliary care sector was at the same time losing staff and having to hand back existing care packages. Most of the increase was on the coast in Colwyn Bay, Llandudno and the surrounding areas for residential and nursing placements. There is not yet data available on the demand for older people's mental health (EMI) care which we feel has also increased.

The number of out of county placements has slowly reduced.

## **Recruitment**

The largest challenge facing the sector has been the recruitment and retention of staff at all levels. Almost all care homes have reported vacancies for health care assistants, senior health care assistants, nurses and domestic staff which they report has impacted on their ability to take on new placements. The staff shortfall has been exacerbated by staff who are unable to work because they have COVID-19. This has meant a significant reliance on staffing agencies who in some cases have been providing 20% to 50% of the staffing for some providers. We have also noted a number of changes across the sector in management staff. Consultation with providers has identified several possible reasons for the recruitment challenge:

- Exiting the EU has had some impact on health and social care, but has had a significant impact on other sectors such retail and hospitality which are very large in Conwy county.
- Competition from retail and hospitality. Care homes report staff leaving to join these two sectors who have increased pay and conditions to attract new staff. The work is often seen as less stressful with more reasonable hours.
- Early retirement. Many providers report staff members taking early retirement during the pandemic.
- Competition from better paid jobs with the health board, local authority and recruitment agencies.

## **Inflation**

Since the beginning of 2022, the rate of inflation has increased faster and higher than the fees that are paid to care home providers. Utilities, fuel and insurance costs

have increased two and sometime three fold compared to previous years. Having managed through the pandemic, many providers are not able to absorb these costs at a time when government financial support for COVID-19 has stopped.

### **Denbighshire market stability**

There has been increased focus on supporting people to remain independent in their own homes for longer. Most people say that they do not want to live in a residential care home if there is an option to remain independent. Denbighshire use “What Matters” conversations with people to enable us to agree the appropriate outcomes of their care and support. We use the resource wheel to ensure we include support that people have from family, friends and communities when discussing how to work towards the agreed outcomes.

There is a diverse provider base in Denbighshire. However, there are limited older people’s mental health (EMI) residential and nursing placements available.

The market is diverse with homes of varying size, in-house and independent. However, the majority are small, independent care homes in older buildings that are not purpose built.

The Contracts and Commissioning Team work closely with providers and offer support that is required.

There has been a lack of trained nursing staff available in the south of the county, meaning Llangollen Fechan faced prohibitive agency fees and therefore decided to cease dual registration for both residential and nursing care, concentrating only on residential beds. This means fewer nursing beds in the south.

A small provider, Chesterton found it was not financially viable so a managed closure took place with weekly meetings between council staff and home managers. All residents were relocated in a safe and acceptable manner.

The pandemic has highlighted the problems of economic viability of small, independent care homes. Difficulty recruiting and retaining staff, lack of flexibility in layouts and facilities have all indicated that there may in future be a move to larger, more modern or purpose-built buildings where economies of scale give greater resilience.

### **Gaps in service / support:**

- Welsh speaking support staff (mainly in the north of the county)
- Social enterprises and independent providers who are based in the south of the county
- Short term, progression focused interventions with agreed outcomes
- Alternatives to traditional services (including respite and day activities)

The learning disability register and housing needs data show that numbers are not changing significantly but the complexity of need is increasing.

In the provider survey for this report, Denbighshire providers reported an average required occupancy of 85% for sustainability. Current average occupancy is 78%. At the time of the survey there was a vacancy rate of 25% in Denbighshire, this was higher than the regional average of 20%.

Denbighshire County Council recognises the value of nurturing and supporting good quality providers - for example, during Covid-19 steps were taken to proactively avoid provider failure. At the same time budgetary pressures mean that commissioners cannot always respond to fee requests in the way that providers would like them to. Generally, we have a good relationship with most providers. This can be more difficult to maintain when we need to raise concerns with a provider (e.g. regarding quality or safeguarding) and when negotiating fee increases or de-commissioning a service. During the pandemic we tried to ensure that providers (for example external day services) could survive financially and we also worked closely with providers on helping to keep people safe and well.

Provider to provider relationships improved during the pandemic and there were good examples of peer support and camaraderie between providers. One long standing good example is a local care home who led on the Person Centred Planning (PCP) community of support, with other mainly domiciliary care providers attending - each sharing good practice regarding person centred approaches, and with guest speakers talking about new initiatives in Denbighshire. Relationships in this meeting are supportive

Other challenges identified are:

- Recruitment and retention.
- High sickness absence.

- Ensuring sufficiency of placements in the local area, are able to meet the individual's level of need, while still supporting choice and control and preventing admission to acute and community hospitals.
- Lack of suitable overnight respite accommodation that can be pre-booked - unpaid carers have difficulty trying to find residential/nursing homes willing to accept people on a one off or occasional basis, particularly if they have higher needs / exhibit challenging behaviour. This may be due to funding, staffing or something else. There is a respite flat in Corwen but this is not well used mostly due to lack of availability of care packages. Staff at a nearby home don't have capacity to cover although not far away. Respite accommodation for people with complex disabilities is very limited - Alexandra House only. Ongoing negotiations with Alexandra House and Conwy CBC.

### **Flintshire market stability**

Flintshire has a diverse provider base with no reliance on one provider but limited nursing and nursing older people's mental health (EMI) placements. The market is diverse with homes of varying size, in-house and independent, family run or as part of a larger organisation. The council is moving ahead with increasing capacity in in-house residential provision. The Contract and Commissioning Team work closely with providers on both entry and exit to ensure the process runs smoothly, offering any support that is required. Although the market is robust and each provider has contingency plans in place to deal with the majority of issues, the COVID-19 pandemic presented exceptional circumstances and providers did not have this included in their plans. These have since been updated.

Business diagnostic reviews conducted with 18 homes in 2017 identified the following issues related to stability:

- Group owned care homes had back of house support and central administration which seemed to reduce time pressures and workload compared to smaller independent homes.
- There was no discrimination identified between private and local authority funded patients but providers were requesting top up fees from local authorities due to financial pressures.
- Recruitment and retention: affected by the size of the home and the way it's managed, it helps to be on a main bus route, some concerns about image of the sectors, wages and competing with the NHS for staff.

- Sickness and absence rates are high and policies in place. The most common cause of absence is sickness and diarrhoea.
- Many homes are in older buildings with poor energy efficiency and difficult to alter. There was more space to expand and better outside space in rural homes, but these are also less convenient to access. Heating costs were a big concern and some homes suggested a joint procurement policy may help give them stronger buying power. Homes would appreciate advice on waste policy too.
- No clear view on minimum number of residents needed to make the home viable, but aware of whether they were losing money or not.
- Appreciation of a recent grant for asset purchase and recommendation for an asset library where expensive, occasional used equipment could be borrowed rather than purchased outright.
- Finances are challenging requiring top ups to local authority fees and a proportion of private patients to survive. The increase in the living wage, a general reduction in unemployment rates, increase in employment and the unknown impact of Brexit suggests that the pool of candidates will get smaller. Profit margins are tight and any increase in interest rates plus increases in other overheads such as business rates, fuel costs and food costs will have an impact on the long term sustainability of the sector.

Since the pandemic the market has become extremely unstable due to:

- Residential and nursing homes going into administration
- Residential and nursing homes being taken over leading to instability and significant changes in services
- Lack of staff due to retirement or leaving the business
- Low number of nursing placements and no providers with open placements to ensure stability of the placement
- Lack of funding to try to assist the providers during a difficult time
- Care Home closures, this could be due to a number of factors such as financial or lack of qualified staff
- Recruitment within Social Services sector is an ongoing concern, this is having an impact on the sustainability of provisions

Discussions with Responsible Individuals highlighted the following issues:

- Rapid changes in guidance
- Cost of living increases

- Hardship Fund tapering
- Recruitment and retention
- Good carers who are not IT savvy and not looking to upskill and undertake additional training for registration

## **Wrexham market stability**

All Wrexham's care homes are outsourced and they are currently evaluating the medium to longer term viability of the private residential market and considering how they might deliver intermediate, short term care solutions in the medium to longer term as this market seemingly has some limitations to delivery in this context.

Fee setting methodology, budgets and lack of agreement regionally on the Pre Placement Agreement which sets the overarching terms and conditions is also hampering flexible, responsive residential care commissioning.

Barriers to entry into the market include suitable facilities and properties and the costs involved in development of a potential property. Plus, the already difficult recruitment market/staff shortages in established facilities. Ideas for ways the local council could support include; assistance to source suitable property, cash incentives, loans to assist with set up and possible recruitment assistance. The lack of flexibility in regional frameworks to reopen may also be a barrier. The council could work with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) and Social Care Wales to enable swifter registration processes and inflation beating budget uplifts.

All contracts are subject to regular monitoring under the terms and conditions and this should pick up any potential problems/issues at an early stage to enable preventative measures and/or emergency measures to be put in place to try and avoid a crisis. The main indicators would be; reported difficulties in recruitment, retention of staff - large numbers of leavers, always had difficulties in retaining staff in the industry as a whole, monetary losses, no reserve funds, possibly the accommodation not being suitable moving forward and no funds to make changes. Escalating concerns process including engagement with other commissioning councils.

## **Escalating concerns**

Identifying escalating concerns within care homes is part of the council quality assurance process, with the process leading to improvements in service

performance and quality and a positive impact on staff. This information can change quickly but is included below as a snapshot.

- Anglesey: No providers currently under escalating concerns (May 2022).
- Gwynedd: One home under escalating concerns for business/financial reasons. As at 31 March 2021, there were three providers in the escalating concerns process, with one other about to be placed into escalating concerns. The reasons for implementing the escalating concerns process with those four homes can be summarised as leadership, management and oversight.
- Conwy: One provider under escalating concerns at the time of writing and one further provider during the pandemic. There is a good relationship between the providers and local authority on the whole with areas of concern identified early and resolved without the need for the formal procedures.
- Denbighshire: 2 providers currently in escalating concerns (May 2022) but has been up to around 6 at the height of the pandemic. During the pandemic Denbighshire County Council's policy was to use the escalating concerns process during an outbreak in any care home. This ensured that there was a structured approach to meetings and a multi-disciplinary team was involved.
- Flintshire: 5 care homes placed into escalating concerns between April 2015 and March 2021. Non-compliance/immediate action notice issued to 3 care homes between April 2019 and March 2020 (excludes 3 providers with new owners)
- Wrexham: Three care homes placed in escalating concerned during the reporting period to March 2021, with two of those homes having completed the process within the timescales. One home remained in the process supported by social care and health colleagues until April 2021.

## Care home closures

### Lessons learned from care home closures

#### What worked well

Experience of recent closures highlight the following:

- Good working relationship between Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), the council and health board with colleagues from Continuing Health Care (CHC) and community nursing leads involved alongside social services senior staff, social workers and contracts and commissioning officers.
- Linking to advocacy.



- Provision of list of current vacancies in the sector.
- Health colleagues working with social care staff in Community Resource Teams building stronger relationships, shortening time to achieve outcomes and improving experience for residents.
- Social services senior staff, social workers and contracts and commissioning officers working more closely to improve dialogue and co-working across operational and business support teams.
- Person-centred, outcome focussed work across all teams.
- Regular communications with providers
- Importance of initiating discussions as soon as possible to facilitate joint planning and working.
- Allocated team of council staff to support people with their packing and accounting for their belongings, alongside providing a council presence in the home.

### **Challenges**

- Could provider failure have been anticipated, risk assessed before notice given? Difficult to anticipate based on intelligence available. Perhaps a joint process could be developed based on experiences to guide future scenarios.
- Ensuring sufficiency of placements in the local area are able to meet the individual's level of need, while still supporting choice and control. Also, preventing admission to acute and community hospitals.
- Managing expectations and emotions of staff and residents during the process.
- Understanding equipment ownership – what belongs to the home, Health Board, Stores, Welsh Government such as personal protective equipment (PPE) and ensuring this is moved to a new setting alongside the resident.
- Working with third parties such as administrators. Differing opinions and expected outcomes, accuracy of information, understanding of Welsh policy.
- Maintaining safe level of staffing at the closing setting.
- Accessing staff files to support ease of employment to new employers.
- Complexities of a new provider taking over the home as a going concern. In particular, if there are restrictions on their registration.

Denbighshire supported providers to update contingency plans during the pandemic when new and exceptional difficulties were experienced. Denbighshire Council staff have worked alongside providers when staffing has been impossible to resource otherwise. Brought providers together to foster better relationships and share best

practice, for example, around infection control. Monitoring visits are not yet back on track since the pandemic but all homes with possible risks have been visited and interim measures included phone calls. Provider engagement meetings are now monthly but very poorly attended.

Flintshire has also found that moving away from systematic annual monitoring visits to a practice development approach has helped develop effective constructive and professional relationships with providers, which have been critical in enabling them to meet the challenges of the pandemic together.

## **Feedback from care home residents**

All counties have systems in place to consult and engage with care home residents. A summary of feedback received is below:

- Positive feedback, particularly focussed on staff providing support. They were described as very caring, having time for people and supporting with all aspects of personal care and related needs. Managers and office staff were also mentioned in terms of being approachable and sorting out problems when they arrive. Everyone also said they felt safe in the buildings.
- Some issues were raised by individuals, not often but still important, including training and reminders to staff about issues such as knocking and waiting at doors, use of mobile phones and how their approach to tenants is important. For example, not rushing, treating them as an adult.

## **Feedback from providers**

- Citizen's having rapid deterioration or life changing events such as a stroke then losing mental capacity with finances. Often no Lifetime Power of Attorney (LPA) in place. It would help to promote LPA more and this could reduce the council deputyship waiting list and workload.
- Transport is a huge issue for older people, particularly those living in rural areas and those with limited mobility. Bus services are very limited especially in rural areas and public transport is often not fully accessible or wheelchair friendly. Dial a ride is excellent but only operates in the North of the county and is not cheap. Taxis are expensive and not always available or accessible. One did need a mobile phone to book the new Flecsi bus – now amended.
- Welsh language capacity is problematic.

- Pressures around recruitment and retention with staff leaving sector following the stresses of COVID-19 and the ability of the sector to pay a competitive wage (compared to other sectors such as retail). Regulatory requirements. Lack of skills regarding bid writing and understanding the requirements of a tender process.

## **Impact of commissioning processes on the market**

Each council has systems in place to support and liaise with providers, including regular meetings and discussions with providers and support with training and resources. Examples include Flintshire's 'Progress for Providers' Programme in Care Homes which is a self-assessment tool for managers to use with their staff to check how they are doing in delivering personalised support for people living in care homes.

### **Supported Living**

North Wales commissioners from the six local councils and health board worked together to develop a Supported Living Framework which went live on 1 April 2020. Multiple service providers have already been admitted to the framework agreement following the requisite due diligence and quality checks. This enables commissioners to commission services adopting the framework agreement which can streamline processes while remaining in accordance with relevant legislation and the local authority Contract Procedure Rules.

Denbighshire County Council have 41 supported living contracts due to end 31 March 2023. These have been in place for many years and extended numerous times with a view to re-tendering. Discussions are currently underway regarding how best to re-tender. The concern is that re-tendering could have a destabilising effect on the local market exacerbating existing issues with retaining staff and risking providers handing existing contracts back rather than bid for more. Discussions are underway about what approach to take.

## **Welsh language**

Around 24% of social care staff in North Wales can communicate effectively through the medium of Welsh (Social Care Wales, 2018b)(Social Care Wales, 2018). Across

North Wales 20% of registered care home managers are fluent Welsh speakers, which is highest in Gwynedd where 57% fluent Welsh speakers.

Engagement in Denbighshire identified receiving services in Welsh was a high priority in the Denbigh area and there is not enough care provided through the medium of Welsh in the south of the county. Many staff have some Welsh language skills but lack confidence so an internal project is looking at ways to improve this. An inspection of Cysgod y Gaer care home in Corwen in March 2022 identified that the service does provide an 'Active Offer' of the Welsh language and that it anticipates identifies, and meets the Welsh language and cultural needs of people who use, or may use, the service.

## **Social value and preventative services**

The concept of social value includes the following.

- The value experienced by the users of a service, delivering 'what matters' and co-producing services with people who use them.
- The added social, environmental or economic value a contract can provide over and above the core requirements.
- The duty local councils have to promote social care and preventative services provided by social enterprises, co-operatives, co-operative arrangements, user led services, and the third sector (Welsh Government, 2014).

The Wales Cooperative Centre (2021) has produced a guide to raise awareness of potential social enterprise and co-operative models in the care home sector.

We want to promote 'social value models of delivery' that:

- Achieve well-being outcomes.
- Work co-productively – giving users a strong voice and real control.
- Have a preventative and dependency-reducing orientation.
- Incorporate collaboration, co-operation and partnership.
- Add value - social, economic and environmental.

As well as to promote activities that maintain or strengthen the well-being of unpaid carers and community capacity beyond the market – without which the market cannot be stable.

Each county supports a range of preventative services which can help people to remain in their homes and avoid the need for residential or nursing care. This includes regional projects funded through the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) including falls prevention projects and step up / step down care. 'Step up' is an intermediate care function to receive patients from home/community settings to prevent unnecessary acute hospital admissions or premature admissions to long term care. 'Step down' is an intermediate care function to receive patients from acute care for rehabilitation and to support timely discharge from hospital.

Projects include; community agents, navigator and social prescribing projects which link people up to support and activities available in their local community. They also include; befriending, advocacy and respite services.

The Micro Care and Community Catalysts projects provides support to micro providers to enter the care markets. Direct payments are used to help people access personal care and live as independently as possible.

There is more information about preventative services available in North Wales in the [Population Needs Assessment](#).

## Workforce

The table below shows the number of registered adult care home managers in North Wales at the 1 April 2020. Analysis of the data shows:

- In the last year 46 managers left the register and 31 joined, a turnover of 14%.
- The ratio of women to men is 6:1 and 230 are aged over 51.
- Around a third of registered managers have some Welsh language skills and 20% are fluent.

Table 6: Number of registered adult care home managers, 31 March 2020

Local council	Care home managers
Anglesey	30
Gwynedd	61
Conwy	67
Denbighshire	66
Flintshire	39
Wrexham	47
North Wales	310

Source: Social Care Wales, Registered adult care home managers

A regional survey carried out for the Market Stability Report identified that 1 in 5 care worker roles are vacant across the region, including senior care worker and care worker roles.

There are some concerns that since the introduction of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 more homes are offering both residential care and older people’s mental health (EMI) residential care without necessarily providing separate facilities for different residents and possibly without having suitable skill sets and arrangements in place.

There is an increase in training needs due to the lack of available training on offer during the pandemic, which include basic training such as inductions and manual handling.

There are some concerns that staff may have moved away from a reablement ethos due to pressures during the pandemic. For example, individuals becoming very deconditioned due to lack of activity and staff not promoting simple forms of independence, such as going to the toilet unaided.

Local authorities report that it is becoming more difficult to recruit care home managers. Alternative approaches such as the [‘Grow Your Own’](#) (The King’s Fund, 2006) may have the potential to create the conditions for sustainable workforce development.

# 4. Domiciliary care services

## Population overview

It is predicted that the number of people aged 65 and over who struggle with activities of daily living will increase by 25% increase by 2040

### There will be more people aged 65 and over living alone

The composition of households can also affect the demand for services to support independence. Data from the 2011 Census shows that there are 44,000 people aged 65 and over living alone, which is 59% of all households aged 65 and over.

Research by Gwynedd Council found a strong relationship between the number of people aged 65 and over who live alone and the number of clients receiving a domiciliary care package in an area (Regional Partnership Board, 2022).

Moreover, around 28% of people in Wales have such low incomes that they do not contribute to the cost of their domiciliary care (CSSIW, 2016). It is anticipated that 30% of people have enough capital to fund their own care in both domiciliary care and care homes (CSSIW, 2016).

Table 7: Predicted number of people aged 65 and over who struggle with activities of daily living

Local council	2020 number	2020 percent	2040 number	2040 percent	Change number	Change percent
Anglesey	5,100	27%	6,550	29%	1,500	23%
Gwynedd	8,000	28%	10,050	29%	2,050	20%
Conwy	9,450	29%	13,050	30%	3,600	27%
Denbighshire	6,450	27%	8,800	29%	2,400	27%
Flintshire	9,150	27%	12,350	29%	3,250	26%
Wrexham	7,550	27%	10,000	29%	2,450	24%
North Wales	45,700	28%	60,900	29%	15,150	25%
Wales	185,300	28%	248,900	29%	63,600	26%

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum

Source: Daffodil, Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics and 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government

# Market sufficiency

## Market overview

The average number of hours of domiciliary care per week commissioned by each local authority and the health board is summarised in the table below.

Table 8: Average local authority/health board Commissioned domiciliary care hours per week

County	Older person	Learning disability	Older person mental health	Physical disability	Total
Anglesey	3644	390	-	582	4616
Gwynedd	-	-	-	-	11144
Conwy (a, b)	8024	5523	382	-	13930
Denbighshire	-	-	-	-	5150
Flintshire (c, d)	6,047	913	22	1,160	8142
Wrexham	5599	638	1196	955	8388
North Wales					44558

Source: Local authority data collection. Some figures are rounded so may not sum.

- (a) Learning disability figure also includes physical disability
- (b) Figure includes direct payments
- (c) Learning disability floating support (not in supported living accommodation)
- (d) Older person mental health - independent sector, but majority of support provided by in house mental health team

In terms of the balance of the market, on average more than 70% of the North Wales domiciliary care market is comprised of independent sector providers with the remainder a mixture Local Authority and Third Sector providers. However, this does vary according to local authority. For example, Gwynedd have 44% of domiciliary care being provided internally currently and 56% through the independent sector, whereas in Flintshire the local authority currently provides around 10% of the domiciliary care provision.



Table 9: Percentage market estimated share of domiciliary care sector by type

County	In House	Independent sector
Anglesey (a)	18.5	81.5
Gwynedd	44	56.0
Conwy	9.7	92.3
Denbighshire	10	90.0
Flintshire	10.5	89.5
Wrexham	3	97

Source: Local authority data collection

(a) Should be in-house/external provider (independent sector and third sector) split of 30/70%

Table 10: Number of providers working in each local authority area

County	Number of providers
Anglesey	1
Gwynedd	1
Conwy	3
Denbighshire	6
Flintshire	6
Wrexham	4
Regional (a)	52

Source: North Wales Domiciliary Care Framework

(a) Providers noted for each county are -ones who only provide services in that county. Regional providers are those that work in more than one county in North Wales.

Table 11: Average hourly rate of domiciliary care by population group (£)

County	Older person	Learning disability	Older person mental health	Physical disability
Anglesey	17.83	16.04	17.83	17.83
Gwynedd	19.13	19.13	19.13	19.13
Conwy (a)	20.60	20.60	20.60	20.60
Denbighshire (a)	19.53	19.53	19.53	19.53
Flintshire (b, c)	18.67	16.84	-	18.67
Wrexham	20.33	16.90	20.58	20.28

Source: local authority data collection

(a) Average rate across all population groups

(b) Supported living

(c) Majority of older person mental health supported in house, no average provided.

## Regional market overview

**Domiciliary care is a priority market identified by commissioners**, with current private sector providers unable to fulfil the demand for a significant amount of time now. As such, growth and development of services including general domiciliary care (includes homecare, re-ablement; community living and recovery) have been identified as opportunities for the future.

### Isle of Anglesey market overview

In Anglesey, demand is currently exceeding supply (March 2022) due to shortage of staff within domiciliary care providers.

### Gwynedd market overview

In Gwynedd there has been insufficient domiciliary care provision to meet need across Gwynedd, particularly in the Eifionydd and Pwllheli area at present.

In Gwynedd, currently there is a lack of available domiciliary care, and the nature of current arrangements mean that providers can refuse to give care, or return

packages. Frequent emergencies can occur, where providers report that they are no longer able to provide care due to staffing problems.

Currently, people have little choice in the field. Getting any care is a challenge, let alone having a choice. People can choose to get Direct Payments to arrange their own care, but it is not easy to find people who can offer care. A project with 'Community Catalysts' has started, to encourage people to set up a small company to provide care, and hopefully this will improve the situation.

## Conwy market overview

The numbers of people who receive domiciliary care packages in Conwy has declined over the past four years, as can be seen in the table below.

There have been a couple of principle reasons for this, the impact of COVID and carers workers leaving the sector with the sector unable to recruit new staff.

As it can be seen that during the last 12 months the numbers of citizens receiving domiciliary care had dropped dramatically and evidence from providers is that this is directly due to lack of domiciliary carers. During the May to November 2021 period approximately 950 hours of domiciliary care packages have been handed back due to private sector agencies unable to meet demand.

Table 12: Numbers of people who receive domiciliary care packages in Conwy

Year	Total clients
2017/18	898
2018/19	818
2019/20	799
2021/22	717

Source: Local authority data collection

As of this week 2 of April 2022 there are 698 packages begin delivered to older people across Conwy.

The table below shows the total number of packages and hours that are being delivered, week 2 April 2022. The areas in this table are shown as the Community Resource Team (CRT) Areas.

Table 13: Total number of domiciliary care packages and hours that are being delivered in Conwy (April 2022)

CRT area	Packages	Hours	Average hours per package
Abergele	146	1,709	11.7
Colwyn	206	2,251	10.9
Llandudno	172	2,217	12.9
Coastal	91	1,166	9.0
Rural	83	747	9.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>698</b>	<b>8,091</b>	<b>11.6</b>

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum

Source: Local authority data collection

It can be seen that the Colwyn CRT area has the most packages and Rural has the least. It is also interesting to see that the Llandudno and Coastal areas don't have the most packages but the average hours per package is higher than any other area, this is probably due to the average age of the population in those areas and the fact that they need more intensive support packages.

## Denbighshire market overview

There were 585 people who received domiciliary care in Denbighshire during 2020-21. This number has increased over the last year.

Table 14: Demographic of people accessing domiciliary care in Denbighshire

Age group	Percentage of Provision
18-24	1%
25-64	19%
65-74	11%
75-84	24%
85+	45%

Source: Local authority data

Denbighshire does not have enough providers to give people a real choice or to give an element of competition in the market. Commissioners have unmet demand and are unable to provide domiciliary care for all requests. For example, at the end of March 2022 there were 116 people waiting for domiciliary care packages, of which 26 were receiving interim support. The Interim Support Team's function is to provide domiciliary care and support for a short period of time whilst care packages are secured through the provider sector. There are particular challenges in the south of the county where we have minimal independent provision. Our in-house team are only working in the south and their intervention often ends up being long term due to lack of alternative provision. Moreover, the re-ablement teams, both north and south, are finding they are picking up urgent care packages on a regular basis and this in turn has an impact on our ability to offer re-ablement services.

The range of care needs is wide and includes:

- frailty due to age related conditions
- physical disabilities
- learning disabilities, including autistic spectrum disorders
- sensory impairments
- chronic illness
- long term health conditions
- dementia
- mental health, including depression, anxiety
- substance abuse
- palliative care

We are working with Community Catalysts to ensure that Denbighshire residents are able to access the kind of care and support that suits them best. In addition Community Catalyst supports citizens who wish to, to provide care and support in a way that fits with their lifestyle.

### **Community Catalysts**

Community Catalysts is a social enterprise working across the UK to try to make sure that people who need care and support to live their lives can get that help in ways, times and places that suit them, with real choice of attractive local options. They help people across the UK use their energies and talents to set up 'community micro-enterprises'. Community micro-enterprises are really small businesses or ventures or groups that offer help with care or health or wellbeing to local people in their area.

Community Catalysts has lots of experience and expertise and can offer people who want to set up a new care enterprise specialist advice and guidance, so they can do this safely and well.

In Denbighshire, Community Catalysts has been commissioned by the Council to use its expertise to help to tackle social care challenges.

### **Moving with Dignity / Right sized Care**

For many years, it has been established practice across health and social care for people who need to be hoisted, or cared for in bed, to have a care package with two people to assist and carry out the care.

It is unknown where or how, this practice became established, but with innovations in moving and handling equipment and a move to a more person-centred care & support approach, this requirement is increasingly being questioned and challenged.

It has been estimated that at least 37% of Denbighshire citizens could be assisted by one carer (instead of two), with the additional benefits of maintenance of dignity and comfort together with the increased flexibility derived from the provision of only one carer. More specialist moving and handling equipment is being designed and manufactured to facilitate single handed care allowing our Citizens to have their care needs addressed with the minimum of support and intervention.

Denbighshire have been promoting this way of working across Health and Social care and training staff so that they become more familiar with specialist moving and handling equipment and so they are more confident about supporting our Citizens to have their Care needs addressed with the minimum of intervention.

The Moving with Dignity project incorporates promoting independence and appropriate handling techniques for care provision. Using kindness and a gentle, compassionate approach, it involves looking at the number of carers required to attend to a person's needs, when being lifted, transferred or repositioned using specific techniques and items of equipment.

During the last year 5 sessions were held with Occupational Therapists to refresh skills using bed management systems. As a result, the Nordic bed management system is now core stock and can be ordered directly from our Community Equipment Service (CESI) which has reduced the delay between the initial assessment and providing beds to citizens.

Formal training sessions were held with 22 care staff from our in-house Independence at Home team. Following on from the training, the team are now working towards ensuring that care packages for those being discharged from hospital are considered within the ethos of Moving with Dignity before the care is transferred to external domiciliary care providers.

A pilot project was implemented with one Domiciliary Care agency, whereby the Manager and Moving and Handling trainer received an awareness training session to discuss the ethos of Moving with Dignity, which they are now rolling out with their care team. The aim is that once all training has been completed, work will be carried out to review all double handed packages of care

Our Moving with Dignity project lead completed a training session with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health board (BCUHB) Moving and Handling trainers to discuss single handed care.

The newly created Adult Social Services Edge of Care Team fits with our strategic vision for a modern, more effective way of delivering social care support that strengthens individual and community resilience. The Edge of Care team is unique in that it is based within Adult Social Care Services and recruits, trains and deploys Volunteers. The Manager is a qualified Social Worker and Outcome focussed mentor. Two Edge of Care Coordinators support the Manager to deliver the project.

The Team has demonstrated how the project can positively impact on planned care pathways, supporting discharge from hospital for citizens, working closely with our Community Resource Teams in delivering a 'team around the individual' approach, reducing demand for traditional planned care. For example; we have volunteers providing respite to carers, with careful and considered matching of 'cared for and volunteer', the result has been an experience that is meaningful and enjoyable for both carer and cared for. We have examples of where citizens have remained on the 'edge' of planned and unplanned care for example Mental Health Services, Care Home placement and traditional domiciliary care, keeping citizens in the community

## Flintshire market overview

With regard to the demographic of people accessing domiciliary care in Flintshire, the largest group are people aged 85 and over, see the table below.

Table 15: Demographic of people accessing domiciliary care in Flintshire

Age group	Percentage of provision
18 to 24	1%
25 to 64	17%
65 to 74	12%
75 to 84	27%
85 and over	43%

Source: Local authority data collection

Of those under the age of 65, a similar proportion of people receive support for a learning disability as a physical or sensory impairment.

As previously reported, the population changes over the next five years will have an impact on the sufficiency of provision. This increase number of people living in the community with dementia and complex needs may increase the demand for domiciliary care services, in particular 'double staffed packages of care'. This is something the authority needs to consider in order to continue to support individuals to live at home for longer.

Flintshire In-house Community Support Service provides care and support for adults who have an assessed need in their own homes. The service is split into three geographical localities and the service is delivered via a team of care staff who work across the whole of Flintshire. These three localities replicate social work and health teams locally and this aids in continuity and developing working relationships across different professions. The three localities are:

- Locality North East – Deeside area
- Locality South – Mold / Buckley area's
- Locality North West – Holywell / Flint area's

The Community Support Service adopts an ethos of re-ablement and supports people in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. The Community Support Service provides services to people over 18 years who have



been assessed as having a social care need living in Flintshire. The Community Support Service provide support for a range of health and care needs, including:

- frailty due to age related conditions
- physical disabilities
- Learning disabilities, including autistic spectrum disorders
- sensory impairments
- chronic illness
- long term health conditions
- dementia
- mental health, including depression, anxiety
- substance abuse
- palliative care

The Community Support Service support people via three different care and support models/approaches which vary depending on the individual and what matters to them.

**Re-ablement** - designed to support people to regain, improve and maintain their daily living skills and maximize their independence whilst continuing to live in their own home. This is a short term service which can be provided for up to six weeks. The service has close links with hospital discharge teams and plays an important role in contributing to a reduction in hospital admissions and readmissions and works closely with a range of professionals including Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Physiotherapists and District Nurses. The service also plays an important role in working with people to achieve their own personal goals to aid integration back into their own environment at home and into their local community. The aim is to support people to maximize their independence as quickly as possible and ensure that if people need ongoing care and support this is at the appropriate level.

**Living Well** - provides flexible care and support for people living with dementia. The service is designed to allow independent living and aims to support people to stay active in their home and active in their community for as long as possible. The care and support is tailored around the individual. Care, support and activities are developed over time as the staff build up a relationship with the person and they understand what they need. This approach delivers positive outcomes and contributes to people living with dementia maintaining their independence for as long as possible.

**People who have long-term complex care needs** are supported to remain independent in their own home. This includes daily living support, helping to achieve identified goals, support with medication as well as end of life / palliative care as required. In supporting people with complex needs the service offers stability and reassurance, and can that can support people overcome a crisis as necessary.

In addition to Local Authority's in-house care provision, the Commissioners in Flintshire actively utilise 28 providers from the North Wales Domiciliary Care Framework. There are also a small number delivering supported living exclusively under an alternative framework.

Both independent sector and Local Authority services are currently delivering around 7500 hours of domiciliary care per week. Flintshire County Council in-house provision delivers approximately 12% of this market, but aims to increase service delivery in this area to support more people to live at home, in line with the Council Plan. These figures exclude the provision of Extra Care, from which the Local Authority delivers around 370 hours of care per week.

## **Wrexham market overview**

The population of Wrexham is just over 135,000 according to the 2017 census. Over 45% (58,359) of that population are over the age of 45 years. Further 23% (31,700) of the population is over the age of 60 years. Those in fair health are 19,000 (14%), those in bad health are 6,500 (5%) and very bad health 1,800 (1%). Domiciliary care provision in Wrexham is provided through a patch-based model.

Of those there are a number who provide care services to those in need who are unpaid. These are broken down as follows: 8,900 provide 1 to 19 hours unpaid care a week; 2,200 provide 20 to 49 hours unpaid care a week and 4,000 provides 50 or more hours unpaid care a week. It is likely that over a five-year period all of these people will need to access services at some level.

## **Market stability**

### **Regional challenges**

A gap in services exists in relation to short home calls for support with medication. Neither health nor social care services provide calls only for medication, but older

people with memory problems do need this vital care (Regional Partnership Board, 2022).

The current economic situation with rising inflation and fuel costs, and wider cost of living pressures in early 2022 are creating instability for domiciliary care providers and their staff for example in-work poverty.

Decreasing budgets could present further challenges around the level of services which are able to be commissioned and provided. Across North Wales, providers have appreciated the support funding throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. For example, an additional £1m for domiciliary care which has provided stability during the pandemic. There is concern over the impact the end of the financial support will have.

### **Isle of Anglesey market stability**

Post pandemic, recruitment and retention of staff remains an issue with the staff turnover rate in Social Services having increased in 2021/22.

There is an increasing demand for services, but budgets along with inflationary pressures are struggling to keep up with this demand.

### **Gwynedd market stability**

Gwynedd has recently begun to establish the new domiciliary care model and early indications are very positive with providers having more recruitment successes. The domiciliary care tender opening in early April 2022 will give commissioners the opportunity to establish the new model across the county, and hopefully achieve much more stability thereafter. It is hoped that it will be possible to recruit more staff, achieve more with the same staffing level, and achieve greater efficiency (less travel and less bureaucracy) which results in more time to care and better outcomes for people (through focus on what makes a difference to the individual and tailor the care appropriately), through the adoption of the new model. The intention in the new model is to maintain the 50:50 split between the internal and external sectors for provision. The inclusion of the new contract for the external providers means that we have the freedom to adjust this ratio over the life of the agreement. Frequent emergencies in domiciliary care where providers report that they are no longer able to provide due to staffing problems. As the new arrangements come into effect a transition period will be required including effective shadowing and training.

## **Conwy market stability**

The Independent sector market has been unable to fulfil the county's domiciliary care requirements since the pandemic. Conwy currently (April 2022) has over 900 hours of un-brokered care that the market cannot supply (60+ packages). This has been consistent for over 12 months and is being met by in house and BCUHB provision. Discussions with providers suggest that this is purely down to staff / recruitment problems faced by the sector. Things are slowly improving but at a pace too slow to meet the rising demand.

## **Denbighshire market stability**

Denbighshire's in house provision adopts an ethos of re-ablement and supports people in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, providing services to people over 18 years of age who have been assessed as having a social care need and living in Denbighshire.

Denbighshire's in-house provision consists of Re-ablement, Health and Social Care Workers and the Interim Support Team - all services are intended to be short term interventions.

The Interim Support Team's function is to provide domiciliary care and support for a short period of time whilst care packages are secured through the provider sector in the South of Denbighshire. Increasingly, all elements of the in-house provision are holding cases for longer due to the lack of domiciliary care available. Due to the low number of providers able to deliver care in the south of Denbighshire, there is a commitment to expand the in-house provision.

Across social care there have also been high levels of staff absence that are likely to be linked to high levels of stress and anxiety post the pandemic.

Commissioners are struggling to secure packages of care, particularly in the south of Denbighshire. The main reason for this is lack of available care staff. This is a long term problem which is worsening. Domiciliary care providers handed back around 600 hours of care packages in 2021 due to lack of available staff.

There is a good range of providers in Denbighshire, although not all on the framework actively bid for packages. The domiciliary care sector in the county has been severely affected by the pandemic. In particular, sourcing double handed care packages is a challenge, as is the lack of availability of care provision in the south of

the county and in rural areas. We are also aware that domiciliary care services in rural settings is more expensive – some research suggests up to 20% more, and the average hourly rate is up to 11% higher. Increasing costs of transport fuel is challenging for all providers

Denbighshire County Council are considering opportunities to develop enhanced domiciliary care provision for citizens with higher levels of care and support needs. The model would necessarily be flexible (rather than ‘time and task’), to support care staff to build relationships and person-centred working, gain enhanced skills through training and play a key role in care and support planning for citizens. Ultimately, the provision would have a clear outcomes focus, and success would be measured by those outcomes.

Denbighshire is hoping to conduct a pilot involving electric vehicles for provision of care during 2022.

### **Flintshire market stability**

In Flintshire, the market is a mixed model with continued expansion of in-house domiciliary care. This is a priority for the Council to help rebalance the care sector. Independent care providers continue to work creatively with the local authority to ensure the numbers of people waiting for care at home are the lowest possible. However, during the last 2 years of the COVID-19 pandemic, this has been challenging.

We now start to see creative solutions including the use of electric vehicles to support domiciliary care staff through the proposed WG scheme. They will be used to support domiciliary care staff who cannot drive by accessing WG scheme to prioritise driving tests for domiciliary care workers who are awaiting a test date. Flintshire is continuing the expansion of Micro-care to support individuals locally. The market remains challenging, but all stakeholders continue to work in partnership to overcome the well-known challenges currently faced across the UK.

In Flintshire, considering independent providers only, no provider holds more than 12% of the independent market share in the local area when considering delivered hours, with the average for a provider being 4.5%.

With regard to the balance of the market in Flintshire, the vast majority (12 out of the 18) are local providers either exclusively in Flintshire, or within Flintshire and

neighbouring authorities. Another 4 provider's work across the North Wales region, while they also have 2 national providers.

In Flintshire, there are some critical pressures and key issues faced by social services in the areas of workforce, commissioning and funding criteria. The local authority is looking at how to address some of these issues through the reviewing of social work roles, improving the career pathway in social care, and offering greater clarity on the criteria applied to particular funding streams.

There are other challenges that local, regional, and national work-streams are looking to address, such as recruitment with WeCare Wales and children's placements, however it is important to note that these still present as critical pressures for the delivery of social services in Flintshire.

As of January 2022 in Flintshire, areas of ongoing pressure include:

- double staffed care
- rural areas
- discharge from hospital
- hand-back packages from providers as a result of staffing challenges
- increased business costs – utility bills and insurance
- increased fuel costs, impacting on care staff themselves.

Need outweighs supply in Flintshire. Due to the challenging financial climate and need to encourage more people into the care industry, consideration is being given to other ways for care to be provided for example Micro-care.

There is a challenge of a deficit of care workers, those requiring care are struggling with a decreasing pool of care staff. Large care agencies have premises and overheads to pay for and investors/stakeholders to satisfy, so care per hour costs are higher.

Within older people's services, there is a diverse provider base, no reliance on one provider or sector. However, within learning disability and physical disability services, there is a small number of providers to choose from who are relied upon to meet the needs of the service.

There is a broad range of services available depending on what the individual would prefer such as traditional homecare care, Micro-care and Direct Payments.

## **Wrexham market stability**

There are currently (April 2022) significant shortfalls in all areas of domiciliary care and wider health and social care market in Wrexham which was not seen in the April 2021 figures and is likely a result of wider, national workforce and COVID-19 recovery challenges.

Rotational and other respite solutions also present significant challenges. A lack of capacity to deliver regular and flexible respite and short breaks continues to burden unpaid carers who are already feeling increased demands from their caring role as a result of COVID-19 and other workforce challenges.

More rural areas of the county prove most difficult in achieving sustainable domiciliary care services. Since April 2021, microenterprise capacity has grown and Wrexham have approached English agencies to support to meet the demand but the sustainability of these approaches is not evaluated.

There is little flexibility in the current market (April 2022) due to significant workforce and COVID-19 recovery challenges across health and social care. Whilst there has been a 30% reduction in domiciliary care waiting list times since April 2021, it remains significantly high with any short to medium solutions yet to be evaluated and tested in terms of their longer term market stability. COVID-19 recovery funding and hardship funding supported much of this recovery during 2021-22 with longer term financial stability remaining a challenge.

Domiciliary care registration can also hamper commissioning and service delivery flexibility. RISCA requirements, while attempting to drive up quality, can prove a barrier to some organisations and staff when recruitment is already a challenge. In addition, as a border town, Wrexham does rely on providers from England in some areas. Providers are restricted in the numbers of people they can support outside of Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) registration which can be very lengthy.

## **Feedback from citizens and providers**

While emergency care is being provided for older people who fall and are injured, a response service is needed for non-injured fallers and for out-of-hours domiciliary care. Currently, if an older person needs additional support due to an unexpected incident, such as their carer becoming unwell, they have no access to support (Regional Partnership Board, 2022)

“Independent domiciliary care providers told us they have managed to start care delivery within the 48 hours but it has been a struggle. The biggest challenges and delays are arranging care for people who have complex needs” (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2019a)

“Independent providers of domiciliary care told us about providing care for people who miss out on a period of re-ablement when there is no capacity in the re-ablement team. We found this is often because there is a waiting list for the service due to it being dominated by people being discharged from hospital with low level needs, requiring convalescence” (Care Inspectorate Wales, 2019a)

Feedback from the Regional Provider’s survey [February 2022] details the challenges faced by providers as:

- Recruitment of staff. The employment market is highly competitive and we must be able to offer a financial package to care workers, that is both competitive and worthy of the role.
- Retention of staff due to poor terms and conditions in the social care sector. The cost of fuel and the cost of living crisis is now beginning to be felt in the sector where providers are seeing more staff suffering in-work poverty.
- Staff leaving the sector due to poor working conditions and lack of respect for the work they do and the levels of responsibility involved. Staff feel undervalued and overworked.
- Retaining staff who are new to the sector who are not able to deal with the intensity of the job supporting people with conditions such as autism, people requiring personal care etc. Need better support for staff to meet the challenges of the role.

Providers also gave suggestions on ways to improve the sector and the quality of care, including:

- Enable flexibility in using commissioned care hours. Whilst appreciating budget restraints for all, it can be frustrating when trusted providers are not able to be flexible with hours etc. More time is spent justifying any variance, rather than being able to 'bank' these hours to achieve people’s outcomes and therefore improve quality. Sometimes flexibility is the best way when supporting someone (make the most of a particular mood or motivation).
- Development of true partnership working with providers.



- A level pay structure for all providers to stop the swapping from one to another for better rates.
- Recognition of the \*true\* costs of providing care services to enable providers to continue to provide quality services and attract / retain quality staff.
- More emphasis on using local providers instead of national companies with local offices.
- Shared resources between providers such as training of staff.

## Other market stability factors

### Consideration of market quality

Flintshire use *Progress for Providers* in care homes, a self-assessment tool for managers to use with their staff to check how they are doing in delivering personalised support for people living in care homes. 'Personalised Support' is a key aim of national policy and means tailoring support to the individual, and enabling them to have as much choice and control over their service and life as possible, rather than supporting everyone in the same way. The programme has been expanded to include domiciliary and extra care services in 2020/21.

In Denbighshire, commissioners have recognised the need to work with domiciliary care providers to embrace a more outcome focused approach. Further work will be done co-productively with providers in the future.

In Gwynedd, commissioners have worked with Health Board colleagues on 'Due Diligence' processes. All providers who apply to be part of the Council's new delivery model must meet certain requirements.

### Impact of commissioning practices on the market

The Integrated Care Fund and Transformation Funding moving to the Regional Investment Fund's (RIF) five-year programme is welcomed, however we continue to work through the guidance and impact of the changes. Due to the value of this funding, it is critical that any changes in criteria are articulated with notice so local authorities and other partners can consider and plan services with this in mind.

Where there has been a need to commission directly with a provider, current procurement practice has often been a barrier to the need to act rapidly. Procurement processes have proved onerous and unattractive to certain providers,

particularly in the third sector, which then hinders the number of suppliers submitting tender applications.

The Contracts and Commissioning Teams in each Local Authority and the Health Board have facilitated regular meetings with residential care, domiciliary care and Supported Living providers. Whilst these meetings took place before the pandemic, their frequency increased. The support and networking became a vital resource for providers. The meetings were also attended by colleagues from the Environmental Health Team, Health and Safety Officers and BCUHB officers so partners could advise and support when needed

Alongside these meetings, a dedicated email address has been established where providers could pose COVID-19 related questions and queries where they could be responded to in a timely manner.

The team have also had daily phone contact with providers to collect data, enquire about PPE supplies, discuss any arising issues or just to be there to listen and support in this difficult time.

Denbighshire use Third Party Administered Support Budgets. This is where the money is transferred from the Local Authority directly to a third party who could be directly providing some of the person's care and support or providing a managed account service. The money is spent on whatever is agreed in the citizen's care and support plan to assist them in meeting their agreed outcomes. In this arrangement the third party holding the budget is responsible for paying providers or services and one off purchases and co-produce with practitioners.

Denbighshire will also continue to commission some long term managed care and support including domiciliary and residential care for those who need it.

### **Provision of service in the Welsh language**

Information from the Population Needs Assessment (2022)2022 detailed that many care homes and domiciliary care providers find it difficult to follow through with the provision of a Welsh speaker. More needs to be done to attract Welsh speakers to the profession and to support staff to improve their Welsh. This needs to include opportunities for both complete beginners and those who need to gain confidence. Many organisations provide Welsh language training to their staff, either formally or informally. Examples included:

- Courses offered by the local council or health board.
- Lunchtime Welsh language groups.
- Welsh speaking staff delivering workshops to their non-Welsh speaking peers.

In the Provider Survey (February 2022) providers note that it is a challenge to recruit Welsh speakers within their setting, help and support to advertise/translate would be helpful moving forward for smaller companies.

Providers are actively trying to increase our use of the Welsh language, but difficult to sustain any learning when not using it frequently enough (on a personal level as well as for the organisation).

Flintshire note that as part of the Mwy Na Geiriau framework the Council ensures that service users and their families are in receipt of the Active Offer. Whilst this has been taken up for some social work assessments, individuals and their families are aware of the current shortage in care staff and we have not received requests for care to be delivered by Welsh speaking carers. They are however, very conscious of this and throughout the recent pandemic have observed an increase in the numbers of staff who are learning Welsh and those who are re-kindling previous Welsh language skills which may not have been used for many years. The Council works in partnership with our local Further Education Institutions to provide Welsh Language courses at all levels to meet individual's needs.

Denbighshire ensures residents receive the Active Offer whenever they contact the local authority for information, advice or support. In the provider network there is a general lack of capacity and lack of available services with Welsh speakers is an issue for them. Useful tools such as Welsh language symbols on files are used as timely reminders to staff. However, the recruitment crisis affects both Welsh and English speakers currently. There has been discussion about placing recruitment adverts in local Welsh language publications, such as Y Bedol.

The Gwynedd position in terms of Welsh speaking staff is highlighted in the table below.

Gwynedd has a significant Welsh speaking domiciliary care workforce, a significant proportion of whom are fluent Welsh speakers.

Gwynedd has invested heavily in the promotion and development of Welsh language skills amongst care staff and in recruiting care staff who are able to speak Welsh or

are willing to improve their Welsh language skills. In terms of care tasks spoke Welsh skills are more important in communicating with citizens and giving care in their language of choice.

Table 16: Welsh Speaking Care Staff in Gwynedd domiciliary care provision (April 2020)

Position	% of registered who are 'fluent' in Welsh	% of registered who have 'some' Welsh language skills	% of registered with no Welsh language skills
Domiciliary Care Workers	51.2	23.0	9.8
Domiciliary Care Managers	56.4	17.9	12.8

Source: Gwynedd Council data collection

## Sustainability of provision

Flintshire County Council has recently employed a Planning and Development Officer to support the independent adult social care sector through the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and to become confident and resilient to meet the support needs of older people in Flintshire into the future. The officer will work closely with the adult social care sector to aid sustainability and recovery following the pandemic. This will include supporting with sustainability plans and recruitment drives in house and across the sector.

People often have little choice in reality. Getting any care is a challenge, let alone having a choice. People can choose to receive Direct Payments to arrange their own care, but it is not easy to find people who can offer care.

## Risks to market stability

Both in-house and independent care providers continue to have significant staff vacancies as existing carers vacate the care sector for a variety of well-rehearsed reasons. This is of concern with regard to market stability, and particularly the ability to deliver care particularly to harder to reach areas.

Whilst WG have made provision for the delivery of the Real Living Wage to direct care workers, this will have an impact on pay compression and ability to recruit /

provide career progression to more senior roles. This may have an impact on market stability as the next financial year unfolds.

Business costs, outside of wages are also increasing with inflation escalating and fuel costs in particular increasing significantly. For domiciliary care this has a significant impact on the attractiveness of the role and the financial viability of existing business models.

A consultation exercise with providers [in-house and external] run by Flintshire identified the following market Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats. These themes are shared across the region.

### **Strengths**

- Good Brokerage relationships with providers and excellent communication between the team and providers.
- Support from provider meeting with virtual meetings and senior leadership representation.
- Commissioners are on the end of the phone for support and advice
- Providers work together and not in conflict or competition.
- Additional meetings for Responsible Individuals are positive and helpfully in getting support from peers
- Open working together – developing a support network
- Open book on finances and having honest conversations enables informed decision making
- Commissioners understand “how it is on the ground”

### **Weaknesses**

- Administration of responding to call, for example, if the carer is late
- Still stuck in task and time
- Unemployment in the general economy is low which creates competition for staff, such as with seasonable retail jobs
- Expectations of citizens can be a challenge for tasks over and above the care plan
- Losing staff to other economic sectors, to the health board and to other roles within the social care sector such as care homes / Supported Living
- Carers who are not I.T. savvy
- Providers need better support from Care Inspectorate Wales

- Salaries we can offer to staff are not competitive enough for the work involved in domiciliary care

### **Opportunities**

- Social care is on the political agenda – decision makers cannot ignore social care any more
- Flexibility within time and task time bands
- Engagement with commissioners and the network of framework providers could be built on
- Providers need to engage with potential employees face to face and show them what the work is
- Greater understanding of the cost of running a domiciliary care agency – looking at the “Unfair to Care” document
- Realistic assessment of the responsibilities of the caring role in comparison with other roles for example police officer
- Need to hear more from the citizens and the benefits that this support gives
- Multi-channel advertising of roles not just online, for example, radio, buses, billboards.
- Opportunity for more joint work with health to ensure people in hospital have access to therapists to support discharge.

### **Threats**

- Young people not attracted by domiciliary care or care in general
- Increasing older workforce and no succession planning
- Terms and Conditions in the sector are poor for the type of work and responsibilities involved
- Care not valued or seen as important in comparison to other sectors, for example, emergency service and health
- The registration and qualification frameworks and requirements are putting carer’s off, particularly those will literacy and numeracy challenges
- The care sector is close to collapsing
- The Health sector does not recognise the importance of domiciliary care
- The role of carers is challenging and they are being asked to undertake more complex tasks – need to develop a stronger relationship with district nursing
- Better terms and conditions in local authority care and Health Board roles leading to destabilisation
- State Benefit restrictions disadvantage care workers and creates in work poverty

# Preventative services

A long term priority is to continue to support people to regain their independence and reduce reliance on the statutory care sector. This will be done by providing effective access to the social prescribing / third sector services through the Single Point of Access (SPOA) as well as effective management of admissions to set up / step down beds.

Some local examples of community preventative approaches are:

- Age Friendly Communities - The Ageing Well in Flintshire Action Plan identifies what needs to be done and by whom, to make growing older in Flintshire a good place to be.
- A short term project to establish proof of concept for social prescribing is also being run by Flintshire Local Voluntary Centre (FLVC) on behalf of the Health Board.
- Flintshire Social Services and BCUHB commission a carer respite service for carers. This service provides a sitting and domiciliary care service within Flintshire, which is accessed via Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads Care Services. The respite is currently available to those that have high demanding caring roles, including carers of people living with dementia. This service is offered for a 12-week period followed by signposting to SPOA to explore ongoing respite options.
- Community Navigators – Social Prescribing in Denbighshire employed by The British Red Cross and Age Connects. The Community Navigators are part of the four Community Resource Teams. They use ‘Talking Points’ in Denbighshire libraries as a place to meet people, although this was not possible during the COVID-19 pandemic and a lot of support was provided via telephone at that time. They are a source of current, accurate and timely information about a range of support that is available in the community. They are key in connecting people, reducing social isolation and loneliness. During 2020-21, the Community Navigators assisted 2,424 Denbighshire residents.

Denbighshire seek to commission services from providers who embrace:

- Having meaningful conversations with people
- Connecting people with what matters to them
- Working with people to take control of their lives
- Building on the strengths and abilities of people to identify individual solutions

Denbighshire's focus is on earlier intervention, increasing preventative services within the community and helping people maintain their independence. Our mission is to place people at the heart of decisions about the type of community support services they access. For many people, this will mean that they may be given a support budget to manage their own care and support to achieve agreed outcomes. This could be in the form of a Direct Payment, a Third Party Managed Support Budget or a Local Authority Managed Support Budget for the individual. Support budgets will operate under a less restrictive legislative framework, and one that supports innovation. In Denbighshire the following work is taking place.

- Men's Sheds – The national UK Men's Sheds Association is a place for men where they can share the tools and resources they need to work on projects of their own choosing at their own pace and in a safe, friendly and inclusive venue. They are places of skill-sharing and informal learning, of individual pursuits and community projects, of purpose, achievement and social interaction. A local Men's Shed's operates in Denbigh.
- Carers Trust North Wales Crossroads Care Services offer 'Gwalia Care' which takes over the roles of the unpaid carer so they are able to take some time out. This can be on a regular or ad hoc basis and is chargeable.
- Age Connects North East Wales (ACNEW) – ACNEW are part of the national Age Connects Cymru programmes, a social enterprise providing support for people aged 50+. Locally, the service provides short-term housing related support, toe nail cutting, a cleaning and shopping service and social activities.
- Education and Learning – Many local projects are referring people to the University of the Third Age (U3A). U3A provide opportunities for retirees and semi-retired people to come together and learn, not for qualifications, but for 'own reward'.
- DEWIS - Dewis Cymru is a website that aims to help people with well-being, whether that is their own well-being or the well-being of a family member or friend. The website contains information that can help people think about what matters to them and has information on services that can be accessed for support. Organisations across Wales can upload their own information to the site
- Community Agent's – at Wrexham the service is commissioned from and managed by Community Councils. Community Agents can tap into third sector services around the county to support people in their community. GP surgeries are linking people in to the Community Agents.



Wrexham County Borough Council supports the following third sector services.

- NEWCIS (North East Wales Carers Information Service) Carers information, advice, support and respite services
- Alzheimer's support: The main theme within the Welsh Government Dementia Action Plan is to enable people living with dementia (including young-onset dementia) to maintain their independence and remain at home where possible, avoiding unnecessary admissions to hospital or residential care and delays when someone is due to be discharged from care or hospital.
- Community Catalyst: Step up and support of an online directory of social care enterprises in Wrexham to allow easier access to information for citizens and professionals. They provide 6 days' worth of support to the development of third sector organisations interested in developing domiciliary care provision.
- Vision support: The purpose of the service is to enable adults who are blind or visually impaired to carry out their daily activities with confidence, through the provision of professional training in new and/or adaptive independent living skills, as well as to register individuals who have been assessed as having sight loss, or severe sight loss as recommended, by a consultant Ophthalmologist through the Cerebral Visual Impairment (CVI) process. The provider holds a small number of specialist pieces of equipment that can be loaned out to individuals in order to support them with their visual impairment.
- Deaf Support Network: The purpose of this service is to provide practical support, information and advice to children and adults who are deaf (member of the Cultural Deaf Community who use British Sign Language as their first language), living with hearing loss or who are Deaf Blind (dual sensory loss). As well as providing direct support, the provider will signpost individuals to other services who may be able to support that individual. The provider will hold a small number of specialist pieces of equipment that can be loaned out to individuals in order to support them with their communication/ hearing loss.
- Delta (Telecare): Telecare is a service that can help to keep you safe at home and enable assistance to be summoned in the event of an emergency. Telecare can help you to live independently in your home, by providing the peace of mind that someone can be automatically alerted if you need assistance or in the event of an emergency situation.
- British Red Cross: A Third Sector Link Worker has been commissioned to work with the Wrexham's SPOA to ensure that information on third sector provision is readily accessible to relevant professionals. The worker supports Wrexham

citizens to access non-statutory forms of support, including the provision of information, advice and assistance, to enable them to maintain their independence, and prevent escalation of need

- Hafal, part of Adferiad Recovery (partnership with housing): Supported Accommodation and floating support for those with Mental Health conditions
- Recovery Service: Supported Accommodation and floating support for those with Mental Health conditions.
- Stepping Stones: Individual specialist counselling, support and group work for adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse, including counselling support for individual pre-trial, during trial and post-trial. This specialised area of counselling is intended to meet the person's needs, with a commitment to supporting individuals for as long as necessary, recognising that many people are very vulnerable and may at times self-harm or have suicidal feelings.

## **Other considerations affecting the market**

### **Social value**

The North Wales Population Needs Assessment 2022 notes “Co-production and social value: Delivering services for older people must include the views of the population. Older people should have a voice in shaping services that they may access. The Wales Cooperative Centre has published a paper outlining how services, such as domiciliary care, can be commissioned using an outcomes based approach for provision, which focuses on well-being. as well as any immediate need” (Regional Partnership Board, 2022).

Flintshire has moved towards Micro-care delivery models and has a pilot programme as part of the ongoing Social Services offer. To meet the growing demand for care, the Micro-care pilot project has been established to expand both the supply of care in and the choices available for people across Flintshire. Micro-care enterprises are small businesses ranging from sole traders up to businesses employing 5 people who offer flexible and personalised care and support services to vulnerable people, tailored to their individual's needs. The aim is to encourage people to become Micro-carers who are either:

- Interested in providing social care services to older people but may have no experience
- Currently working in the care sector but interested in being their own boss

- Actively supporting people in their local communities
- Want to do something that support others and makes a difference

The Micro-care team work with individuals to:

- Support them to develop their business or idea
- Provide information on training, funding and other available support and resources
- Support individuals to develop and deliver a quality service in line with current WG legislation and regulations
- Providing links to a network of other Micro-care providers for mutual support

As of February 2022, there were 27 Micro-carers trading in Flintshire. The Flintshire Micro-Care Team have also created Micro-care web pages for use by both micro-carers and people looking for Micro-carers. It provides key information for people considering working as a Micro-carer. For the public it also has explanations about Micro-care and lists Micro-carers and their contact details. This will support our aim to develop ongoing sustainability in the project. The website is located at [www.careatflintshire.co.uk](http://www.careatflintshire.co.uk) This programme is now moving out of the 'pilot' phase and incorporated in to Flintshire's offer.

Also in Flintshire the recruitment of volunteers began at the start of April 2021 initiated by colleagues in FLVC. The Flintshire Social Care Workforce Development Team, supported by FLVC, provided basic training to volunteers, relating to safeguarding, food hygiene, health and safety, consent, data protection, dignity, principles of care and confidentiality. By the end of April 2020, following the training and required Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks, a group of 64 volunteers were available for deployment to volunteering opportunities across the county.

Flintshire benefits from a strong third sector presence and networks and a positive relationship between the Council and FLVC. The Wellbeing Team in FLVC and AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham) supports the third sector and statutory partners in a number of ways:

- Promoting third sector organisations, services and activities to statutory partners
- Representing the third sector at strategic planning and partnership groups
- Engaging the third sector in consultations and engagement about health and social services
- Promoting partnership working within the third sector and across sectors

- Signposting to or providing business support and funding
- Providing training to organisations to improve their capacity and effectiveness
- Explaining the complexities of commissioning and procurement
- Helping keep services up to date with the latest evidence base, whilst guiding them through the changes in NHS and local authority structures.
- Helping the start-up of new services or groups
- Supporting the third sector in Flintshire and Wrexham to access FLVC and AVOW's services

Community Catalyst are commissioned as a project through the Community Transformation WG Fund in Wrexham. The project's aim is to support the development of micro-enterprises to support the domiciliary care offer in Wrexham. The enterprises are not to replace the offer from domiciliary care agencies, rather to support stability and allow choice and control for citizens. It supports the direct payment options for citizens. There are currently 37 microenterprises that have completed the 'Doing it Right' standards and actively on Wrexham's register of providers.

Gwynedd notes that there is 44% of domiciliary care being provided internally today. There are several small independent companies that are local to Gwynedd and a few larger companies. The Gwynedd market does not have many co-operatives and social enterprises, but they are developing. There are third sector providers within the county but not a consistent presence as the local authority would like it be in each part of Gwynedd. Commissioners find it very difficult to obtain provision in rural areas often. Some areas have a strong informal community network already in place.

Gwynedd is proposing to develop Social Enterprises through community hubs that focus on the elements of well-being and also to develop a specialist equipment assessment provision - smart house. Gwynedd has currently 15 Third Sector Providers operating in Gwynedd.

As explained above in Gwynedd people have little choice of domiciliary care provision. Securing care is a challenge, let alone having a choice. People can choose to arrange their own care via Direct Payments, but it is not easy to find people who can offer care. A project with 'Community Catalysts' has started, to encourage people to set up a small company to provide care, and hopefully this will improve the situation.

## Direct payments

Local authorities promote Direct Payment through highlighting a person centred service that reflects voice, choice and control by empowering individuals to be as independent as possible in their own local community.

Some benefits of choosing Direct Payments are:

- Individuals choose who delivers their care and support
- Individuals choose when their care is delivered to suit their everyday life
- Direct payments is flexible to meet individual requirements

Isle of Anglesey Council is dedicated to developing the service by consulting regularly with direct payments experts (citizens) and to make sure that the service is fit for purpose.

Our vision and our way of implementing change has resulted in the increase in service take up and its success resulting in 243 individuals taking control of their care package and choosing to receive support through direct payments on the island compared to 35 individuals in 2015.

Denbighshire will continue to develop and utilise Direct Payments, where individuals, or their chosen responsible person, receive money directly from the Council to fund their agreed care and support needs in their chosen way. This might be through recruitment of a Personal Assistant or by paying for services of their chosen agency or organisation.

At present there are not enough providers to give people a choice or to give an element of competition. Community Catalysts are helping small local providers (Micro providers) launch services but few are willing to provide personal care, which is where the biggest gap is. Whilst there may be a reduction in the care and support needed by individuals because of earlier interventions and preventative work, we anticipate growing numbers of people with more complex needs such as dementia. Denbighshire has recruited for two Independent Living Advisers (ILA) posts. Part of their role will be to join things up and offer consistent and helpful advice to families for example about Direct Payments, Micro providers and other support available for citizens and carers.

In Flintshire Direct Payments are an important mechanism by which people can exercise choice, voice and control to decide how to achieve their needs for care and

support and achieve their personal outcomes. In Flintshire the approach focuses on strengths and outcomes, which they aim to enable citizens to retain autonomy over their life, support, self-determination and autonomy and efficient use of resources.

In recent years the Flintshire Direct Payments Support Services has been completely redesigned and now provides a far more holistic service benefitting both Flintshire citizens, social services and third sector partners. Some of the key benefits of the service are:

- Far greater control over the service and how it meets the department's priorities.
- Service works collaboratively with social work teams to embed person-centered practices in line with the SSWB (Wales) 2014 Act
- Shared systems, improved communication, and better access to the service.
- Outcomes focused Referral process centres on what is to be achieved and supports joint working with the individual to own the outcome and develop bespoke solutions.
- Better placed to work in partnership with third sector organisations.
- Autonomy to develop, test and imbed innovation in line with the departments ambition and priorities.
- Far more holistic approach, centred on the needs of citizens in the first instance, but also practitioners, communities, partners etc.
- Consideration for the Personal Assistant market in terms of standards, quality, training and opportunities for progression.
- Support that is proportionate. Importantly, we don't want to over support people, but enable them to manage their own arrangements.

During Quarter 2 (July to Sept) of 2021/22, 498 people received a Direct Payment in Flintshire. This represents the highest number of recipients per head of population of any Welsh Local Authority. Direct Payments currently make up 39% of home based services.

Table 17: Flintshire direct payments by category Q2 2021/22

Service category	Number of direct payments
Learning disabilities	169
Physical / sensory impairment	104
Children with disabilities	78
Older people	65
Children's services	49
Mental health	24
Vulnerable adults	9
Total	498

Source: Local authority data collection

Working in partnership with a small local film company (Follow Films) Flintshire Direct Payments recipients have been supported to tell their unique stories of their lives and how Direct Payments have contributed towards them achieving positive outcomes and improved life experiences. The impact of these films and the feedback received has been significant and the films are now being utilised by local authorities and institutions far and wide.

## Workforce

As outlined in The North Wales Social Care and Community Health Workforce Strategy, the sector is under significant pressure as a result of:

- Changes to legislation as a result of the Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 (RISCA)
- A new qualification framework
- Competitive pay structures with other sectors
- Competition from other sectors

There is an urgent priority around ensuring a sufficient workforce is in place for the delivery of social services and social care functions. The recruitment and retention of Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and direct care workers has become a particular challenge across North Wales.

The North Wales Social Care and Community Health Workforce is in a time of unprecedented change whereby they are required to deliver services differently with a focus on prevention, protection, intervention, partnership and integrated working,

coproduction and empowerment; requiring a different emphasis on workforce skills and training.

Much has been written on the issues surrounding recruitment and selection in the Domiciliary Care workforce. In March 2016, WG published a research report on the 'Factors that affect the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers and the extent to which these factors impact upon the quality of domiciliary care' (Atkinson, Crozier and Lewis, 2016). The research, undertaken by Manchester Metropolitan University sought to identify factors that influence whether people choose to 'become and remain working as domiciliary care workers'.

There are approximately 17,000 domiciliary care staff employed by commissioned care providers in Wales (Social Care Wales, 2018a). WG's consultation in to the Domiciliary Workforce (Welsh Government, 2016) recommends that those working in the sector are recognised as the skilled professionals they are. The negative image of the sector must be challenged to encourage people to join the social care workforce.

The key factors highlighted by this consultation included:

- Low wages
- Work pressures
- Unsociable hours
- Poor terms and conditions
- 'Zero hours' or 'non-guaranteed hours' contracts deterring people from joining the sector, as there were no guaranteed hours
- Some call times not enough to address the needs of the individual
- Lack of training and career development opportunities
- Seen as a low status job compared to healthcare

Local Authorities have extended their Care First and other Employee Assistance Programmes to the external [non local authority] workforce. Care First/Employ Assistance Programmes provide confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, online or via the free-phone telephone number. The service is free for all employees to access whenever they need it.

The care provided by domiciliary carers for those with mental health needs could be improved by ensuring staff are encouraged to work in the field where they have most talent. Those working with people living with dementia require specialist training and



extra time to complete tasks. There is a lack of dementia trained care workers, which should be addressed by the local authorities. Commissioners are keen to ensure the agencies they employ to provide dementia care are fulfilling their obligations and following care plans carefully. The profile of the profession needs to be raised to attract a high calibre of staff. (Regional Partnership Board, 2022).

Gwynedd note that there is the potential to adapt roles / tasks within their domiciliary care plans but need support from providers to implement. Staffing is a major issue at present for both domiciliary care providers and care homes.

In Flintshire, the local authority has also worked with Mind in North East Wales to provide extra support for social care workers. Information, talking therapies and activities designed to support wellbeing during this difficult time is available.

Providers in Flintshire have reported that the All Wales Jobs Fair is difficult to use and the IT is clunky particularly if you have no digital support.

Flintshire has worked in collaboration with citizens to design and implement a unique platform that supports both Direct Payments employers and Personal Assistants. The [Flintshire PA Portal](#) enables Direct Payments employers to search for available Personal Assistants in their area autonomously and for Personal Assistants to promote themselves and their availability to work. Personal Assistants complete a profile describing themselves, their experience, availability etc. and prospective direct payments employers can search the data base and engage with people they feel may be able to help meet their needs and/or achieve personal well-being outcomes. Recently they have added a vacancy page that enables citizens to post their requirements i.e. needs to be met/outcomes to be achieved, making the system a two-way process.

The Flintshire direct payments scheme has consciously set out to change the support available for this significant, but sometimes disassociated workforce. Some of the initiatives to date are:

- Personal Assistant Coordinator engaging with the workforce. Pastoral support for Personal Assistant's working in complex/isolated positions being built into the role.
- Personal Assistant Code of Conduct developed and implemented. This has helped them understand their role, where they fit in and what the expectations of them are.

- Flintshire Personal Assistant Induction Certificate developed around 7 core modules and designed specifically around the PA role. Since its introduction 11 Personal Assistants have completed the certificate and a further 35 are working towards the award. For those enrolled on the scheme there are a further 50 training modules that they are able to access in their own time. This is the first initiative of its kind and the local authority are in discussions with Social Care Wales regarding the potential for a National approach.
- Personal Assistant Portal developed to aid recruitment for Direct Payments employers and to promote work opportunities for prospective PA's.

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 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.

## 5. Residential services (children)

This chapter focuses on residential care services for children and young people. For the purpose of this assessment, the chapter includes those aged between 0 to 18 as well as those who are eligible for services until they are 25 years of age, such as disabled people and care leavers.

Residential services include:

- Care Homes (Children) – care in a home with paid staff
- Secure Accommodation – a secure safe place
- Residential Family Services – accommodation where parents and children stay together to be assessed / receive care

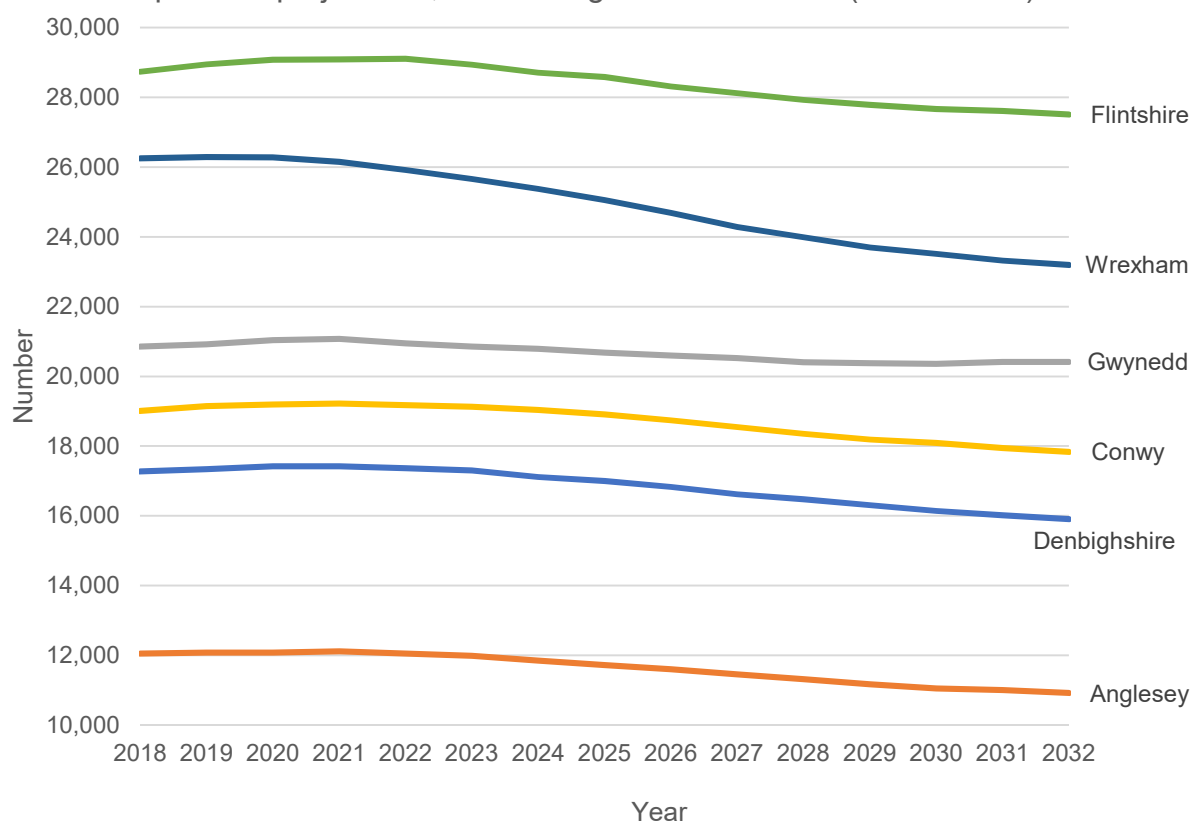
There are separate chapters about fostering and adoption services.

### Population overview

#### **The number of children is predicted to decrease**

In 2020, there were around 123,700 children aged 0 to 15 in North Wales (Welsh Government, 2021b). There has been little change in the number of children between 2015 and 2020 across North Wales or in each county. The number of children is projected to fall in North Wales by 7% over the next 15 years (Welsh Government, 2020). The level for each local authority varies from a 2% decrease for Gwynedd, to 12% in Wrexham as shown in the chart below. This is a nationwide trend, with numbers also projected to fall by 5% in Wales as a whole.

Chart 1: Population projections, children aged 15 and under (2018 based)



Source: 2018-based local authority population projections for Wales (principal projection), Welsh Government

### The number of children receiving care and support has increased

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

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

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

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

## **Children who are care experienced were more vulnerable to the pandemic**

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

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

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

Table 18: Number and rate per 100,000 of children looked after (under 18) by local authority, 2017 and 2021

Local council	2017 No	2017 Rate	2021 No	2021 Rate	Change No
Anglesey	140	1,039	160	1,214	20
Gwynedd	220	927	280	1,210	65
Conwy	180	829	215	1,015	35
Denbighshire	160	825	180	923	20
Flintshire	210	654	255	795	45
Wrexham	215	736	375	1,304	160
North Wales	1,120	805	1,470	1,063	350
Wales	5,960	949	7,265	1,153	1,305

Source: StatsWales

## Market overview

Despite a shared commitment to prevention and early intervention, there will always be a small proportion of looked after children who need residential placements.

Depending on care needs this may be in a:

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

The updated Market Position Statement (Regional Partnership Board, 2019) provided a breakdown of residential care provision in North Wales. As at 31st March 2020, there were 70 North Wales children living in a care home. The total number of children living in a children's home increased by 133% in North Wales between 2016 (30 children) and 2020 (70 children). The table below shows that figure has more than doubled to 158 between 2020 and 2021.

Table 19: Snapshot of number of young people in residential placements at 31 Mar 2021

County	Residential
Anglesey	10
Gwynedd	21
Conwy	37
Denbighshire	20
Flintshire	39
Wrexham	31
North Wales	158

Source: Local authority data collection

Notes: Residential includes children’s homes, family residential services, residential school placements

## Market share

There were 17 independent providers of residential care for children, operating 42 settings and providing 180 registered places (‘beds’) across North Wales.

Due to the limited residential in house provision in the region, authorities have to pay external organisers known as ‘providers’. You can find information on work to increase residential in house capacity within the Children’s Transformation Programme section.

## Secure accommodation

There is no secure accommodation provision in North Wales. There is a national purpose built secure children’s home in South Wales. Hillside can accommodate up to 18 children and young people of either gender between the ages of 12 to 17 years.

The children placed in secure accommodation are done so by order of a court and numbers are very low, between 0 to 2 per authority each year with no clear trend. There are no plans to extend this provision in North Wales.

Step down provision from secure accommodation and secure welfare placements are discussed in the [emergency accommodation](#) section.

## Market sufficiency and stability

Placement within county or nearby is known to be important for children and young people to maintain their established positive social networks both with family (parents, siblings and others) and school – which helps them to develop their identity and emotional maturity (NICE, 2021).

The table below shows that Conwy and Gwynedd have the highest proportion of placements outside of North Wales. Over half of all residential placements across the region are placed outside of North Wales.

Table 20 Number of residential out of county placements

County	Total placements	Placements outside North Wales	% of placements outside North Wales
Anglesey	16	5	31%
Gwynedd	16	10	63%
Conwy	16	12	75%
Denbighshire	10	5	50%
Flintshire	31	17	55%
Wrexham	18	8	44%
North Wales	107	57	53%

Source: Market Position Statement (Regional Partnership Board, 2019)

### There is a shortage of local residential providers

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

### **There is a shortage of emergency accommodation**

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

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

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

## **Local market overview**

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

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

What we don't need:

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

What we want:

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

## **Isle of Anglesey**

There are 3 small group home resources on Anglesey with a potential to offer 5 bed spaces for children that require the service. Our 4<sup>th</sup> property is being renovated and the works will be finished by August 2022. This will enable the local authority to offer another 3 potential bed spaces locally to reach a total of 8 bed spaces.

The Ynys Môn small group homes service enables young people with complex needs to remain with their birth family for as long as possible. The aim is to avoid the need for specialist Out of County residential placements in the event of family breakdown.

Our multi-disciplinary team of professionals support the family and care staff who will be responsible for the day to day care of the young person. This provides consistency across the range of care and support provided to the individuals.

## **Outcomes**

- Be able to develop and offer an increased 'shared care' option for individuals and families to delay complete family breakdown.
- Be an opportunity for the young person to develop new skills and experiences that may enable them to move on to alternative supported accommodation to meet their individual needs.
- Be able to provide longer term care and the opportunity to work in partnership at an earlier stage with Adult Learning Disability Services to support them through the transition process.
- Be available to meet the needs of other young people who have complex care and support needs, dependent on their assessed needs.

## **Gwynedd**

There is an identified shortfall of capacity in residential child care settings in Gwynedd and in Wales more widely. Current provision does not address the need and there is no prospect for new provision in the near future. Current providers are very small ones which leads to children having to go to England which can lead to secondary problems, especially as there is no sufficient supply in England either. Social workers encounter difficulties in placing children with intensive needs as providers tend to keep placements for children with less intensive needs. It has been noted that it is possible to ensure a placement for each individual, but that more discussion is needed in order to place those with more intensive needs. The fees are also very high.

The following issues have been raised as barriers to developing residential care:

- There is still a stigma associated with children's care homes.
- Children placed together in a care home setting need to be able to coincide and they can often have very different or conflicting needs which can be very complicated and a daunting prospect for new providers given the financial risks in establishing such a business.
- The substantial increase in housing stock prices in Gwynedd makes a business case in Gwynedd less attractive.

## Conwy

The table below shows the type and number of placements in Conwy over the last five years.

Table 21: Type and number of placements, Conwy, 2017 to 2021

County	2017-18	2018-19	2019-20	2020-21	2021-22	
Foster Placements	-	249	221	212	203	208
Adoption/Placed for Adoption	-	11	16	15	17	22
Independent Living		15	16	23	29	23
Residential Homes/Schools/Hostel		30	31	33	37	48
Young Offenders/Secure Accommodation		1	2	2		
Placed with Parent/other parent		46	41	38	24	39
Est Med/Nursing Care		11	4	1	1	
Family Centre or Mother/baby unit					1	5
Section 38(6) Court Directed Unregulated Placement					3	12
Temporary Placements					3	11

Source: Local authority data collection

The number of looked after children has reduced, this is in parallel with a significant investment and focus on early intervention and preventative services. The Conwy Family Support and Intervention team saw 4,400 referrals between April and September 2021. The team has received an increased number of referrals. Anecdotally there has been an increased complexity of cases.

Key challenges to maintaining provision includes:

- Workforce - Recruitment of child care workers, particularly those with experience is a significant challenge. Experienced social workers look for alternative roles due to the nature of child protection work and the impact that this has on work life

balance and mental health. Local authorities are competing with agencies to attract social workers, who provide higher rates of pay.

- Endeavouring to change the status of looked after children through Special Guardianship Orders (Kinship).
- Working within effective partnerships with Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) continues to be inconsistent while each agency has different perspectives and conflicting priorities – challenging, high risk, time consuming casework.
- Shortage of emergency accommodation and reliance on out of county / temporary placements. This is a key priority for us at this time.

Costs for placements have almost doubled from an average per week of £3,500 in 2017 to some commanding between £6,000 and £7,000 in 2021/22.

## **Denbighshire**

Denbighshire County Council have 20 children or young people placed within care home provisions, more than half of these children and young people are placed outside of Wales. Whilst these children and young people have been appropriately placed in residential settings based on their presenting needs, the lack of local options have resulted in some placements being made at a considerable distance from their home area.

There is a demand for residential placements for children with mental health issues and who present with complex, trauma induced behaviour. Placements with the ability to support children and young people who have experienced Child Sexual Exploitation or Child Criminal Exploitation are also lacking.

## **Flintshire**

Flintshire County Council commission 39 children's care home services, half of these children and young people are placed out of the country in England and Scotland. A focus is needed on initiatives designed to reduce the number of children who are placed out of county from the outset. While children have been appropriately placed in residential settings based on their presenting needs, there had been few viable alternative approaches available which could have contributed to a de-escalation, eliminating the need for out of county placement.

There is a demand for residential services for children who suffer with their mental health, and there is not the sufficient level of care and support with the local authority area to provide this. Services are being sought out of county which incurs further cost implications.

A number of local residential providers also have plans for expansion, which presents another opportunity to work in partnership to align the provision to meet local needs.

Over the next five-year period, in order to ensure stability within the sector, the council aims to:

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

## **Wrexham**

Wrexham County Borough Council do not commission any in house provision for children's care home services, though we do have 33 children and young people placed in out of the county placements in England and Wales. A focus is needed on initiatives designed to reduce the number of children who are placed out of county from the outset.

Utilising Welsh Government Integrated Care Capital Funding, this year we were able to launch our Care Closer to Home Programme which will remain a priority into the next 4 years. The Programme focuses on the purchase, repurposing and/or redevelopment of property either by WCBC or in partnership with Registered Social Landlords to deliver supported living schemes and small children's homes within

Wrexham, enabling people to return to the Borough to meet their housing and/ or care needs and preventing the need to commission out of county placements in future. This year, we secured three properties and more are in the planning under the new and expanded Welsh Government capital grant schemes.

There is a demand for residential services for children who suffer with their mental health, and there is no the sufficient level of care and support within the local authority area to provide this. Services are being sought out of county which incurs further cost implications.

A number of local residential providers also have plans for expansion, which presents another opportunity to work in partnership to align the provision to meet local needs.

Over the coming year, our priorities will focus on:

- Maximising regional capital funding to expand care closer to home and develop non-profit, local care solutions for looked after children.
- Reunification framework project – using NSCC process to improve reunification success.
- Improving discharge planning with dedicated legal and social work support committed to discharge planning and delivery of Discharge Care Orders.
- Continued growth of special guardianship offer and support.
- Launch of 'Reflect' – programme to support reduction in number of recurring pregnancies ending in children being removed.
- Evaluation of rates of pay for Foster Carers to better reflect costs of living and reducing poverty related risks.
- Delivery of Kick start and Supported Lodgings Projects
- Multi Systemic Therapy – continued roll out of MST approach across services to include move-on / step down support for families.
- Early Permanency Process to be established prioritising permanency from the start.

We also aim to;

- Maximise the use of new and increasing regional capital funding to develop new emergency placement accommodation/ units to increase the provision of emergency respite accommodation for those families in crisis.



## In-house children’s care home provision

North Wales secured £3.8m grant funding for a regional transformation programme for children and young people for 2021/22. The strategic partnership of local authorities and health board in each geographical area within the region are overseeing the delivery of the transition programme. In the Central and East areas, two purpose built Residential Assessment Centres will be opened in 2022/23. They will support the provision of in house care closer to home for children with complex behavioural and emotional needs.

Table 22 Additional annual capacity created by Transformation Programme Funding 2021/22

Area	Annual Assessment Placements	Annual Emergency Placements	Care Home placements
West (Anglesey and Gwynedd)	-	-	-
Central (Conwy and Denbighshire)	12	-	12
East (Wrexham and Flintshire)	12	182	4
North Wales	24	182	4

Source: Local authority data

Notes: East and Central annual assessments based on 4, 16 week placements. East annual emergency placements based on 1 placement with a 2 night maximum stay.

### Isle of Anglesey and Gwynedd Councils and BCUHB (West)

There was insufficient demand to justify commissioning a full-time residential family centre unit. Current capacity is adequately fulfilled.

The Transformation Team on Anglesey is a new service that will provide a multi-agency provision of intensive services in Anglesey.

The Team will work with families, aged 0 to 25, who are either at risk of coming into the care of the local authority or where there is a possibility for them to return to the home or remain in the care of their parents / carers safely.

The team consists of a practice leader, psychologist, social worker and two support workers. Their focus is on working with children and young people where a neurological condition may be impacting their behaviours at home, school or out in the community.

## **Denbighshire and Conwy Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (Central)**

### **Bwthyn Y Ddol**

The Bwthyn Y Ddol multi-disciplinary team continues to work with children and young people who are at the edge of care and are at risk of becoming looked after.

The team will initially focus on completing a holistic assessment through a consultation process, in order to recommend a program of interventions.

A new evidence based model of care has been developed through a multi-agency team. This has been tailored to the needs of young people within Denbighshire and Conwy. Early indications suggest that the intervention has helped young people remain at home safely.

A person centred, whole family approach has seen multi-agency collaborative discussions routinely taking place which has promoted partnership work across all agencies.

The new residential assessment centre will provide:

- Four placements for residential assessment
- Short term, unplanned 'emergency' accommodation for two children and young people

It is envisaged that the development will be completed in early 2023.

## **Flintshire and Wrexham Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (East)**

Ty Nyth a Residential Assessment Centre and Children's residential home will provide support underpinned by the Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) Family Intervention Transition (FIT) approach.

The MST (Multi Systemic Therapy) Team became operational in May 2020 during the COVID lockdown, comprising of a supervisor, four therapists and an

administrator. The MST team provides intensive assessment and therapeutic support for young people with significant needs, often with high levels of challenging behaviours across multiple areas which can include verbal and physical aggression, substance abuse, missing from home, self-harm and patterns of school exclusion / risk of exclusion. Each family has a bespoke package of care tailored to the needs of their family, leveraging off existing strengths in the family to provide the best possible opportunity for long term sustainability. The MST Team have met the criteria to operate MST UK model under strict licensing requirement including competency to practice through intensive training. MST is an evidence based clinical model that works with all systems surrounding the child, including education, community influences and any significant adults / others in the family. It builds resilience of the family and offer supports that is accessible '24/7'. Acknowledging that problems in the families can occur at any time of the day or night. Appointments take place in the family home at times that are convenient to the family. The team operates with MST's ethos of 'whatever it takes.' The team provides direct support to build the resilience of families for between 3 and 5 months. The focus is preventing out of home placement by care or custody in youth presenting with anti-social behaviour at home, in the community and/or in school.

The service will provide:

- 4 residential assessment placements at any one time (12 to 16 week length of stay) aged 12 to 17 years.
- Support to young people's carers by the MST FIT team to increase skills and support a smooth transition home.
- Ongoing family support for up to a further 4 months and with other key agencies, such as social care and schools' and other community based support networks. The goal is to improve family independence, reducing long term reliance on statutory services.
- 1 placement for children requiring emergency accommodation (2 night maximum stay).

Park Avenue will offer 4 long term placements for those children who do not suit support in larger settings. Indicatively the strategic partnership are seeking to commit to 6 small group homes over the next 3 years.

# Consideration of market quality

## Regional

Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) are a Welsh National Team working to support Local Authority Children's Social Services Departments to commission and contract placements for Children Looked After. They manage the All Wales Residential Framework for the Provision of Services for Children & Young People Looked After across Wales.

Framework monitoring of Quality Assurance and Risk Management processes within the Framework identifies trends in relation to providers and issues.

## Isle of Anglesey

Anglesey has two registered Small Group Homes – known as “Catrefi Clyd Môn” - that are registered and running – Cartref Clyd Bryn Hwfa, and Cartref Clyd Llanfairpwll, - both of which have been running at full capacity throughout the year, working with young people with complex care needs who have suffered early childhood trauma and struggle with attachment disorders.

Following the success of the first two homes, Anglesey is currently nearing opening its third Catrefi Clyd Môn in Caergybi (Holyhead), a specialist small group home, which will be an opportunity for respite for children supported by the specialist children's services.

During the next twelve months a fourth property will be opened, which is still in its planning and registration phase -Cartrefi Clyd Môn Rhosybol.

There is another project with the planning and registration phase of Catrefi Clyd Môn Llangristiolus, which will be a modern facility specialising in Day Services for its Specialist Children's Services. With the opening of these 2 new facilities in 2022, out of county placements will be reduced further.

The facilities at Cartref Clyd Bryn Hwfa in Llangefni and Cartref Clyd Llanfairpwll were inspected by CIW in 2020 and both were judged to be Excellent.

## **Denbighshire**

Denbighshire is committed to continuous improvement through engaging with and listening to children and young people and their carers and paid staff via surveys and at key stages of the support process for example end of placements.

Children have helped to shape contracts for the Care Leaver Service and Regional Advocacy Services through the evaluation process.

There is an ongoing consultation with Children and Young People in conjunction with children and young people about the language used by professionals when discussing verbally or in writing the lives and circumstances of care experienced children and young people. This is in response to requests by Voices from Care, Young Commissioners and the Family Justice Young People's Board who have highlighted the language used by professionals and its impact on children and young people.

Collaborative Conversations Training has enabled Children's Service practitioners to consider how to build better relationships with people. There was significant practitioner feedback as part of a reflective exercise.

## **Flintshire**

During April 2021, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) completed an assurance check to review how well the Local Authority Social Services continue to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being. The key lines of enquiry were focused within the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and findings / judgements were aligned to these – People – Voice and Control, Prevention, Well-Being, Partnerships and Integration.

## **Current and projected trends**

- Challenges in accessing secure welfare beds and local alternatives that provide crisis intervention and diversion from secure accommodation.
- Challenges in sourcing appropriate local placements for children and young people with complex needs.
- Need for additional and appropriate short term care arrangements and facilities for children. This also includes children with additional needs and on occasions their siblings.

- Children ages 16+ often have complex needs and placement options are limited, a strategic approach is needed in supporting the accommodation and support needs of young people ages 16-18 and for care leavers.

## **Impact of commissioning practices on the market**

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

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

## **Provision of service in the Welsh language**

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

## **Preventative services**

The Population Needs Assessment identified a key priority to support child and adolescent health and well-being with an emphasis on preventative services. This was identified as a key area of priority across the region.

The Integrated Care Fund 2016-22 has been used to explore new and innovative ways to provide early intervention to those in most need. Without this funding children and families may have required increasing interventions from Social Care, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services in both Tier's 3 and 4 and North Wales Police, and may have not been able to remain with their families.

Learning from previous projects should be used to further explore the development of preventative services through the Regional Investment Fund 2022-27.

## **Isle of Anglesey**

The children and families service continues to invest in preventative services to decrease the number of children and young people requiring to be looked after. The main preventative provision is the resilient families team. They provide intensive support for families where substance misuse, domestic abuse and parental mental health difficulties have been identified and contribute to the risks that the children and young people may face at home. Through utilising strength based and psychological informed interventions the team has consistently demonstrated that these are effective ways of decreasing risk and facilitating change that allow families to remain together. In addition, a peer mentor programme has been developed and although it's early days we expect this to be an effective addition to the offer.

The Transformation Team is a new service established in 2021. They will provide a multi-agency provision of intensive services in Anglesey. The Team work with families, aged 0 to 25, who are either at risk of coming into the care of the local authority or where there is a possibility for them to return to the home or remain in the care of their parents / carers safely. The team consists of a practice leader, psychologist, social worker and two support workers. Their focus is on working with children and young people where a neurological condition may be impacting their behaviours at home, school or out in the community. In 2022 the team will be incorporated into the resilient families' team widening the remit and scope of that team.

The service aims to provide at the earliest possible opportunity, early intervention and prevention services to families. Provisions include the team around the family that has recently been increased in size from 6 to 8 support workers. Our commissioned services include GORWEL domestic abuse service, Action for Children emotional wellbeing and young carers, Adferiad parental mental health support and the early Help Hub and One Front door multi-agency meetings.

## **Gwynedd**

Through ICF monies, Action for Children have established the Gwynedd Repatriation and Prevention (RAP) service for Looked After Children which provides a direct therapeutic service to reduce the number of Looked After Children, including

reducing the need for, and the number of expensive out of county placements and to support the development of a high quality local care provision for Gwynedd children. The service also prevents family breakdown including adoption breakdowns which result in the need for a looked after placement.

The predominant need from referrals is to stabilise foster placements, we offer support directly and indirectly via carers and other professionals. The support to foster parents is not just to new foster parents but also to experienced and established carers. As always, collaborative working is key to the success and in these instances working in close partnership with fostering is vital particularly focussing on self-care for foster parents. The RAP service has continued to be active to members of the closed Gwynedd fostering Facebook group, sharing advice and links on a variety of topics from parenting to pandemic issues.

The outcomes of the service are to:

- Reduce the number of Children Looked After.
- Develop a whole systems therapeutic approach to the families at risk of breakdown.
- Prevent children becoming looked after by providing Attachment-Focussed Therapy to enable children, young people and their families to better understand trauma and its impact.
- Ensure children and young people are able to achieve and maintain stable care placements by therapeutically supporting carers to understand and manage behaviours that challenge.
- Support and upskill carers to develop nurturing, therapeutic responses to behaviours which helps stabilise placements and prevent placement breakdown.
- Deliver an accessible, timely solution focussed, non-stigmatising service.
- Provide intensive support and therapeutic input for looked after children who are suitable to be repatriated to their home community in Gwynedd.
- Work with adoptive families to achieve placement stability

The service is person centred in its approach, the creativity and adaptable support of the staff ensures this.

The feedback has been very positive with one example below:

“Absolutely brilliant and invaluable support and advice. The service has been a real support and something we feel confident in and know that their always there for us



as a family to help guide us through the bad times and for us to just vent our frustrations to! their level of commitment to us shows in their aftercare contact making sure we are ok after contacts and bad weekends. Cannot rate this service highly enough”

## Conwy

### Youth Justice

- Referral orders – 38 young people engaged in the last 6 months, 4 re-offended
- Enhanced Restorative Justice Work - 66 initial referrals
- Supported 78 people who had been harmed and then 44 of the young people (perpetrators) were supported to engage in specific interventions guided by the victim’s views to develop an understanding of the impact of their behaviour
- No young people that engaged within the project were made subject to custodial sentence

Table 23 Conwy Youth Justice Referrals, April to September 2021

Type of referral	Number
Yellow Cards	203
Flat Community Resolution	13
Prevention referrals	44
Community Resolution +	24
Youth Caution	0
Youth Conditional Caution	6
<b>Total</b>	<b>290</b>

Source: Local authority data

## Denbighshire

2021 saw the establishment, via Children and Young People’s Transformation Programme funding of LIFT (Local Integrated Family Team). LIFT offers targeted early support for families experiencing difficulties with managing emotional and behavioural difficulties.

The team, which includes wellbeing navigators, occupational therapists, behavioural support specialists and a psychologist, works with families to understand the challenging behaviour and act as a source of information and support to help

develop and implement positive behavioural plans and to provide specialist consultation when required.

The multi-agency team consisting of multi-disciplinary professionals have developed a specific model of care and a partnership approach to support families in Denbighshire and Conwy. They are now operational and working directly with children and young people and their families.

The programme has also upskilled 78 local authority and health staff in therapies that the team will be using, this has encouraged a common approach and shared language, providing consistency across partner agencies and teams. The independent evaluation of the project stated:

- Strong partnership approach at senior level was a key driver in getting the new services up and running.
- Partner agency staff were impressed at how quickly the LIFT team came back to them in response to referrals and requests for advice and guidance.
- Opportunities for consultations and joint working which they felt was contributing to learning and development for the children's workforce.
- Families have engaged well.

Feedback from parents:

- "Life is so much better at home now since [staff members] made that video for us"
- "M is so much more in touch with his feelings as I am since LIFT has been helping us, his behaviour has also improved"
- "It has been lovely to have been listened to and not judged"

During the period where the Integrated Care Fund was provided to Denbighshire the provision of this edge of care support has worked with 122 families (accounting for 200 children).

### **Integrated Families First / Flying Start programme (IFFFS)**

The IFFFS programme provides a range of Family and Parenting Support in Denbighshire. We aim to provide early intervention and prevention services for vulnerable families to avoid escalation and ensure children in our most deprived areas receive extra help.

In 2021-22, our Families First services received 302 referrals. We had an average monthly waiting list of 18, and an average waiting time of 26 days from receipt of referral to allocation of a worker. We supported 369 families and newly assessed 114 families' needs.

The Team Around the Family (TAF) coordinates multiple services and interventions around individual families, securing engagement, assessing need and planning support. Amidst ongoing issues and fluctuating needs around Covid-19, to date the TAF team have successfully concluded 29 action plans with families. Using a Welsh Government piloted methodology, we estimated the potential cost savings achieved by TAF for other services. The most recent available figures for January to December 2021 show savings of £122,823.

Table 24 Potential cost savings from TAF to services, January to December 2021

Service area	Estimated savings	Issues addressed
Crime	£52,272	Antisocial behaviour, domestic abuse & criminal behaviour
Education	£22,264	Absence, exclusion & school readiness
Health	£6,187	Drug misuse
Mental health	£18,052	Mental health issues in children, young people & adults
Employment	£24,048	Support to gain employment
<b>Total</b>	<b>£122,823</b>	

Source: Local authority data

In 2021, our Flying Start Health Visitors supported 1,182 children under 4 in the most multi-deprived parts of Prestatyn, Rhyl and Denbigh. We supported a further 52 families across the county through Outreach. Our Speech and Language therapists helped 102 children alongside our Early Language Development team, who delivered Portage and Laugh and Learn interventions to 36 children. From January to December 2021 we provided 31,998 free childcare sessions to 366 children, and provided 1,348 additional sessions.

Our Health Visitors contribute significantly to safeguarding children in Denbighshire. From January to December 2021 the team made 218 contacts with children in Child

Protection measures, 135 contacts with children with a Care & Support Plan and 115 with Looked After Children. They made 639 contacts with children needing a Tier 3 Intensive service.

Table 25 Denbighshire health visitor activities, 2021

Activity	Number
Child Protection Referrals	102
Court Reports / Police Statements	12
Case Conference reports/attended	77
MARAC Reports	26
Looked After Children Reviews attended	29
Safeguarding Pre-Birth Assessments	97
Safeguarding related meetings attended	337

Source: Local authority data

In January we appointed a new Safeguarding Nurse who attended four Case Conferences and six professionals' meetings (Core Groups/Care & Support Plans/Looked After Children).

## Flintshire

### REFLECT

The REFLECT Service supports women who have had one or more children removed through care proceedings and are at high risk of having children who will be subject to the same experience.

The Early Help Hub is a multi-agency early help resource for children and families demonstrating two or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Partners include Social Services, Police, Health, Youth Justice, Housing, Flintshire Customer Connects, Education, Family Information Service, Early Years Support and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC).

The Early Help Hub received 2,641 referrals between April 2020 and end of March 2021 and the team have adapted to meet needs during the pandemic. All Early Help Hub members quickly reverted to having discussions online and agencies adapted well during lockdown and there was no interruption with meetings. Referrals slowed down slightly during April/May but started to pick back up again from June.

## **Parent and Child Together Placement'**

The 'Parent and Child Together Placement' recruitment campaign is beginning to come to fruition. This aims to keep children with their parents in a specially assessed foster care setting.

Flintshire closely scrutinise decisions about whether older young people should be taken into care and, in particular, what difference can be achieved at this relatively late stage.

## **Flintshire Meeting Service**

Flintshire Meeting Services approach is aimed at keeping families together wherever possible. Families are offered a Family Group Meeting at the earliest opportunity, to prevent them from reaching crisis. Family Group Meetings explore if wider family members or connected persons would be willing to put themselves forward to be assessed to care for the child. Further funding has been made available to strengthen this approach. We have seen an increase in referrals to the service and it's been noted that families during this period required additional support due to the impact of COVID19 and the strain and increased pressure / stress on family life. We have also seen a sharp increase in referrals from statutory services which again highlights the strain the pandemic has and is having on families.

## **Family Information Service (FISF)**

The Family Information Service is a statutory local authority service providing free and impartial information, advice and guidance to families (and those working with families) on a range of topics and in various formats.

Topics include health, education, leisure, finance and registered childcare. The service processes an average of 20,000 enquiries each quarter either face to face, by telephone and email or on the website and via social media.

## **Wrexham**

Throughout the year, the Department has made steady progress in the development of early intervention and preventative services. In November 2021, the Early Help and Prevention Framework document was published, following a multi-agency launch along with the Children's Services Threshold document.

The Prevention and Early Help Framework document is to assist all when planning Prevention and Early Intervention Services. It supports in considering who needs to be involved, what the principles are that will drive discussions and decisions and it enables individuals to develop a clear business case for enhancing, expanding or repurposing current services.

Since the development of the Prevention and Early Help Framework, a new Prevention and Early Help Partnership has been established and work is currently underway to develop a strategy that will help to focus both the Council's and its Partner's on ensuring that support to children, young people and families is available to them before issues worsen. It aims to help children, young people and families to help themselves in the first instance but when more help is needed, we aim to provide the right support much earlier. Further development of the Prevention and Early Help Partnership will continue throughout the coming year.

# 6. Fostering services

## Population overview

### **The number of children is predicted to decrease**

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

The Market Position Statement update (2021) gave an overview of key statistics;

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

### **Demand for foster care has increased**

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

Table 26: Number of children looked after in foster placements at 31 March

Local council	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020
Anglesey	90	100	100	90	110
Gwynedd	145	145	145	165	200
Conwy	120	125	150	140	140
Denbighshire	125	110	110	115	115
Flintshire	135	140	135	150	140
Wrexham	120	135	170	175	240
North Wales	735	755	810	835	945
Wales	4,250	4,425	4,700	4,840	4,990

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Children looked after by local authorities in foster placements. Stats Wales, Welsh Government

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

Local authorities have in-house foster care places and independent fostering agencies providing places. Some of the independent foster agencies are charities or co-operatives. The table below shows the number and percentage for each type of foster placement provision, broken down by Local Authority.

Table 27: Number of foster placements in the local authority area commissioned by provider type

Local council	In House (number)	Independent provider (number)	Total (number)	In House (percentage)	Independent provider (percentage)
Anglesey	37	32	69	54%	46%
Gwynedd	98	31	129	76%	24%
Conwy	82	41	123	67%	33%
Denbighshire	69	19	88	78%	22%
Flintshire	55	13	68	81%	19%
Wrexham	119	21	140	85%	15%
North Wales	460	157	617	75%	25%

Source: Provided by each local authority



## **Predicted increased demand for foster parents**

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

## **Sufficiency issues for some children**

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

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

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

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

## **The National Fostering Framework**

The National Fostering Framework (2018) finds children who live with foster carers in their own locality more likely to thrive and children in local authority provision more likely to stay in their home authority, enabling them to maintain important links. It is vital local authorities increase local placements and reduce out of area placements. According to the National Fostering Framework (2018), connected fostering (with family or friends) has seen increased demand. It also finds that local authority placements have better outcomes for children. The framework states that local authorities need to be able to have capacity to facilitate this, or otherwise ensure that the child has opportunities to maintain connections if placed in alternative fostering.

# Market overview

## Regional market overview

The table below shows a breakdown of fostering provision by provider type.

Table 28: Fostering placements, beds and market share by provider type.

Provider Type	Market share (Percentage)	Placements (number)	Care settings (number)
In House	62%	776	453
Private	37%	469	206
Third sector	1%	16	7
North Wales	100%	1261	666

Source: CCSR data accessed 31/05/22

## Isle of Anglesey market overview

The table shows how many children in Anglesey are increasingly being placed outside of their local authority.

Table 29: Number of children in foster placements by area - Anglesey

Location of placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
Inside local authority	65	60	70	80	-45
Outside local authority (Wales)	30	30	30	20	50
Outside Wales	0	0	0	0	0

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Table 30: Number of children in foster placements by type - Anglesey

Type of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change no
With relative/ friend, inside local authority	30	25	25	35	5
With local authority, inside local authority	20	20	40	40	20
With agency, inside local authority	15	15	10	10	-5
With relative/ friend, outside local authority	5	0	0	0	-5
With local authority, outside local authority	0	0	0	0	0
With agency, outside local authority	25	25	25	25	0

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

## Gwynedd market overview

Figures in the table below, show children in the Gwynedd area have been increasingly placed into foster placements within Gwynedd. The number placed outside of Gwynedd but still in Wales has reduced. However, placements outside of Wales have increased.

Table 31: Number of children in foster placements by area - Gwynedd

Location of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
Within Local Authority	110	120	140	135	25
Outside Local Authority Wales	35	40	50	50	15
Outside Wales	0	5	5	15	15

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

The figures below show children in Gwynedd are increasingly placed into foster placements both within and outside Gwynedd. They have also seen increased numbers of placements with family/friends.

Table 32: Number of children in foster placements by type - Gwynedd

Type of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
With relative/ friend, within local authority	35	50	50	45	10
With local authority, within local authority	70	65	85	85	15
With agency, within local authority	0	0	0	0	0
With relative/ friend, outside local authority	5	10	15	25	20
With local authority, outside local authority	10	15	15	10	0
With agency, outside local authority	20	20	30	30	10

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Gwynedd local authority themselves report a “relatively good provision” of foster placements available within the county, when compared to other provision but recognise there is potential for shortages in foster carers in the near future. The local authority anticipate approximately 10 to 12 new foster placements would be required each year to maintain this and at least 18 to 20 to improve provision.

### Conwy market overview

Conwy has increased foster placements inside the local authority and those outside of Wales have reduced significantly. However, those outside of Conwy but still in Wales have increased, see figures below.

Table 33: Number of children in foster placements by area - Conwy

Location of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
Inside Local Authority	95	85	100	100	5
Outside Local Authority Wales	20	35	35	35	15
Outside Wales	35	25	5	5	-30

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Conwy has seen a reduction in foster placements with the local authority and a small increase in agency placements.

Table 34: Number of children in foster placements by type - Conwy

Type of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
With relative/ friend, inside local authority	25	20	15	20	-5
With local authority, inside local authority	65	60	55	55	-10
With agency, inside local authority	25	30	35	30	5
With relative/ friend, outside local authority	10	10	10	15	5
With local authority, outside local authority	0	0	0	0	0
With agency, outside local authority	20	20	20	20	0

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Conwy report that both emergency and longer term placements are needed urgently. The local authority recognises the importance of local placements for children, they are considering a range of options to increase provision in the county and reduce reliance on costly temporary arrangements and out of county placements that are far from the family.

## Denbighshire market overview

The figures in the table below show placements for children from Denbighshire have increased both inside Denbighshire and outside of Denbighshire but still in Wales.

Table 35: Number of children in foster placements by area - Denbighshire

Location of placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
Inside local authority	85	90	90	90	5
Outside local authority Wales	15	15	15	20	5
Outside Wales	10	10	10	10	0

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Denbighshire has seen increased agency use inside and outside of the area and increased placements with family/friends out of area.

Table 36: Number of children in foster placements by type - Denbighshire

Type of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
With relative/ friend, inside local authority	20	20	20	20	0
With local authority, inside local authority	60	70	65	65	5
With agency, inside local authority	0	5	10	5	5
With relative/ friend, outside local authority	5	10	10	10	5
With local authority, outside local authority	10	5	0	0	-10
With agency, outside local authority	10	10	10	15	5

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Denbighshire local authority have identified a need to increase care capacity to meet population needs within Denbighshire for foster care services. They also recognise a shortage in the availability of overnight respite accommodation for children with complex disabilities.

## Flintshire market overview

In Flintshire children have increasingly been placed outside of Flintshire both in Wales and outside of Wales. The figures also show a reduction in placements in Flintshire.

Table 37: Number of children in foster placements by area - Flintshire

Location of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
Inside Local Authority	95	95	90	90	-5
Outside Local Authority Wales	25	35	30	45	20
Outside Wales	15	20	15	20	5

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Data in the table below shows a considerable increase in the use of agencies for Flintshire both inside and outside of the local authority.

Table 38: Number of children in foster placements by type - Flintshire

Type of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
With relative/ friend, inside local authority	35	35	35	30	-5
With local authority, inside local authority	60	60	50	55	-5
With agency, inside local authority	5	5	5	15	10
With relative/ friend, outside local authority	15	15	15	15	0
With local authority, outside local authority	15	15	10	15	0
With agency, outside local authority	5	15	20	25	20

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Flintshire report as of 31 March 2021, there were 109 children and young people in foster placements within and outside the Local Authority Area (not including kinship

placements) and as of 16 February 2022, this figure was 102. They state they are currently able to look after the majority of children under 8 within in house fostering services.

The local authority identified the following market sufficiency issues:

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

## Wrexham market overview

The table shows how there has been an increase in all types of placements in Wrexham, including children placed out of area.

Table 39: Number of children in foster placements by area - Wrexham

Location of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
Inside Local Authority	115	120	145	150	35
Outside Local Authority Wales	30	40	65	75	45
Outside Wales	20	15	20	25	5

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. Stats Wales, Welsh Government

The table below demonstrates a sharp increase in the use of agencies for Wrexham, with the steepest increase outside of the local authority.



Table 40: Number of children in foster placements by type - Wrexham

Type of Placement	2018	2019	2020	2021	Change No
With relative/ friend, inside local authority	60	70	75	80	20
With local authority, inside local authority	65	55	70	70	5
With agency, inside local authority	15	20	25	30	15
With relative/ friend, outside local authority	0	0	0	0	0
With local authority, outside local authority	20	20	15	15	-5
With agency, outside local authority	15	15	40	55	40

Numbers have been rounded so may not sum.

Source: Looked After Children Census. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Progress has been made in the implementation of the 4C's Framework and a Placement Officer has been appointed to manage the Framework database within Wrexham. The usage and expectations of the 4C's Framework continues to be embedded into practice as evidence as best practice. We have experienced an increased demand for placements able to meet the need of highly complex young people. This has led to an increase in the number and cost of such placements. In order to deliver against the not for profit agenda, further investment will be needed in the development of local authority residential care.

Wrexham see reducing the number of looked after children as a priority, as well as removing profit from the children's placement market. The local authority also recognises a lack of intermediate or short term placements for children.

## Market stability

### Regional challenges

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

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

### **Isle of Anglesey market stability**

The local authority recognises the following as issues affecting the future stability of the fostering service:

- Workforce – recruitment, retention, age profile of workforce, costs
- Supply and choices available
- Can the cost of living crisis impact the numbers of looked after children and therefore hamper the projection of decrease in demand?
- Impact of children seeking asylum on resources including placements and support available.
- Impact of unplanned arrivals to the Port of Holyhead.

### **Gwynedd market stability**

Gwynedd have identified several factors that may influence fostering stability:

- Recruitment and retention of staff
- Potential shortage of foster placements, an estimated 10-12 new placements needed each year to maintain and at least 18-20 to improve provision
- Finance - concerns around maintaining quality services with limited resources
- Lack of funding often results in using out of county providers which results in higher costs contributing further to the problem

### **Conwy market stability**

Conwy refer to key issues around future stability of their fostering service:

- Recruitment and retention (linked to pay and conditions but not exclusively)
- Emergency and longer term placements in county are needed urgently

## **Denbighshire market stability**

Denbighshire recognises some key factors that may affect stability of the service:

- Increase in capacity to meet population needs within Denbighshire
- Staffing and recruitment issues
- Specialist training and knowledge
- Possibly long term funding problems
- Increased complexity of need
- Supply of specialist care not meeting demand
- Overnight respite care for children with complex disabilities
- Lack of placements for children with challenging/complex behaviour

## **Sustainability of provision**

- Denbighshire recognises the following issues affecting sustainability of the service: Recruitment of in-house foster carers has been impacted by the pandemic with a lack of applicants coming forward, resulting in increased use of Independent Fostering Providers.
- Lack of availability has resulted in no offer or placements at a considerable distance, which is not always in the best interest of the young person.
- Children who require a placement but where foster care cannot be sourced are being escalated into residential care, but there is placement insufficiency and a perceived reluctance to offer placements to young people with complex needs. This can result in a placement at a distance away.
- Particular pressure if a child/young person presents with self-harm or suicidal ideation, providers show reluctance to offer placements to and emergency provision is extremely limited.

## **Preventative actions for children on the edge of care**

During the period where the integrated care fund supported the provision of edge of care support, there were 122 families (200 children) supported including:

7 parents and 2 foster carers (19 children) attended new Parent Participation Group (collaboration with Parents and Carers Against Exploitation, North Wales Police, Health colleagues and Denbighshire Safeguarding Lead). Of these children, 6 no longer reach criteria for multi-agency oversight within Denbighshire's Exploitation Panel and 2 have been closed to social care.

2 children in long-term foster placements received an intensive intervention which stabilised their placement and enabled the foster carer and parent to have a shared understanding of each child's individual needs.

16 staff across Social Care, Early Intervention and Housing attended Dialectal Behavioural Therapy (DBT) Skills training and the Therapeutic Service will mentor these staff to develop DBT Skills groups for Foster and Kinship Carers, Looked After Children, Care Leavers and Semi-Independent and Homelessness Projects.

1 young person received an intensive intervention from the Therapeutic Service following police colleagues using their Powers of Police Protection. The young person required short-term foster care and was rehabilitated back to their family within 6 weeks, they are now closed to Social Care.

## Engagement

Denbighshire list the following engagements used to help improve quality of service:

- A quality of care evaluation will be carried out of Denbighshire Fostering Service in April and May 2022. Questionnaires will be sent to gain views of children/young people, foster carers, kinship carers, panel members and parents, the results will assist in making improvements where required as well as recognising good practice.
- Closed Facebook group for foster carers developed with views from foster carers and is regularly being updated with information. Creating the page/group has provided another avenue to obtain feedback, information is circulated to a larger geographical area and accessibility has improved.
- Two children/young people's forums meet on a regular basis. They have not been able to meet over the last year, but staff running the forums kept in touch regularly.
- Kids in Care Young People's Forum (KIC Club) for young people aged 8 to 15 living with foster carers. They meet and do activities during half terms, share their experiences, say what is going well and what they would like to change.
- KWC Club (Kids who care) is a group of children/young people whose parents foster and are also part of the fostering process. They meet during half term, share experiences, say what's going well and what they would like to change.
- Foster carers virtual coffee mornings, invites were sent with a package containing a tea bag and packet of biscuits. To allow better conversation, foster carers were

split into groups based on their supervising social worker. Facilitated by the supervising social worker with drop-in appearances from; Head of Service, Service Manager, Fostering Team Manager and Placement Commissioning Officer/Recruitment Officer. It had good attendance, lots of laughter, discussion and feedback from attendees was very positive.

- The Fostering Service have increased the level of communication with Foster Carers with a regular newsletter and the Denbighshire Fostering Service Competition, whereby children have been asked for Christmas cards to be designed, pebbles to be painted and a Sunflower growing competition.

### **Flintshire market stability**

Flintshire identified several issues impacting the stability of fostering services:

- Foster carers with skills/experience to support teenagers and sibling groups
- Increase in 14, 15 and 16 year olds entering care
- Parent and child placements

### **Action taken to improve stability**

Recruitment of foster parents has been identified as an issue for Flintshire, in response the [Foster with Flintshire](#) portal has been developed to promote Fostering roles. The site contains a wealth of information, resources and stories from some of Flintshire's current foster parents. They have also targeted their recruitment strategy to address demand for foster parents with skills and experience to support children age 12 and over.

### **Mockingbird Programme**

Flintshire was the first council in Wales to introduce the evidence-based Mockingbird model for foster placements. The programme nurtures the relationships between children, young people and foster families supporting them to build a resilient and caring community of six to ten satellite families called a constellation. The aim of the model is to improve foster care and outcomes for fostered young people.

### **Action for Children - Repatriation and Prevention (RAP) Service**

The service provides intensive therapeutic support for Children Looked After with support from experienced foster carers. The service is a partnership between the local authority, health, CAMHS and Action for Children.

The aims of the service are to:

- Prevent placement breakdown and escalation to crisis point leading to out-of-county placements
- Return young people to stable placements in their home
- Ensure looked after children can access educational opportunities
- Increase resilience and confidence in children and carers

### **Adaptations to Foster Carers Homes Policy**

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

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

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

**Placement stability meetings** - Facilitated in house, when issues with maintaining a placement arise and the Independent Fostering Agency chair when requested.

**Disruption meetings** - The family group meeting service will bring together stakeholders and look at lessons learnt.

### **Wrexham market stability**

Wrexham identified the following issues that may impact stability of fostering:

- A need to reduce the number of looked after children
- Removing profit from children's placement market
- Intermediate/short term care placements
- Staffing shortages
- Lack of appropriate placements

Carers are needed to support teenagers and mother and babies in the Wrexham area. To recruit carers to meet these needs, the local authority have;

- Commenced a review of rates of pay for carers, proposing an increased rate for specialist/skilled carers able to care for children with complex needs.
- Carried out a recruitment campaign using buses, billboards and social media.

Wrexham's Care Leavers Offer has been progressed throughout the year and the development of accommodation pathways for young people are underway. This will provide varying degrees of support on their pathway to independence and their own tenancy.

This will be achieved by developing in-house services including;

- Supported Lodging's Service
- Kick Start Project
- Step Down Project
- Use of a training flat.

The Leaving Care Team are located in accessible 'info shop' with their social workers while being able to take advantage of the 'one stop shop' for any identified areas of support including access to funding grants and employment support.

## **Consideration of market quality**

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

- 44% of independent and 51% of local authority foster carers said they were not supported to maintain contact with children they had cared for. Foster carers perceived this as 'cruel', ending significant relationships for children who have experienced so much loss already.
- Some fostering services are not maintaining foster carer approval, even if they intend to continue fostering. This, and dropping financial support, are barriers to young people entering 'When I am Ready'.

- 20% independent and 12% local authority foster carers have no children in their care. It recommended better use of foster carers skills to meet the needs of children.
- 57% local authority foster carers had an agreed learning and development plan, 31% did not and 12% didn't know. 66% independent foster carers had a learning and development plan, 22% didn't and 12% didn't know.
- Local authority foster approvals were more restrictive and limited than independent approvals, it recommends local authorities assessments use broader approval statuses, robust matching procedures and placement stability processes.
- Foster carers would like to build relationships with social workers and children in their care to have stability and continuity of social worker. Over the previous two years, 53% of foster carers had one supervising social worker, 29% had two, 12% had three and 6% had four or more.
- Foster carers felt 'dismissed', 'ignored' and their role is not valued by the social care workforce. Lack of respect for their commitment, skills and dedication is a long-term, well reported issue in fostering.
- Foster carers want allowances to cover the full cost of caring for a child and payment reflecting their value as a member of the team around the child. Sufficient payments are a must to attract new skilled, committed foster carers.
- Lack of placement choice. To secure good matches for children, services would need to see a significant increase in access to local, quality placements.
- Staffing levels are not sufficient to provide required support for foster families. Services would like staffing to enable best practice and improve standards.
- Trauma-informed practice – concerns about access to training and additional services for those caring for traumatised children. Services would like children looked after to have priority status for services across health and education.
- Support for foster carers with improved peer support services and out of hours provision. Services with this support saw improved retention and stability.

## Current and projected trends

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

- Increased demand for placements
- Lack of places for older children
- Lack of places for children with complex care plans/behavioural issues



- Lack of foster parents with skills to support children with complex needs
- Projected increase in demand for placements
- Predicted potential shortage of placements, supply not matching demand

## Welsh language

A shortage of Welsh speaking foster parents was identified in Flintshire.

The provision of Welsh language across the rest of North Wales will be discussed within the children's services chapter of this report.

## Other provision

There is a significant lack of foster or residential placements for children and young people with challenging or complex behaviour.

Recruitment of in-house foster carers has been impacted by the pandemic with a lack of applicants coming forward. This has resulted in an increased use of Independent Fostering Providers.

Lack of availability has resulted in no offer or placements only at a considerable distance, which is not always in the best interest of the young person.

Children who require a placement but where foster care cannot be sourced are being escalated into residential care, but there is both placement insufficiency and a perceived reluctance to offer placements to young people with complex needs. Again this can result in a placement at a distance away.

There is particular pressure if the child/young person presents with self-harm or suicidal ideation, with providers showing reluctance to offer placements to this cohort. Emergency provision is extremely limited.

## Workforce

The National Fostering Framework (2018) highlighted a loss in the number of approved foster households. The framework states improvements need to be made to increase; enquiries, conversions, approvals and retention of foster parents.

The table below shows numbers of foster parents and places have seen a slight increase overall across North Wales. However, Gwynedd and Denbighshire saw a

drop in both the number of foster parents and places available, and Flintshire saw a drop in foster parents but increase in places. If reductions in foster parents or places continue this could result in insufficient spaces for children in these local authorities.

Table 41: Number of approved foster spaces as of 31 March

Local council	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Anglesey	86	69	43
Gwynedd	164	178	198
Conwy	113	130	127
Denbighshire	156	155	149
Flintshire	133	157	156
Wrexham	161	172	166
North Wales	813	861	839
Wales	4,075	4,170	4,317

Source: Children Receiving Care and Support. StatsWales, Welsh Government

Table 42: Number of approved foster parents as of 31 March

Local council	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Anglesey	45	38	39
Gwynedd	103	111	120
Conwy	70	84	80
Denbighshire	78	77	74
Flintshire	77	77	76
Wrexham	100	112	110
North Wales	473	499	499
Wales	2,347	2,443	2,462

Source: Children Receiving Care and Support. StatsWales, Welsh Government

### **Carer skill set & training desired:**

Carers who are able to work with our internal services and are trained in the delivery of therapeutic trauma informed care.

Carers who are aware of the impact of county lines and have received training to support children who are vulnerable to exploitation via these gangs. This includes the resilience to work with children who are being exploited by gangs, frequently abscond and can display verbal and sometimes physical aggression.

- Resilient & trained to work with childhood trauma, absconding, exploitation and self-harm behaviours.
- Carers who are trained to understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on children who they care for.
- Carers who are trained in crisis intervention, and can work calmly under the pressure of emergency planning.
- Resilient when faced with threat of physical harm & trained in de-escalation, with positive behaviour management planning, minimising use of restraints
- Carers with the ability to speak Welsh or commitment to learn.

## **Social value**

Three providers offer a total of 16 beds in 7 care settings across the region, this accounts for 1.3% of market.

### **Taking profit out of care for looked after children**

One of the wellbeing objectives established within the Welsh Government Programme 2021-2016 is to protect, rebuild and develop our services for children and young people. A key priority in this area of work is to eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after.

Commissioning placements to independent foster agencies can impact on provisions being provided from within the local authority., Local authorities are keen to work in partnership with independent care providers to ensure that both the in-house and independent sector market function to meet foster care needs. Flintshire local authority highlighted this as a potential risk and stated how they were focusing the use of independent foster agencies for those services that they struggle to provide with local authority services.

The foster care allowances survey from The Fostering Network (2020) found even though all local authorities in Wales are paying at or above the national minimum allowance, foster carers feel their current allowance does not meet the full costs of looking after a child. The network recommend foster payments must be transparent

so it is clear to foster carers how much constitutes the allowance, and must be spent on the child, and how much constitutes the fee and is payment for the foster carer's time and skills.

# 7. Adoption services

## North Wales Adoption Service overview

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

Services provided by the adoption service include:

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

## Population overview

The table below shows the number of looked after children who were placed for adoption in each local authority. It is worth noting that the service has undergone significant transformation since 2020, therefore it is difficult to compare local data and it does not reflect the service now.

Table 43: Number of children looked after placed for adoption by local authority 2020/21

Local Council	No of Children
Anglesey	6
Gwynedd	2
Conwy	17
Denbighshire	7
Flintshire	1
Wrexham	11
North Wales	44

Source: Figures provided by each local authority

## Current and predicted trends

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

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

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

- Adults requesting their birth records to find their birth parents was shut down during the pandemic, majority of services have resumed but there is a backlog.
- Staffing - 43 staff, 10 are off or due to go off on maternity leave, it is difficult to recruit to fixed term posts so the ability to assess may be impacted in 2022/23.

## Quality reports

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

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

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

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

# 8. Unpaid carers

## Population overview

Under the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 carers have the same rights as those they care for and local councils have a duty to assess their needs and promote their well-being. Supporting unpaid carers is a preventative measure for both the individual carer and the sustainability of health and care services.

There are around 79,000 people of all ages providing unpaid care in North Wales, according to the 2011 census, and we expect this number to be increasing as the need for care and support increases. More unpaid carers came forward during the pandemic to access support.

Much of the support that unpaid carers need is provided through care to the person they care for, so lack of provision in the care market leads to additional demands on unpaid carers. The population assessment identified that issues within wider social care workforce recruitment and retention is leading to additional demands on unpaid carers. Specifically, this is impacting the complexity of care meaning that unpaid carers are experiencing caring responsibilities with higher needs of care. Other priorities were the early identification of carers, carer breaks (respite care), improving unpaid carer assessments and digital inclusion.

## Market sufficiency

The number of carers is increasing. The largest growth is in those carers providing between 20 and 49 hours a week. There has also been a rise in the number of carers providing 50 or more hours of care per week, in Denbighshire approximately 46% of these carers are over 65 years. It is these carers who are likely to have more intensive caring roles and who will have the greater support needs.

These demographic trends are reflected in the increasing number of people living with long term conditions including learning disabilities, dementia and mental health conditions, as well as a general growth in the older population.



We know from talking to unpaid carers and the mapping work that has been done, that some carers who need support find it difficult to get alternative care and many have been unable to have a break for a long time, due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic.

“A short break is any break which strengthens and /or sustains informal caring relationships and enhances wellbeing of carers and people they support” Carers Trust Wales, Road to Respite Report, July 2021.

Welsh Government awarded local authorities a carers respite grant in 2021-22, with emphasis on supporting the development of flexible and person centred forms of respite instead of the more traditional sitting service or replacement care support.

The population needs assessment identified a wide range of services provided across the region to support carers. The Regional Project Manager leading on carers within the regional collaboration team continually maps the full range of services available to carers across North Wales, identifying any areas of duplication and also collaborative opportunities across all six councils and the health board.

In addition to the need for more carer breaks (respite care) provision across the region, the following local needs have been identified:

The following factors have an impact on unpaid carers;

- Gaps in general provision in services for carers of older people and the individuals receiving care.
- Waiting lists for domiciliary care support in each part of Gwynedd because of a lack of provision.
- Gaps in the provision for short term respite from caring when the individual who is being cared for has needs that cannot be met by voluntary/third sector support.
- day centres have been closed during the COVID period – we have been working to provide alternative support on a 1:1 basis. We are reopening day centres gradually and in the process of remodelling day care services for older people developing a more local provision for a smaller number of individuals.
- Respite care in residential homes came to an end during the COVID period as a result of the regulations. This provision has started again, but staffing challenges exist in the Council’s eleven residential homes.
- There are areas where there is a high percentage within the population of older people, and a low percentage of working age population – a recruitment

challenge and competing with other local services/younger individuals leaving the area for work opportunities.

- The geography of the area contributes to the gaps, with a number dependent on public transport for access to appropriate support.

## **Ynys Môn**

The Council are committed to supporting unpaid carers by planning for the future. Forward Thinking Forward Planning is a project within Carers Outreach funded by Local Authority. The project focuses on having conversations with a carer about their current and future needs. Having a conversation at the earliest possible stage allows time to identify and arrange any changes or adaptations they require to support the person they care for, and themselves as the carer.

## **Gwynedd**

The learning disability service has succeeded in continuing to offer respite for services over the Covid period. Over the past six months we have succeeded in increasing this provision, introducing individuals to respite for the first time e.g. transition age individuals, as well as being able to offer regular stays for individuals living at home with unpaid carers/family.

The demand for counselling services provided by the third sector (Carers Outreach) is substantially more than the provision which is currently available.

Day opportunities and support services are continuing to face a challenge regarding the staffing deficit/recruitment therefore a number of individuals are receiving less days/hours.

Use of a holiday bungalow (provided by Antur Waunfawr) has been extended for another six months, with the offer to anyone who is caring in Gwynedd to arrange a free short stay. A number of carers have taken advantage of this.

The Gwynedd community resilience work programme is looking at developing information hubs/community enterprises to meet needs on a local level.

There are respite opportunities for individuals with learning disabilities available through the Gwynedd and Môn Shared Lives Scheme and Seren Cyf. Work is continuing through the community hubs mentioned above to offer opportunities and activities locally and also through our Llwybrau Llesiant Team.

## **Denbighshire**

There is increasing demand for more flexible provision of alternative and respite care covering weekends, overnight or pre-planned periods such as 'Respitivity' for older adults and for both children and adults with complex disabilities, to reduce carer breakdown, to reduce emergency admissions to residential care and to provide more life choices.

## **Flintshire**

- Demand for respite and support for parent carers is a growing service demand, given the complexity of multiple health conditions some children have, as well as a high prevalence of children with Neurodevelopmental Conditions.
- Sourcing respite for children and adults with complex needs, including health needs, remains an ongoing challenge.
- Finding suitable Personal Assistants can be a challenge and an area that we need to develop as well as expanding community based support to build family resilience and capacity to sustain their caring role. Supporting the recruitment of Personal Assistants
- Local building based respite opportunities were severely impacted by the pandemic, with only emergency places being offered.

## **Wrexham**

Engagement with unpaid carers in Wrexham has highlighted a number of significant challenges since the pandemic. Action plans have been developed in partnership with unpaid carers and support organisations. In order to drive the agenda forward, funding for an Unpaid Carers Lead Officer has been secured from the Regional Investment Fund 22/23.

The Unpaid Carers Direct Payment Scheme was launched in 2021/22. 31 payments were made last year. This enabled unpaid carers to purchase respite solutions which meet their needs flexibly.

## **Market stability**

A wide range of support for unpaid carers in North Wales is grant funded or commissioned to third and voluntary sector organisations who have a long and

valued history of supporting unpaid carers. The third and voluntary sector can effectively draw in external funding to develop services for unpaid carers to provide added value to service provision. However, a reliance on grant funding can put the sustainability of some services at risk. Some carers services in North Wales are commissioned regionally or sub-regionally to try to streamline the commissioning and reporting requirements for organisations that work across the region.

The Population Needs Assessment identified that social value delivery models and added social value can be achieved through the shared experience of peer-carers, mutual support and reciprocity. Unpaid carers will require support to create co-operative arrangements and commissioners will need an investment strategy that builds capacity beyond the market.

It is important to have a balance of preventative services that address the health and wellbeing of carers and commissioned services that meet the assessed needs of carers.

The commissioning of services are set against the need to respond to budgetary pressures that are being faced nationally, and therefore investment in sustainable services is key to meeting demand.

We commission services that:

- are flexible, accessible county wide and meet the individual needs of carers
- are more sustainable in the long term.
- encourage engagement with, and access to, community based activities that support the carer and / or the cared for person.
- will enable carers to continue caring, including the provision of information, advice, peer support, training and short breaks away from the caring role.

## **Gwynedd**

The domiciliary-care project is working to address the issues regarding domiciliary care and support for individuals in the community. The community resilience preventative agenda is looking at developing communities to support the preventative agenda. We are also adapting the Council's residential homes to create more dementia care units and day care and respite provision.

## Denbighshire

Locally, a lot has been achieved to modernise support and ensure future services are commissioned with input from unpaid carers and families, to help identify 'what matters' and using Denbighshire's asset based approach to help them find solutions.

We encourage the creative use of direct payments and Bridging the Gap vouchers to support individual choice and allow unpaid carers to have a break or pursue social or leisure activities, with or without the cared-for person. For example, to enable unpaid carers to attend concerts, weddings, or pay for gym membership, flooring, new washing machine, training courses, driving lessons.

Identified needs in Denbighshire include:

- More specialist (condition specific) respite support to reflect the range of different needs, for example places that are suitable for people with acquired brain injury, stroke, dementia and other neurological conditions (in an emergency and also available to pre-book).
- Community based activities/events that provide respite care and benefit unpaid carers, with the capacity and trained staff/volunteers to continue to support people with progressive conditions who require higher levels of care.
- A wide range of flexible options including more sessional and community services spread across the whole of Denbighshire, especially in rural areas.
- Both emergency crisis support to keep people living independently at home and out of hospital and more regular, consistent respite options that are easy to book in advance.
- Group/individual support available in the evening and weekends, particularly for those carers who work and cannot attend support groups or access other services during the day.
- Good quality information, advice and assistance about the various respite options available.

Respite/short breaks work best when carers are confident with the arrangements, which in turn helps to reduce anxiety. The current recruitment crisis is impacting on providers who are finding it difficult to recruit staff and volunteers with the right skills and values to deliver high quality respite.

Respite support that works best for the carer and the cared-for person includes meaningful activities that fit in with their interests and hobbies. Denbighshire County

Council is promoting the development of Community Catalysts /Micro Employers and using additional volunteer capacity alongside commissioned services. We also encourage local social enterprises to run innovative projects to support unpaid carers.

We await further guidance from Welsh Government about developing respitality and a National Short Breaks Scheme. Locally carers can book guest accommodation in Extra Care schemes and two recently adapted properties in Ruthin and Corwen. Shared Lives is also available, mainly for people with complex disabilities who are matched with Shared Lives families. NEWCIS and Carers Outreach have respite property and a caravan.

## **Flintshire**

We welcome the additional funding provided by Welsh Government to scale up a range of respite options for Carers to meet the anticipated spike in demand for respite services caused by the impact of the pandemic on the mental and physical health of carers.

We continue to explore flexible respite options for carers based on the outcomes the carer wants to achieve, alongside a meaningful activity to the cared for.

Our focus on ensuring stability of support for unpaid carers includes;

- Consider how micro-care can support an offer of day/ respite services.
- Further development of our Direct Payment offer for carers.
- Further development of Young Carers Services and the ID card.

## 9. Advocacy services

Advocacy means getting support from another person to help someone to express their views and wishes, and help stand up for their rights.

All people are very different from each other. Their needs for support are different, and may change during their life. A variety of advocacy has developed to recognise these differences.

All advocacy types are of equal value. What advocacy is used, and when, should depend on what is best suited to the person who seeks it. One type of advocacy is Independent Professional Advocacy which involves a professional, trained advocate working in a one-to-one partnership with an individual to ensure that their views are accurately conveyed and their rights upheld.

### Children and young people

Advocacy is one of the key foundation stones in achieving our commitment to children's rights, ensuring children and young people can get help when they need it and from people that will listen to them and represent their views.

By law all local authorities in Wales must have advocacy services for children and young people to use, and that an Active Offer for advocacy must be made. Tros Gynnal Plant (TGP) provide advocacy services to children and young people in North Wales.

When children and young people need services, sometimes an advocate is required to meet with them to explain what these services are. This helps them to understand what is on offer and how the service is able to help them. This is called an Active Offer.

An active offer must be made to:

- Children in care.
- Young people leaving care.
- Children and young people who need extra support.

Councils have a statutory responsibility to provide an independent professional advocacy service for children and young people which complies with all regulations,

standards, legislation, directions, code of practice, outcome framework and any amendments or replacements relevant to the service.

This includes but is not limited to:

- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.
- The Service is an 'advocacy' service for the purpose of paragraph 7(1) of Schedule 1 of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, and is accordingly a regulated service and must comply with the provisions/requirements set out within the Regulated Advocacy Service (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019.
- Independent Professional Advocacy: National Standards and Outcomes Framework for Children and Young People in Wales.
- Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014: Part 10 Code of Practice (Advocacy).
- Statutory Guidance relating to Parts 2 to 15 of The Regulated Advocacy Services (Service Providers and Responsible Individuals) (Wales) Regulations 2019.

## Young carers

A common need of young carers identified by service providers is advocacy support to have their voices heard.

Specific support for young carers and young adult carers has been commissioned across North Wales from the third sector. WCD / Credu Young Carers is commissioned to provide these services in Wrexham, Denbighshire and Conwy, NEWCIS provide the service in Flintshire and Action for Children provide the service across Gwynedd and Anglesey.

## Adults

Local authorities must consider individuals' needs for advocacy support when carrying out various functions involving decisions that will have a significant impact on the person's day to day life, for example:

- Assessment of needs for care and support, support for carers and preventative services
- Provision of information, advice and assistance



- Preparing, maintaining or reviewing care and support plans
- Protecting property of persons cared for away from home
- Determination of person's ability to pay a charge
- Safeguarding and duty to report adults or children at risk
- Promoting integration of care and support with health services
- Receiving complaints or representations about social services

### **Advocacy:**

- safeguards individuals who are vulnerable, discriminated against or whom services find difficult to serve
- speaks up on behalf of individuals who are unable to do so for themselves
- empowers individuals who need a stronger voice by enabling them to express their own needs and make their own informed decisions
- enables individuals to gain access to information, explore and understand their options, and to make their views, wishes and feelings known, and
- actively supports people to make informed choices.

## **Older people**

The Golden Thread Advocacy Programme was funded by Welsh Government for four years from 2016 to 2020 to run alongside and support the implementation of Part 10 (Advocacy) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. The programme has now ended, but Age Cymru's commitment to advocacy in Wales continues through the HOPE project.

**Anglesey, Gwynedd and Wrexham:** North Wales Advice and Advocacy Association (NWAAA) offer advocacy to over 65s

**Conwy and Denbighshire:** DEWIS Centre for Independent Living offer advocacy to anyone over 65, or any carer.

**People living with dementia (all counties):** Alzheimer's Society offer support for anyone living with dementia, whether they have capacity or can communicate or not.

## Mental Health

People receiving secondary mental health care may need help from an Independent Mental Health Advocate (The Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010) or an Independent Mental Capacity Advocate.

Advocacy may be required for older people with dementia who have lost contact with all friends and family, or people with severe learning disabilities or long term mental health problems who have been in residential institutions for long periods and lack outside contacts.

Other people with mental health conditions may want support from another person when expressing their views, or to seek advice regarding decisions that impact them.

The following organisations provide specialist advocacy support for those with mental health needs;

- The Conwy and Denbighshire Mental Health Advocacy Service (CADMHAS) (Conwy and Denbighshire)
- Advocacy Services North East Wales (ASNEW) (Wrexham and Flintshire)
- Mental Health Advocacy Scheme (Gwynedd and Anglesey)

## Learning disability

People with a learning disability often have poorer access to health improvement and early treatment services; for example, cancer screening services, diabetes annual reviews, advice on sex and relationships and help with contraception (Harris *et al.*, 2016). The Learning Disability Health Liaison Service in BCUHB work across North Wales to raise awareness and reduce inequalities.

Advocacy is also geared towards wellbeing outcomes. Local authorities have a duty to consider individuals' needs for advocacy when carrying out assessments and care planning. People with a Learning Disability may need support in ensuring that their voices are heard and their rights upheld.

Dewis Centre for Independent Living provide advocacy services for vulnerable adults aged 18 to 64, including people with learning disabilities. Anglesey also commission North Wales Advocacy Association (NWAA).

# Autism

Advocacy for autistic adults, children and their carers ensures that individual rights are met. Advocacy can provide support in a number of ways including seeking a diagnosis, overcoming barriers and accessing services.

## Self-advocacy

Additionally, there has been an appointment of a Regional Self Advocacy Officer as a result of a need to bring in new voices to self-advocacy groups across North Wales. This is being taken forward in a partnership between Conwy Connect, NWAAA and All Wales People First. The Self Advocacy Officer is a person with a learning disability and is employed by Conwy Connect. Their role is to link into local organisations and groups across North Wales to raise awareness and promote the benefits of self-advocacy to people with learning disabilities.

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# Market Stability Report

Flintshire



2022

## CONTENTS

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

#### 1. INTRODUCTION

#### 2. Care Home Services (Adult)

#### 3. Care Home Services (Children)

#### 4. Fostering Services

#### 5. Domiciliary Care Support Services

**Appendix 1 - Summary Findings of the Business Diagnostics (2017)**

**Appendix 2 – Feedback from Workshops with Responsible Individuals**

**Appendix 3 - MSR Registered Provider Survey Results**



## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Regional Market Stability Reports are a requirement of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, and are developed alongside a regional Population Needs Assessment

Market stability reports **must** provide an assessment of:

- the sufficiency of care and support in **meeting the needs and demand for social care, as set out in the population needs assessment**, and
- the stability of the market for regulated services providing care and support

The information that follows has been submitted as Flintshire's contribution to the development of the Regional Market Stability Report for North Wales.

Key messages of this local report include:

<b>Care Home Services (Adults)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Flintshire currently has the capacity to facilitate 850 older people permanent placements in a care home in the area. A further 50 placements are available in specialist provision for those with mental health need or a learning disability</li><li>• Additional capacity is being built through the expansion and redevelopment of in-house care homes</li><li>• There is a local shortage of nursing and EMI nursing provision</li></ul>
<b>Care Home Services (Children's)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Local provision is being rebalanced to remove the profit from care</li><li>• The range of new in-house provision planned includes short term residential and assessment provision, emergency accommodation, small group homes and placements for unaccompanied asylum seeker children.</li><li>• Whilst in-house provision is being developed, children may remain in out of county placements</li></ul>
<b>Fostering Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A number of innovative developments have been invested in to support children to be in local placements. These include RAP, Mockingbird and the Adaptations to Foster Carers Home Policy.</li><li>• It is a priority to increase foster care provision in the area.</li></ul>
<b>Domiciliary Care Support Services</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• There are ongoing pressures to address double person care, provision in rural areas, discharge from hospital</li><li>• The Council are working to expand our network of Extra Care accommodation with our partners.</li><li>• The council have invested in Micro-care as a model to support the delivery of direct care and wellbeing services.</li><li>• 39% of all home based services are delivered through Direct Payments</li></ul>

In addition to the above, there is a risk to market sufficiency and stability relating to recruitment and retention across the workforce and the projected increase in the number of older people with complex needs requiring care and support.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Regional Market Stability Reports are a requirement of the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, and are developed alongside a regional Population Needs Assessment

Market stability reports **must** provide an assessment of:

- the sufficiency of care and support in **meeting the needs and demand for social care, as set out in the population needs assessment**, and
- the stability of the market for regulated services providing care and support

The Population Needs Assessment sets out current and projected need and demand for care and support, and the range and type of services that will be required to meet that demand.

Together the two documents should provide those commissioning care and support, at the regional and local level, with a comprehensive picture of current and projected demand and supply.

The information that follows has been submitted as Flintshire's contribution to the development of the Regional Market Stability Report.

## 2. CARE HOME SERVICES (ADULTS)

### 2.1 MARKET SUFFICIENCY

#### Current Care Home provision

Flintshire has a large population of people aged 65 and over, with population projections suggesting substantial and continued growth in the number of older people. This is likely to lead to an increasing number of people experiencing age relating problems such as, chronic physical and sensory diseases, dementia and falls. All of which have a potential negative impact on people overall well-being and will in turn increase the demand on services.

Flintshire currently has the capacity, in both the independent sector and in-house provision, to facilitate 850 older people permanent placements in a care home in the area. A further 50 placements are available in specialist provision for those with mental health need or a learning disability. The introduction of the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016 has meant that the type of services provided within that number is more varied and fluid than categorising them into four traditional categories of care would allow, but for the purposes of market analysis the below table illustrates an estimate of the market split in March 2021;

Category of Care	Market Capacity
Residential	366
Residential with Mental Health	261
Nursing	179
Nursing with Mental Health (EMI)	44

Comparative to data obtained in 2016, it is evident that the overall number of long term placement options, specifically in care without nursing, has increased;

Category of Care	Capacity 2016	Capacity 2021	Difference
Residential	211	366	155
Residential with Mental Health	227	261	34
Nursing	243	179	-64
Nursing with Mental Health	44	44	0

The increases in residential provision are due to the re-opening of three care homes that were not occupied in 2016, along with the expansion of Marleyfield House in Buckley. There has also been a change in service provision, from nursing to residential care, for one large care home in the area. This has contributed to the expansion of our residential care capacity, but simultaneously has reduced the general nursing capacity in the area. Likewise a general nursing home in Holywell closed in 2019. Not included in these figures is the closure of a further nursing home in March 2022, which has further diminished local capacity for general nursing placements by 52. Finally, one care home is currently undergoing renovation work, which has temporarily reduced our market capacity, although this is expected to increase again once these works have been completed.

Marleyfield, Croes Atti, and Llys Gwenffrwd are purpose built care homes, owned by the Council, situated in the towns of Buckley, Flint and Holywell. Llys Gwenffrwd differs in that

provision is provided over three floors, which requires a change in staffing levels to creatively support people with dementia on the top floor.

Ensuring developments for new homes are accessible to all, through for example incorporating dementia friendly measures and accessible homes and developments is a recommendation in the Population Needs Assessment 2022. Both Marleyfield and Croes Atti have separate units for those with dementia related needs.

Supporting people to live at home for longer is a recommendation in the Population Needs Assessment 2022. Llys Gwenffrwd houses rehabilitation placements and all three homes provide a number of respite, step up / step down and assessments placements rather than permanent residential. Marleyfield and Croes Atti have adjoining day-care provision which would be affected with some of the options presented.

Embracing innovative, an £8.4 million redevelopment project at Marleyfield House was completed in 2021. This has doubled the number of placements from 32 to 64 and increased communal outdoor spaces and accessibility to support residents' well-being, reaffirming the Council's commitment to quality services, investing money in critical services.

The Council proposes to replace Croes Atti with a new care home on the former Flint Hospital site. The new care home will have an additional 25 placements, 12 of which will be accessible to the Health Board.

These 12 additional placements will be ear marked to provide a new model of step down care to support the discharge to assess and recover programme developed within the Health Board. The support model will be managed and run by the council, and it is envisaged the discharge to assess placements will be therapy led with the primary objective of maximising independence, assessing longer term needs and enabling individual's to get back home as soon as possible.

These are examples of the local authority's pro-active approach to addressing the current significant pressures and fragility in the care sector across the country, and addressing the need to support people to return to their own homes in the community.

The levels of vacancies in the sector over the pandemic has been impacted by care homes not being able to facilitate admissions at the usual quantity due to Covid-19 Red Status restrictions or other pressures that relate specifically to their business. This is evidenced by the fact that on average, between August-October 2021, 39% of vacant care home placements in Flintshire were not accessible for such reasons. As a result we currently see vacancy levels that are 82% higher in number than vacancies in April 2019, although this figures has risen to 157% during April 2021. As there has been market fluctuations, the below is the level of vacancies as a percentage of market capacity;

Care home vacancies as a percentage of overall placement capacity

Service Type	Oct-21	Apr-21	Oct-20	Apr-19
Residential	11%	7%	6%	4%
Residential with Mental Health	13%	18%	10%	5%
Nursing	11%	29%	24%	10%
Nursing with Mental Health	5%	25%	5%	7%

As can be seen nursing homes have returned back to a pre pandemic level of vacancies but the recent reduction in nursing placement, as outlined previously, is significant to this. Similarly a lower supply of Nursing with Mental Health placements for older people has led to a similar level of vacancy across the sector now in comparison to April 2019. The increases in vacancies related to residential and residential with mental health care provision will be more indicative of the demand for those services, with consideration to the impact of Covid-19 on the market as outlined in the previous paragraph.

These numbers offer a picture of the local provision in regards to long term placement capacity, but it's important to recognise additional areas of development that contribute to the overall market provision. As previously outlined, Marleyfield House has expanded its long term capacity, but there are also an additional 16 short-term discharge to recover and assess placements, which would aim to ensure people are not inappropriately assessed as requiring residential care. Also there are currently a number of independent sector homes with planning permission in place to extend their provision.

### **EMI Provision**

The number of people living with dementia in Flintshire is set to rise over the forthcoming years. People living with dementia may need intensive support as they progress along their dementia journey. Individuals may need EMI provision due to their complex needs, of which there is a limited supply in the county.

- 261 EMI residential placements across 12 homes.
- 44 EMI nursing placements – 2 homes only.

In 2016 Flintshire completed an in-depth residential care review which provided detailed evidence regarding the current state of the residential care sector in Flintshire and outlined projected increases in needs and demand. The report concluded in order for the local authority to meet the projected need (based on demographic changes) a further 178 placements will be required by 2020; 67 Residential, 52 EMI Residential, 51 Nursing and 8 EMI Nursing. These are now stabilizing with only 8 EMI nursing placements vacancy 24/05/21.

The Flintshire shortage in EMI nursing provision is historical and leads to placements being made out of county which is not only a challenge for the individual themselves but also for family. As of May 2021, there are 32 out of county residential EMI placements, and 29 EMI nursing placements.

In addition, the complexity of need coupled with the lack of placements locally leads to in delayed transfer of care from hospital. This was evident during the pandemic, where at one point, due to active cases in nursing homes, there were no available nursing placements in Flintshire in to which to discharge people from hospital.

### **Supported Living - Volume**

As of August 2021, there are a total of 60 Supported Living properties in Flintshire, delivered between 10 providers. 16 of these properties are operated by the Council. There is also a combination of national providers, smaller local providers and both local and national providers with a charitable status. Contracts are tendered through the regional framework or commissioned through direct payments.

139 people are supported, most with over 20 hours of support per week, either shared or 1:1. Most individuals have a tenancy agreement as is usually the case for 'Supported Living'.

There are providers who are able to support from a low level to more complex needs on the Framework.

When recommissioning existing services, there is a possibility of Tupeing staff to the new company. For new services, the provider has to recruit which can impact of the timescales and attract staff from existing providers who then have to back fill.

### **Out of County**

Within the Learning Disabilities and Physical Disabilities sector, due to the small choice of local providers and the specialist nature of support, some of these residential placements may need to be made out of county and this can incur higher costs. This impacts on families visiting and link to the individual.

## **2.2 MARKET STABILITY**

A review in to Flintshire's Residential Care sector (2016) outlines the challenges and some potential options as we move forward, but highlights a number of strategic issues that 'would impede efforts by any local authority to strengthen their residential care market'. National coordination and action will be needed to minimise the impact of these factors, which include:

1. The effect of the National Living Wage on the sustainability of independent care providers.
2. Reported lack of financial resources available to improve the state of repair of independent care homes, and a decreasing appeal for potential new investors to the sector.
3. Retention and recruitment rates of care staff, with a perceived unclear career pathway and unappealing job conditions, specifically registered managers.
4. A national concern of poorly performing nursing homes.
5. Increasing demand for services with decreasing budgets'.
6. Brexit

There is a diverse provider base with no reliance on one provider. However, there is limited EMI residential and nursing placements available as outlined in section 1A (44 placements EMI nursing).

The markets is diverse with homes of varying size, in-house and independent, family run or as part of a larger organisation. The Council is moving ahead with increasing capacity in in-house residential provision.

The Contract and Commissioning Team work closely with providers on both entry and exit to ensure the process runs smoothly, offering any support that is required.

Although the market is robust and each provider has contingency plans in place to deal with the majority of issues, the COVID-19 pandemic presented exceptional circumstance and providers did not have this included in their plans. These have since been updated.

Between June and September 2017, Osterley Associates offered a business diagnostic to providers across the residential and nursing sectors who were based within Flintshire on behalf of the Council. Osterly Associates is an independent consultancy which was established in 2014 to provide business sustainability support to community based businesses and stakeholders. It specialises in working with SMEs in groups and sectors that are vulnerable to political change or facing challenges that are outside normal business

modelling. Often the businesses in these groups are micro or family run and as such do not access mainstream support.

Owners and managers from 18 homes were interviewed by an experienced business adviser and a diagnostic review was completed, 2 homes declined the offer and 4 were unable to schedule an interview in the timescale.

The diagnostic tool to conduct the interviews was designed to structure the interview but allow for a personal conversation so as to ensure that individual circumstances were accommodated (Osterly Associates, 2017). The findings can be found in Appendix 1.

### **2.3 Action Taken Due to Provider Failure**

*Needs to include recommendations for future mitigating actions and lessons learned*

#### **Escalating Concerns**

The process is guided by '[Quality Services: Delivering What Matters](#)', the North Wales' procedures for contracted care and support services for children, young people and adults:

- Ensuring quality services
- Responding to increasing and escalating risks or concerns (including 'embargo policy')

When placed under escalating concerns, providers may not be able to accept new admissions and Social Service staff will visit on a weekly basis, and where appropriate, link with the Health Board to streamline this process. Once aware of the reasons behind escalating concerns, the provider will be required to produce a corrective action plan which is monitored.

Recent experience shows us that issues arising may be related to changes in the Management.

#### **Provider Failure**

The Welsh Government has produced statutory guidance about the closure of care homes where there are concerns about financial viability or abuse. Further guidance from the Older People's Commissioners Office for Wales includes securing the human rights of residents, meaningful consultation and engagement, provision of advocacy if required and ongoing impact assessments.

When it has been confirmed that a Care Home provider is no longer able to continue supporting its residents, Commissioners will contact the provider and explain the purpose of the Home Closure Team (HCT) and get key contact information. At this stage they will request a list of all individuals and identify any immediate risks or issues. A Home Closure Group meeting will then be set up as soon as possible where roles and responsibilities will be confirmed.

Following this a finalised full list of residents who will be transferred will be produced and staff members will check the most recent CIW and monitoring reports to identify any other positive or negatives that could impact on the closure. The Providers Business Continuity Plan will also be checked. An up to date list of care home vacancies based on the needs of the residents will be developed and shared with all partners, residents/ next of kin / carers / commissioners as appropriate. It would also be identified if there are any current safeguarding / criminal enquiries are under way or there was a potential for them to be consulted, other partners that would need to be involved e.g. Police / Fire

The finalised list of all individuals and their needs will be confirmed with the Provider. It will identify those who lack capacity to make decisions about where they live e.g. if they have

dementia or a learning disability, and ensure that they have a family representative or an independent mental capacity advocate. Any special factors will also be identified relating to support equipment, or urgent or very complex care needs and needs which may require reassessment or review such as stress, anxiety or health factors and any additional clinical factors. A residential relocation plan will be completed for each resident as well as a resident property sheet for relocation. Responsibility for assessing or reassessing resident's needs and funding status, including any self-funding or out of LA area residents will be agreed and any other commissioning bodies will be identified if they need to be informed and consulted.

### **Lessons Learnt**

Following recent local care home closures, we have asked colleagues within the LA and BCUHB for their views on what has worked well, and what are the challenges during this time.

#### What's working well

- Good working relationship between CIW, LA and BCUHB, with colleagues from CHC and Community Nursing leads involved alongside, Social Services senior staff, Social Workers and Contracts and Commissioning Officers
- Named Social Worker assigned for each resident – *outline their particular roles in the process*
- Allocated team of LA staff to support people with their packing and accounting for their belongings, alongside providing a LA presence in the home.
- Linking to Advocacy
- Provision of list of current vacancies in the sector

#### Challenges

- Could provider failure have been anticipated, risk assessed before notice given? Difficult to anticipate based on intelligence available. Perhaps a joint process could be developed based on experiences to guide future scenarios.
- Ensuring sufficiency of placements in the local area, able to meet the individual's level of need, while still supporting choice and control. Also, preventing admission to acute and community hospitals
- Managing expectations and emotions of staff and residents during the process.
- Understanding equipment ownership – what belongs to the home, Health Board, Stores, Welsh Government (e.g PPE) – and ensuring this is moved to a new setting alongside the resident
- Working with third parties e.g Administrators. Differing opinions and expected outcomes, accuracy of information, understanding of Welsh Policy
- Maintaining safe level of staffing at the closing setting
- Accessing staff files to support ease of employment to new employers
- Complexities of a new provider taking over the home as a going concern. In particular, if there are restrictions on their registration.

## **2.4 Consideration of Market Quality**

### **Feedback from service users**

Choice and control over what service and provider an individual would like to receive care forms part of the 'What Matters' Conversation.



Engagement and consultation with people who use care and support services is a requirement for all care providers, this includes both in house and independent sector providers registered and regulated under the Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016.

For the Councils in house services this means Residential Care, Extra Care, Domiciliary Care, and services for people with a Learning Disability. Twice a year, the Responsible Individual coordinated conversations with people receiving Council care services in each setting through questionnaires, group and 1:1 conversations.

The responses from tenants and residents was overwhelmingly positive, this particularly focused on the staff providing support. They were described as very caring, having time for people and supporting with all aspects of personal care and related needs. Managers and office staff were also mentioned in terms of being approachable and sorting out problems when they arrive. Everyone also said they felt safe in the buildings.

Some issues were raised by individuals. These were fed back to the managers. A number of issues related to the need to provide training, or reminders to staff about areas such as knocking and waiting at doors, use of mobile phones and how their approach to tenants is important (e.g. not rushing, treating like an adult). It should be emphasised that these were isolated, mainly one-off comments, however, they are still important.

### **Care home monitoring**

In 2017, the Contracts & Commissioning Team moved away from systematic annual minoring visits, adopting a practice development approach in supporting providers to achieve positive outcomes for individuals receiving care and support. This has nurtured and developed effective, constructive and professional relationships with providers of care and support (managers, Responsible Individuals and Owners). These relationships have been critical as we have met the challenges of the pandemic together.

### **Progress for Providers**

Progress for Providers in Care Homes is a self-assessment tool for managers to use with their staff to check how they are doing in delivering personalised support for people living in care homes. 'Personalised Support' is a key aim of national policy and means tailoring support to the individual, and enabling them to have as much choice and control over their service and life as possible, rather than supporting everyone in the same way. This means learning what matters to the person and ensuring that any support wanted or needed is shaped by this. Using person-centred thinking tools and approaches helps staff to provide the best support that they can in ways that reflect what is important to the person. Working in this way is not about doing more, but about doing things differently.

The programme has been expanded to include domiciliary and extra care services and in 2020/21, the Progress for Providers Programme has been introduced to providers within learning disability services, where person-centred practice has long been a feature of care and support within this sector.

## **2.5 Current and Projected Trends**

The Population Needs Assessment (2022) shows the projected increases on the population of older people, and those living with Dementia.

## 2.6 Impact of Commissioning practices on the market

### Support from the Council to providers

Flintshire have developed the 'Progress for Providers' Programme in Care Homes. This is a self-assessment tool for managers to use with their staff to check how they are doing in delivering personalised support for people living in care homes, tailoring support to the individual and enabling them to have as much choice and control over their service and life as possible. Using person-centred thinking tools and approaches helps staff to provide the best support that they can in ways that reflects what is important to the person. Bronze, Silver and Gold accreditation will help managers check their own progress over time and demonstrate publically that they are making continued progress along the road to truly person centred care. Those who have achieved the accreditation will be listed on Flintshire County Council's website.

Over the years, Flintshire have been working to develop strong relationships with those who provide services for Flintshire's residents. The Council support providers in a number of ways :

- Regular Provider Meetings, open to all care providers in Flintshire, which include updates, Care Forum representative feedback, workshops and information sharing. These events are valued and enable two way communication between provides and the Local Authority. These events are also used to develop a coordinated response to national consultations. The Local Authority can then submit responses that includes the voice of the local sector alongside our own.
- We actively discuss gaps and challenges
- Information is circulated on a regular basis to providers via email.
- Training is available via the Council's Workforce Development Team and number of providers attend the Workforce Strategy Meeting.
- Providers are supported to achieve accreditation through Progress for Providers Programme.
- The Council has developed a template for providers to produce a 'Welcome Pack' for new residents. The pack, tailored to each home, outlines information on rights and entitlements, staff, what's available locally and person-centred practices.
- The Contracts Monitoring Team provide support for settings who may be facing difficulties or in need of improvement.
- Through the Council's dementia work, free activities are provided to care homes via a 'buy one get one free' as part of the Dementia Friendly Communities programme, coordinated through a private Facebook group.
- Providers are offered support with National Care Home Open Day.
- Flintshire County Council provided equipment packs containing hoists, a mattress, chair, commode, bath lift, scales and other equipment to all care homes in 2017.
- The Social Care Workforce Development Programme (SCWDP) training voucher scheme gives independent and voluntary sector social care staff access to mandatory or core training from a small number of approved local training providers.

As well as the above, the Contracts and Commissioning Team have facilitated regular meetings with residential care, domiciliary care and Supported Living providers. Whilst these meetings took place before the pandemic, their frequency increased. The support and networking became a vital resource for providers. The meetings were also attend by colleagues from the Environmental Health Team, Health and Safety Officers and BCUHB officers so partners could advise and support when needed

As part of our Contact and Commissioning Teams role, they work with due diligence when trying to identify any risks that a provider might have in the market, whether this be financial or other information. The Team are now able to do financial checks online on providers and companies, this enables them to complete an assessment of the provider's financial stability and identify any information that may flag up as being an issue in the future.

### **Supported Living – Commissioning**

In February 2020, Denbighshire's Cabinet approved the North Wales Supported Living Framework on behalf of all the 7 partner organisations, and agreed for it to go live from the 1st April 2020.

By adopting this Framework, Flintshire is able to effectively commission Supported Living services, when the need is identified whilst ensuring consistency and quality of provision across North Wales. Multiple service providers have already been admitted to the framework agreement following the requisite due diligence and quality checks. This enables Flintshire's commissioners to commission services adopting the framework agreement which can streamline processes whilst remaining in accordance with relevant legislation and the local authority Contract Procedure Rules.

For any service contract with a total value (projected annual contract value multiplied by the length of the contract) of £1 million will require the necessary delegated approval. Any service contract with a total projected value over £2 million will seek Cabinet approval prior to commissioning in accordance with the local authority Contract Procedure Rules.

Contracts officers and associated involved professionals adopt a collaborative approach with the individuals (where feasible) and stakeholders such as families to develop an appropriate service specification that meets the needs of each individual. Services are procured collaboratively with stakeholder involvement (where feasible) to select the service provider.

## **2.7 Sustainability of provision**

Flintshire County Council has recently employed a Planning and Development Officer to support the independent adult social care sector through the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and to become confident and resilient to meet the support needs of older people in Flintshire into the future. The officer will work closely with the adult social care sector to aid sustainability and recovery following the pandemic. This will include supporting with sustainability plans and recruitment drives in house and across the sector.

Due to the recent COVID-19 pandemic and its ongoing effects on Social Care, the market is extremely unstable at present. This is due to a number of factors including :

- Residential and Nursing homes going into administration or being taken over, leading to instability.
- Lack of staff due to retirement or leaving the business
- Low number of Nursing placements and no providers with open placements to ensure stability of the placement
- Lack of funding to try to assist the providers during a difficult time
- Care Home closures , this could be due to a number of factors such as financial or lack of qualified staff
- Recruitment within Social Services sector is an ongoing concern, this is having an impact on the sustainability of provisions

## 2.8 Risks to market stability

- Increasing population, people are living longer and therefore the demand for services is going to increase over the next five year period.
- Ageing population poses challenges for Flintshire, the projected increase in both 65-84 and those over 85+ years will lead to an increased service need.

In October 2021, workshops were held with Responsible Individuals (RI) in the sector to explore the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats. Below are some themes raised in conversations with RIs from the Residential sector:

- Rapid changes in guidance
- Cost of living increases
- Hardship Fund tapering
- Recruitment and retention of care and nursing staff
- Good carers who are not IT savvy and not looking to upskill and undertake additional training for registration

### Funding

Some independent care homes charge more than the rate the Council can pay for care. If The Council is paying toward care home fees, and the individual chooses to move into a home which charges more, the difference between the two amounts has to be paid by another means. This is usually a relative, friend or a charity of the individual.

Sustainable care fees are required to ensure fair pay for care workers in the independent sector and sustainable fair pay for local authority funded care workers. The Care Home Sector and partners require fair funding to ensure they retain and recruit staff through higher pay rates. Social care jobs are simply not competitive with retail and delivery occupations which offer similar or more pay with less stress.

## 2.9 NON-REGULATED PROVISION [PREVENTATIVE SERVICES]

### Local examples of community approaches:

Cares Support - A number of organisation across Flintshire provide a range of support for carers to support them in their caring roles. This includes assessment, respite, small grants and training.

Single Point of Access (SPoA) - SPoA is multi-agency initiatives in Flintshire providing support for adults. By telephoning just one number an individual will be able to speak to someone about community health, wellbeing and care services. Access to information, advice, assistance, assessment and co-ordinated care will be available. SPoA also supports a co-ordinator who can advise and signpost to organisations within the Third Sector.

DEWIS - Dewis Cymru is a website that aims to help people with well-being, whether that's their own well-being or the well-being of a family member or friend.

The website contains information that can help people think about what matters to them and has information on services that can be accessed for support. Organisations across Wales can upload their own information to the site

## 2.10 Social Value

### Volunteers

Since April 2020, Flintshire County Council (FCC) and FLVC have worked in partnership to develop a creative, effective response to the Covid-19 pandemic focussing on voluntary support for formal and informal social care activities

This involved:

- FLVC staff working with Social Care Senior Officers and operational staff assessing the need for volunteers generally
- agreeing bespoke volunteering roles to support Social Care staff
- utilising FLVC's Volunteer centre staff resource, Volunteering in Wales website
- recruiting and training volunteers to complement the work of Social Care staff
- deployment of a trainer registered with Social Care Wales to provide introductory training in Safeguarding / Dignity in Care / Health and Safety / Equal Opportunities/Confidentiality

The volunteer group provided support from April to August to a number of activities and initiatives including twice-weekly delivery of PPE for staff at older people's care homes and domiciliary providers and schools, weekly shopping deliveries to two Supported Living Homes, delivery of donates chocolate eggs, 1:1 telephone support, Well Fed project and Food Bank Food parcel delivery; and delivery of iPads and Codgers Quarterly Newsletter to reduce isolation in care settings.

### Achievements

- Successful partnership working with FCC/Contracts Team
- 70+ Volunteers linked directly with Flintshire care homes, many more interested volunteers but have put their application on hold due to covid restrictions
- 70+ Volunteers attended the FLVC training: Introduction to Volunteering, Introduction to Social Care and Inspiring Digital Activities
- Level 2/ 3 Health and Social Care Student placements & partnership working with:
  - Glyndwr University
  - Mold Alun School
  - Coleg Cambria

<https://www.leaderlive.co.uk/news/19655304.flintshire-care-home-residents-helped-kind-hearted-volunteers/>

## 2.11 Resources

Flintshire benefits from a strong third sector presence and networks and a positive relationship between the Council and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC). The Wellbeing Team in FLVC and AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham) supports the third sector and statutory partners in a number of ways:

- Promoting third sector organisations, services and activities to statutory partners
- Representing the third sector at strategic planning and partnership groups
- Engaging the third sector in consultations and engagement about health and social services
- Promoting partnership working within the third sector and across sectors
- Signpost to or provide business support and funding
- Provide training to organisations to improve their capacity and effectiveness
- Explain the complexities of commissioning and procurement
- Help keep services up to date with the latest evidence base, and guide you through the changes in NHS and local authority structures.
- Help the start up of new services or groups
- Support the third sector in Flintshire and Wrexham to access FLVC and AVOW's services

## 2.12 Self funders

As of 1<sup>st</sup> February 2022, there were 194 self-funding placements in Flintshire care homes.

## 2.13 Workforce

### Transport

The availability of local transport has an impact on some of the homes and those on good bus routes were more likely to be able to staff their homes than those off a main bus route. All of the homes interviewed paid at or above the living wage but recognised that this would be difficult in the future as wages increase above the income streams. Group owned homes had central HR services available to them and several of the family owned homes contracted with external HR agencies such as Peninsula to manage their HR issues.

### Perceptions of social care

When asked directly about the difficulties of recruiting staff there was a variance in replies. Several homes stated that more should be done to increase the image of the sector and that very often potential recruits were unaware and unprepared for the nature of the job. The variation in replies came when some homes stated that they had difficulty in finding suitable candidates and others stated that they had waiting lists. Others suggested that the NHS "poached" the experienced members of staff and several homes were proud of the fact that majority of their staff had been employed by them for many years. It was concluded that the difference is likely to be effected by the size of the home and the way that the home is managed. The fact is that there is a need to attract new entrants into the sector and increases in the living wage will add to the financial pressures on owners in the future.

### Sickness and absence

Sickness and absence rates are high in comparison to other industries but it is accepted as one of the negatives of the sector. The most common causes of absence is sickness and

diarrhoea. The impact is for a short term need to replace staff and the added costs associated with this. All homes operated a statutory sickness policies.

### **Recruitment and retention**

Recruitment and retention issues are reported as the most significant issue affecting the sector locally. However, providers have identified that people in the workforce don't necessarily leave the sector, but move around within it and when they do leave, move on to employment in other caring roles such as within the NHS. Our challenge is to increase the number of people entering the sector.

Colleagues at Job Centre Plus report that they are not encountering many who are seeking work in the sector, and those who have expressed an interest are looking for '9-5' hours, which is not conducive with working patterns in care. Provider assistance has also been removed in recent years, including apprenticeships funding for people aged over 25 leading to difficulties in staff gaining the relevant qualifications or staff having to pay the fees themselves leading to providers finding it difficult to meet the current requirement that 50% of staff to be qualified to QCF level 2, unless they support with funding the training themselves.

### **Regulations**

Providers have reported concerns around the HR implications of new regulations and where this will lead in terms of existing staff who do not want to register or work towards qualifications.

### **Nursing staff shortages**

Shortages in nursing staff are presenting a problem across the UK (Public Policy Institute for Wales, 2015). In 2017, Welsh Government began to consult on the Phase 2 regulations for the Regulation & Inspection Act Wales 2016. Within this, a proposal was outlined that there would no longer need to be 24 hour nursing care on site for as long as it can be proven that the provision meets the needs of the individual. This may have an impact on those setting who have a low need for nursing care, as they can look at how they can meet these needs in a more flexible way. However, for homes where high levels of nursing care are required, the issue is still present.

### **Employee Assistance Programmes**

Flintshire County Council has bought in to the Carefirst Employee Assistance Programme. Carefirst provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, online or via the freephone telephone number. The service is free for all employees to access whenever they need it.

Carefirst offers free and confidential assessment, short term counselling and follow up services to employees who have personal and/or work related problems. These can include from complex issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, such as alcohol and substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems and psychological disorders. A similar form of support may be of benefit to those working in the sector to build a resilient, supported workforce. The effect on sickness levels and retention levels can be monitored alongside and implementation.

### **The Hardship Fund**

Over the course of the recent COVID-19 pandemic, Welsh Government's Hardship Fund provided additional financial support to the sector which included:

- Support towards the cost of void placements in care homes, plus an additional £50 per week per resident.
- An additional £1 per hours for domiciliary care staff.

- Additional £37 per week per individual for Supported Living providers.
- Other support, for example, funding for additional staff capacity to support individuals who found it difficult to isolate in care homes.

### **Assessors**

The North Wales Care and Community Health Workforce Strategy outlines that in 2016 surveys showed that 38% of domiciliary care workers and 36% of the residential care are unqualified. This is a significant number of workers that will need training in order to meet the new registration requirements, with increased resource implications for the sector. Concerns have been raised about the number of assessors available to meet the increased demand, which may have implications on provider's ability to comply with regulations.

### **Impact of Covid-19**

Following the COVID-19 pandemic staff numbers within the sector may go down which will cause issues within a sector that already struggles with staff recruitment and retention. Throughout the pandemic, the sector has received praise from the Government as well as the public and this may change opinions on working in the sector.

### **Progression**

Homes owned by a group have their own training programmes in place and often used external training providers. They recognise the value of career progression and remarked that this policy often assisted in staff retention rates. Smaller family owned homes found the cost element to be more challenging, but still recognised the need. There was a willingness for managers to broaden their management skills but stated that time to train was a major barrier in them not proceeding.

## **2.15 Conclusions and Recommendations**

There are some critical pressures and key issues faced by social services in the areas of workforce, commissioning and funding criteria. There are suggestions on how to address some of these issues through the reviewing of social work roles, improving the career pathway in social care, and offering greater clarity on the criteria applied to particular funding streams.

Other local actions include:

- Progress in-house residential care expansion schemes



### 3. CARE HOME SERVICES (CHILDREN)

#### 3.1 MARKET SUFFICIENCY

##### **Rebalancing Local Residential Provision**

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

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

North Wales has secured £3.8m grant funding for a regional Transformation Programme for Children and Young People for 2021/22. In the East Area, the strategic partnership of Wrexham and Flintshire Councils with BCUHB is overseeing the delivery of the transition programme, which aims to provide:

- i) Early intervention and prevention to improve the emotional health, wellbeing and resilience of children and young people
- ii) Edge of Care interventions incorporating Multi-Disciplinary Teams.

##### Ty Nyth

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

#### Park Avenue

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

#### Small Group Homes

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

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

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

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

#### Accommodation for Unaccompanied Asylum Seekers

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

#### Arosfa

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

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

#### Unregulated Placements

Whilst bringing enhanced local placement capacity these developments are within the context of a national shortage of residential placements for children. We know that across Wales there is a significant shortfall in placement sufficiency leading to unprecedented reliance on unregulated arrangements. It is important to emphasise that these arrangements are used as a last resort in emergency situations, due to exceptional circumstances and for a short period until a regulated provision can be sourced.

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

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

**Update:** Further information about these schemes can be found in Flintshire County Council Placement Commissioning Strategy 2022 to 2025. ([link to be included once approved](#))

#### **Out of County Placements**

Whilst local provision is in development, there will always be a small proportion of looked after children who need residential placements, and we want to make sure that these children and young people can remain close to home.

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

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

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

A focus is needed on initiatives designed to reduce the number of children who are placed out of county from the outset. Our research tells us that while children have been appropriately placed in residential settings based on their presenting needs, there had been few viable

alternative approaches available which could have contributed to a de-escalation, eliminating the need for out of county placement.

Flintshire County Council commission 39 children's care home services. Out of these 39, 18 are placed in Wales, 16 are in England and two are in Scotland.

From the placements with Wales, 14 are in North Wales and 4 are in South Wales.

A number of local residential providers also have plans for expansion, which presents another opportunity to work in partnership to align the provision to meet local needs.

At present, there is a demand for residential service for children who suffer with their mental health, and there is no the sufficient level of care and support with the local authority area to provide this. Therefore services are being sought out of county which incurs further cost implications.

### **Emergency provision**

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

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

The arrangements that local authorities have to put in place in emergencies can amount to unregulated placements. Under RISCA it is an offence for a person to provide a regulated service without being registered in respect of that service. This project will move to establish a registered provision that be set up in an emergency to provide accommodation, care and support. The provision will be designed to open as situations arise and close down as move on placements found. We would draw on registered staff in other provisions as opposed to employing a dedicated staffing Team.

### **Please also see:**

- Draft Children and Young People's Residential Care and Fostering North Wales Market Position Statement. Update to May 2019 publication. April 2021 to April 2023.
- Care Closer to Home - Flintshire County Council's Placement Commissioning Strategy from 2022 to 2025

### 3.2 MARKET STABILITY

Like many other authorities, Flintshire is currently reliant on the independent sector for Children's Residential Care provision. This provision is very expensive and often in placements that are out of area. There are opportunities to use transformation grant funding to facilitate a different approach to help reduce the reliance on Out of County placements which lead to unsustainable financial pressures for social services and education. Approaches to this have been outlined above.

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

Over the next five year period, in order to ensure stability within the sector, the Authority aims to :

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

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

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

### 3.3 Action Taken Due to Provider Failure

The majority of residential placement providers are signed up to the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) and therefore they take the lead on any monitoring arrangements. If there is provider failure or concerns these are investigated and resolved through their own internal procedures.

North Wales Quality Management Escalating Concerns Procedure

There is a small number of providers which have not signed up to the 4C's Framework, if there are any issues with these providers or concerns, Flintshire County Council follow the North Wales procures for contracted care and support services for children, young people and adults : ensuring quality services, responding to increasing and escalating risks or concerns (including 'embargo policy').

Increasing and / or escalating concerns arise where there are accumulating issues and / or a singular significant event or incident relating to the operation of a service, or the quality of care and support being provided. They may also be instigated alongside or as a consequence of other procedures including safeguarding providers and/ or regulatory procedures. Each of the north Wales commissioners has a range of methods in place to assure themselves of the standards of quality and safety and the outcomes for individuals that a service offers.

### **3.4 Consideration of Market Quality**

During April 2021, Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) completed an assurance check to review how well the Local Authority Social Services continue to help and support adults and children with a focus on safety and well-being. The key lines of enquiry were focused within the four principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and findings / judgements were aligned to these – People – Voice and Control, Prevention, Well-Being, Partnerships and Integration.

### **3.5 Current and Projected Trends**

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

### **3.6 Impact of Commissioning practices on the market**

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

The vehicle used for e-tendering external fostering and residential placements is the Children's Commissioning Support Resources (CCSR) which offers transparent and

outcomes focused placement commissioning for both Framework and Non-Framework regulated placements and allows compliance with the relevant procurement guidance and regulation that underpins commissioning.

### **3.7 Provision of service in the Welsh Language**

There is a gap in provision for services that are provided in the Welsh language.

### **3.8 Sustainability of provision**

With the development of in-house provision, we seek to address sustainability issues.

### **3.9 Risks to market stability**

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

- Sourcing appropriate local placements for those with complex needs
- Meeting demand for children who need complex multi-agency care packages or have challenging risk management plans, example behaviours include anger management issues, verbal and physical aggression towards adults
- Insufficient placements lead to children being placed in unregulated settings
- Not enough carers who speak Welsh
- North Wales has a shortage of parent and child places, especially in Wrexham and Flintshire

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

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

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

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

Given the Council's ambitious plans, investment will need to be made in building Responsible Individual capacity. Flintshire is in a current period of expansion in other areas of social care, including in-house residential care for older people and Extra Care. With these new services coming online, additional capacity will need to be considered to meet the need of the growing children's residential provision alongside this.

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

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

The review identified the following:

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

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

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



### 3.10 NON-REGULATED PROVISION [PREVENTATIVE SERVICES]

#### REFLECT

The REFLECT Service supports women who have had one or more child/ren removed through care proceedings and are at high risk of having children who will be subject to same experience. Through the delivery of an evidence based model you will support women to avoid pregnancy that could lead to care proceedings and removal of their children in the future. This will support women (and their partners) to achieve positive change in their lives to so that they can break this cycle.

#### Early Help Hub

The Early Help Hub is a multi-agency early help resource for children and families demonstrating 2 or more Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs). Partners include Social Services, Police, Health, Youth Justice, Housing, Flintshire Customer Connects, Education, Family Information Service, Early Years Support and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC).

The Early Help Hub (EHH) received 2641 referrals between April 2020 and end of March 2021 (Flintshire County Council, 2021) and the team have adapted to meet needs during the pandemic. All EHH members quickly reverted to having discussions online and agencies adapted well during lockdown and there was no interruption with meetings. Referrals slowed down slightly during April/May but started to pick back up again from June.

#### Parent and Child Together Placement'

The 'Parent and Child Together Placement' recruitment campaign is beginning to come to fruition. This aims to keep children with their parents in a specially assessed foster care setting.

Flintshire closely scrutinise decisions about whether older young people should be taken into care and, in particular, what difference can be achieved at this relatively late stage.

#### Flintshire Meeting Service

Flintshire Meeting Services approach is aimed at keeping families together wherever possible. Families are offered a Family Group Meeting at the earliest opportunity, to prevent them from reaching crisis. Family Group Meetings explore if wider family members or connected persons would be willing to put themselves forward to be assessed to care for the child. Further funding has been made available to strengthen this approach. We have seen an increase in referrals to the service and its been noted that families during this period required additional support due to the impact of COVID19 and the strain and increased pressure/stress on family life. We have also seen a sharp increase in referrals from statutory services which again highlights the strain the pandemic has and is having on families.

#### Family Information Service (FISF)

We are a statutory local authority service providing free and impartial information, advice and guidance to families (and those working with families) on a range of topics and in various formats.

Topics include health, education, leisure, finance and registered childcare. The service processes an average of 20,000 enquiries each quarter either face to face, by telephone & email or on the website and via social media.

### 3.11 Conclusions and Recommendations

#### Summary of commissioning intentions

##### Residential Provision

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

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

##### Edge of Care

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

##### Responsible Individual Capacity

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

## 4. FOSTERING SERVICES

### 4.1 MARKET SUFFICIENCY

As of the 31<sup>st</sup> of March 2021, there were 109 children and young people in foster placements within and outside the Local Authority Area (not including kinship placements). As of 16<sup>th</sup> February 2022, this figure was 102.

We must ensure we meet the forecasted demand for children by creating a resilient pool of in-house foster carers to provide care for local children with a variety of needs.

Children's Services Placement Commissioning Strategy details Flintshire County Council's commitment to ensure safe, high quality, support for children on the edge of care services and to the children we look after. Our aim is to support this cohort of children and young people so they are able to develop the skills and resilience to lead fulfilled lives.

#### **Where are the gaps and areas of concern?**

- Demand for foster placements currently outstrips supply. This includes placements for children who require a complex multi-agency care package or have challenging risk management plans, examples of these behaviours include anger management issues, verbal aggression and physical aggression towards adults.
- As a host Local Authority for other areas, there is a significant pressure on our available resources to support children who are looked after.
- Lack of sufficiency for the highest end of needs profile. These are children who currently live in a care home as there are not enough skilled foster carers who are able to meet their needs.
- There is a need to increase the supply of foster carers
- There is a need to expand the Mockingbird Hub model
- There is a need for suitable accommodation for Looked After Children including sibling groups and children with disabilities.
- There is a need to stimulate growth in specialist provision for children and young people who have complex mental health needs
- There is a need for more foster carers to support children in the age categories 10-14 and aged 15+
- There is a need to strengthen targeted/intensive support for children and families on the edge of care
- An insufficient supply of placements leads to young people being placed in unregulated settings.
- Covid has placed significant pressure on families.
- There are not enough foster carers with the right skills to care for our children who have a disability.
- There is not enough availability in our region for our disabled children who require short breaks.
- There are not enough carers who are able to speak Welsh in our region.
- There is a shortage of parent and child places in the North Wales region, particularly in the Wrexham and Flintshire areas.

#### **What we don't need:**

- We do not want to compete with independent providers for local carers. We believe this is a waste of everyone's resources. This can be achieved by independent

agencies targeting their local recruitment at the areas where we are not developing our own in house services.

- The provision of general foster placements by the independent sector is not an area where we require an increase in provision.
- We are able to look after the majority of children under 8 within our in house fostering services.

**Please also see:**

- Draft Children and Young People's Residential Care and Fostering North Wales Market Position Statement. Update to May 2019 publication. April 2021 to April 2023.
- Care Closer to Home - Flintshire County Council's Placement Commissioning Strategy from 2022 to 2025

## 4.2 MARKET STABILITY

### **Foster Carer Recruitment.**

The [Foster with Flintshire](#) portal has been developed to promote Fostering roles. The site contains a wealth of information, resources and stories from some of Flintshire's current Foster Carers.

### **Babies and young children**

There is currently a surplus of enquiries from those who are interested in fostering babies and/or young children. Given the current population of Children Looked After, the demand is for foster carers who have the skills and experience to support teenagers and sibling groups. We have now targeted our recruitment strategy to address this.

We are now actively recruiting carers who can support a wide age range, including older young people aged years 12+. We have seen an increase in 14, 15, 16 year old coming in to care.

### **Rebalancing Local Foster Care Provision**

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

Another challenge is that we have a surplus of enquiries from people who are interested in fostering babies and/or young children. Our need is for foster carers who have the skills and experience to support teenagers and we have a targeted digital recruitment strategy to address this. We have also undertaken a Parent and Child Together Placement recruitment campaign which is beginning to come to fruition.

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

Work continues to support a small number of looked after children through the

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

Children and young people referred to the RAP Tier 3 service all have severely disrupted and abusive backgrounds and their needs are among the most complex conceivable. The service provides intensive therapeutic support to the child/young person and their carers to stabilise their placement and encourage the development of healthy attachments for the individual children and develop their ability to regulate their emotions. Practitioners also work alongside Social Workers and Education staff to develop positive plans for the future, promote positive contact with birth families and to support the child's access to and use of education. The aim of this service is to maximise the potential for positive future outcomes for this vulnerable group of children and young people who are at significant risk of developing mental health problems, drug and alcohol addictions, criminal pathways and social exclusion. Involvement in this service could continue as long as 18 months, or longer dependant on the needs of those involved.

'Solutions' (Wrap Tier 2) is a therapeutic service offering early intervention and prevention services to children, young people and their families where there are indications of emotional and/or behavioural difficulties that could lead to the development of future placement breakdown and mental health problems. Therapy, primarily following a solution focused model, is providing children and their parents to promote emotional well-being, resilience and familial bonds to enable families to find alternative ways of coping with particular difficulties and/or predictable transitions in life.

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

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

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

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



The Fostering Network's Mockingbird programme

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

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

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

#### Parent and Child

Extension of timescales constantly. PAC placement could last as long as proceedings. Care tied up. Parent moves on, leave child with carer 12 – 18 months while looking for adoption. Offered out training to all carers. Take up, but not carrying forward to a placement. Need to revisit with current cohort of foster carers. Need carers who are able to offer flexible. Increase in allowance with pact, and step back down.

#### 4.3 Action Taken Due to Provider Failure

Placement stability meetings are held when placements become unstable.

The Disruption meetings process brings in the 'Family Group' Meeting service to bring stakeholders together to discuss solutions and outcomes. Lessons learnt will be recorded.

#### 4.4 Current and Projected Trends

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

##### Children age 10-18

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

##### Connected Persons

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

##### Children at Crisis Point

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

##### Older Children

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

##### No Wrong Door

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

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

## 4.5 Workforce

Foster carer recruitment.

The [Foster with Flintshire](#) portal has been developed to promote Fostering roles. The site contains a wealth of information, resources and stories from some of Flintshire's current Foster Carers.

## 4.6 Conclusions and Recommendations

### Summary of commissioning intentions

Mockingbird

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

Training for Foster carers

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

Advocacy

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

The voice of children and young people

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



## 5. DOMICILIARY CARE SUPPORT SERVICES

### 5.1 MARKET SUFFICIENCY

#### In house services

The Community Support Service provides care and support for adults who have an assessed need in their own homes. The service is split into three geographical localities and the service is delivered via a team of care staff who work across the whole of Flintshire. These three localities replicate social work and health teams locally and this aids in continuity and developing working relationships across different professions. The three localities are:

- Locality North East – Deeside area
- Locality South – Mold / Buckley area's
- Locality North West – Holywell / Flint area's

The Community Support Service adopts an ethos of reablement and supports people in line with the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Community Support Service provides services to people over 18 years who have been assessed as having a social care need living in Flintshire.

We are able to provide care and support to individuals who have an assessed care and support need. The range of health and care needs we support is wide and includes:

- frailty due to age related conditions
- physical disabilities
- Learning disabilities, including autistic spectrum disorders
- sensory impairments
- chronic illness
- long term health conditions
- dementia
- mental health, including depression, anxiety
- substance abuse
- palliative care

We support people via three different care and support models/approaches which vary depending on the individual and what matters to them.

- **Reablement** - This care and support approach is designed to support people to regain, improve and maintain their daily living skills and maximize their independence whilst continuing to live in their own home. Reablement is available to anyone who has an assessed need, this is a short term service which can be provided for up to six weeks.

The service has close links with hospital discharge teams and staff understand how difficult the transition from hospital to home can be. The service also plays an important role in working with people to achieve their own personal goals to aid integration back into their own environment at home and into their local community. The reablement service plays an important role in contributing to a reduction in hospital admissions and readmissions and works closely with a range of professionals including Occupational Therapists, Social Workers, Physiotherapists and District Nurses. The service also works positively with people and their families during this initial six week period to deliver

positive change and stability. We aim to support people to maximize their independence as quickly as possible and ensure that if people need ongoing care and support this is at the appropriate level.

- **Living Well** - our Living Well teams provide flexible care and support for people living with dementia. The service offers people a flexible package of care in their own home that is designed to allow independent living and aims to support people to stay active in their own community for as long as possible.

The Living Well teams provide long and short term care for people living with dementia, regularly reviews the care and support people receive to ensure the care and support is still relevant to the individual. One of the most important aspects of this service is that the care and support is tailored around the individual. Care, support and activities are developed over time as the staff build up a relationship with the person and they understand what they like and need. This has huge positive outcomes and contributes to people living with dementia maintaining their independence for as long as possible.

- People who have long-term **complex care** needs are supported by the service, with a distinct aim to remain independent in their own home. This includes daily living support, helping to achieve identified goals, support with medication. Where required we are able to support people at the end of their life with palliative care providing sensitive support to individual and their families through this difficult time.

The service is also able to support people who have complex relationships and this can include family situation or even where there has been a breakdown in the relationship with other care services. Often the service offers vital stability and reassurance that can support people overcome a crisis within their home life.

### **Local Domiciliary Care Market - Dom Care providers**

There are 49 providers on the North Wales Domiciliary Care Framework who applied to deliver services in Flintshire of which 28 are actively delivering care in the area, although a small proportion are delivering supported living exclusively under an alternative framework. This is in addition to the Local Authority's in-house care provision which more detail is provided on in the following section.

Both independent sector and Local Authority services are currently delivering around 7500 hours of domiciliary care per week. Flintshire County Council in-house provision delivers approximately 14% of this market, but aims to increase service delivery in this area to support more people to live at home, in line with the Council Plan. These figures exclude the provision of Extra Care, from which the Local Authority delivers around 370 hours of care per week.

Considering independent providers only, no provider holds more than 12% of the independent market share in the local area when considering delivered hours, with the average for a provider being 4.5%.

In regards to the business demographic of providers, the vast majority (12 out of the 18) are local providing services either exclusively in Flintshire, or within Flintshire and neighbouring authorities. Another 4 provider's work across the North Wales region, while we also have 2 national providers.

In regards to the demographic of people accessing domiciliary care, the vast majority are people aged 85 and over;

Age Group	Percentage of Provision
18-24	1%
25-64	17%
65-74	12%
75-84	27%
85+	43%

Of those under the age of 65, a similar proportion of people receive support for a learning disability as a physical or sensory impairment.

**Extra Care**

Extra Care continues to be an extremely popular housing choice for older people in Flintshire, which offers them the opportunity to live independently whilst having the support of an on-site care and support team, if and when needed. This in turn, releases capacity and time in community based domiciliary care.

The benefits of living in an Extra Care facility include:

- Staying independent for longer with on-site support, in your own living space.
- Support can be increased and decreased based on needs.
- Emergency support available, including at night.
- Enables couples where one partner is highly dependent to remain living together.
- Opportunities to socialise with other residents in a community setting.

The Council currently has 4 Extra Care facilities, Llys Eleanor (Deeside), Llys Jasmine (Mold), Llys Raddington (Flint) and the newly occupied Plas yr Ywen (Holywell).

The Council are working to expand our network of Extra Care accommodation with our partners. A new Extra Care site will be established in Buckley.

**Challenges**

There are some critical pressures and key issues faced by social services in the areas of workforce, commissioning and funding criteria. There are suggestions on how to address some of these issues through the reviewing of social work roles, improving the career pathway in social care, and offering greater clarity on the criteria applied to particular funding streams.

There are other challenges that there are local, regional, and national workstreams looking to address, such as recruitment with WeCare Wales and children’s placements, however it is important to note that these still present as critical pressures for the delivery of social services in Flintshire.

- The ICF and Transformation Funding moving to the Regional Integration Fund’s (RIF) a five year programme is welcomed, however we continue to work through the guidance and impact of the changes. Due to the value of this funding, it is critical that any changes in criteria are articulated with notice so the Local Authority can consider and plan services with this in mind.
- Procurement restrictions have been conflicting to this need to act rapidly, specifically where there has been a need to commission directly with a provider. In addition procurement processes have proven heavy and unattractive to certain providers, particularly in the third sector, which then hinders the number of suppliers submitting tender applications.

- There is an urgent priority around ensuring a sufficient workforce is in place for the delivery of social services and social care functions. The recruitment and retention of Social Workers, Occupational Therapists and direct care workers has become a particular challenge.

Other local actions include:

- Move Micro-care from a pilot programme to part of the ongoing Social Services offer.
- Progress in-house residential care expansion schemes

As previously reported, the population changes over the next five years will have an impact on the sufficiency of provision. This increase number of people living in the community with dementia and complex needs may increase the demand for home care services, in particular 'double manned packages of care'. This is something the authority needs to consider in order to continue to support individuals to live at home for longer.

As outlined in The North Wales Social Care and Community Health Workforce Strategy, the sector is under significant pressure as a result of :

- Changes to legislation as a result of the Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
- A new qualification framework
- Competitive pay structures with other sectors
- Competition from other sectors

A further challenge is the financial implications decreasing budgets could have on the amount of services which are able to be commissioned and provided.

As of January 2022, areas of ongoing pressure include:

- double person care
- rural areas
- border areas between local authorities and with England.
- discharge from hospital
- hand-backs from providers as a result of staffing challenges
- increased business costs – utility bills and insurance
- increased fuel costs, borne in the main by care staff themselves

### **Micro-care**

To meet the growing demand for care the Micro-care pilot project has been established to expand both the supply of care in and the choices available for people across Flintshire.

Micro-care enterprises are small businesses ranging from sole traders up to businesses employing 5 people who offer flexible and personalised care and support services to vulnerable people, tailored to their individual's needs.

The project supported by two development officers seeks to promote social care as a career option and help develop micro-care enterprises to support vulnerable people across Flintshire.

The aim is to encourage people to become micro-carers who are either:

- Interested in providing social care services to older people but may have no experience
- Currently working in the care sector but interested in being their own boss
- Actively supporting people in their local communities

- Want to do something that support others and makes a difference

The Micro-care team work with individuals to:

- Support them develop their business or idea
- Provide information on training, funding and other available support and resources
- Support individuals to develop and deliver a quality service in line with current Welsh Government legislation and regulations
- Providing links to a network of other micro-care providers for mutual support

As of February 2022, there were 20 Micro-carers trading in Flintshire.

<b>Direct Payment Hours Delivered</b>	<b>April 20 - March 21</b>	<b>April 21 - October 2021</b>	<b>Total over pilot period (To Jan 22)</b>
Direct Payment Care Hours	1680.00	1813.00	3493.00
Direct Payment Support Hours	2377.00	11464.75	13841.75
Direct Payment Wellbeing hours	0.00	86.50	86.50
<b>Average Total no. of hours deliver over for the pilot</b>	<b>4057.00</b>	<b>13364.25</b>	<b>17421.25</b>

<b>Private Hours Delivered</b>	<b>April 20 - March 21</b>	<b>April 21 - January 2022</b>	<b>Total over period</b>
Private - Care Hours	233.50	1212.50	1446.00
Private - Support Hours	660.25	2705.25	3365.50
Private - Wellbeing hours	1272.50	2370.50	3643.00
<b>Average Total no. of hours deliver over for the pilot</b>	<b>2166.25</b>	<b>6288.25</b>	<b>8454.50</b>

As well as the above, we have successfully established a virtual micro-care network group, meeting on average every two weeks. The Flintshire Micro-Care Team have also created micro-care web pages for use by both micro-carers and people looking for micro-carers. It provides key information for people considering working as a micro-carer. For the public it also has explanations about micro-care and lists micro-carers and their contact details. This will support our aim to develop ongoing sustainability in the project. The website is located at [www.careatflintshire.co.uk](http://www.careatflintshire.co.uk)

This programme is now moving out of the 'pilot' phase and incorporated in to our offer.

## 5.2 MARKET STABILITY

Need outweighs supply. Due to the challenging financial climate and need to encourage more people into the care industry, consideration is being given to other ways for care to be provided e.g. micro-care.

There is a challenge of a deficit of care workers, those requiring care are struggling with a decreasing pool of carers. Large care agencies have premises and overheads to pay for and

investors/stakeholders to satisfy, so care per hour costs are higher, sadly not passed onto the caring staff, many of whom are on minimum or just above. The latter point does not help to retain or encourage new people into the caring roll.

Within Older People's services, there is a diverse provider base, no reliance on one provider. However within LD/PD, there is a small number of providers to choose from who are relied upon to meet the needs of the service.

There is a broad range of services available depending on what the individual would prefer e.g. traditional homecare care, Micro-care and Direct Payments.

### **Support for the sector**

The Contracts and Commissioning Team have facilitated regular meetings with residential care, domiciliary care and Supported Living providers. Whilst these meetings took place before the pandemic, their frequency increased. The support and networking became a vital resource for providers. The meetings were also attend by colleagues from the Environmental Health Team, Health and Safety Officers and BCUHB officers so partners could advise and support when needed

Alongside these meetings, a dedicated email address has been established where providers could pose COVID-19 related questions and queries where they could be responded to in a timely manner.

The team have also had daily phone contact with providers to collect data, enquire about PPE supplies, discuss any arising issues or just to be there to listen and support in this difficult time.

The Council have also worked with Mind in North East Wales to provide extra support for social care workers. Information, talking therapies and activities designed to support wellbeing during this difficult time were available.

## **5.3 Consideration of Market Quality**

### **Progress for Providers**

Progress for Providers in Care Homes is a self-assessment tool for managers to use with their staff to check how they are doing in delivering personalised support for people living in care homes. 'Personalised Support' is a key aim of national policy and means tailoring support to the individual, and enabling them to have as much choice and control over their service and life as possible, rather than supporting everyone in the same way. This means learning what matters to the person and ensuring that any support wanted or needed is shaped by this. Using person-centred thinking tools and approaches helps staff to provide the best support that they can in ways that reflect what is important to the person. Working in this way is not about doing more, but about doing things differently.

The programme has been expanded to include domiciliary and extra care services and in 2020/21, the Progress for Providers Programme has been introduced to providers within learning disability services, where person-centred practice has long been a feature of care and support within this sector.

#### **5.4 Provision of service in the Welsh Language**

As part of the Mwy Na Geiriau framework the Council ensures that service users and their families are in receipt of the Active Offer. Whilst this has been taken up for some social work assessments, individuals and their families are aware of the current shortage in care staff and we have not received requests for care to be delivered by Welsh speaking carers. We are however, very conscious of this and throughout the recent pandemic have observed an increase in the numbers of staff who are learning Welsh and those who are re-kindling previous Welsh language skills which many not have been used for many years. The Council works in partnership with our local FEI to provide Welsh Language courses at all levels to meet individual's needs

#### **5.5 Sustainability of provision**

Flintshire County Council has recently employed a Planning and Development Officer to support the independent adult social care sector through the recent COVID-19 pandemic, and to become confident and resilient to meet the support needs of older people in Flintshire into the future. The officer will work closely with the adult social care sector to aid sustainability and recovery following the pandemic. This will include supporting with sustainability plans and recruitment drives in house and across the sector.

#### **5.6 Risks to market stability**

Both in-house and independent care providers continue to have significant staff vacancies as existing carers vacate the care sector for a variety of well-rehearsed reasons.

This is of concern with regards to the stability of the market and our ability to deliver care particularly to harder to reach areas

Whilst Welsh Government have made provision for the delivery of the Real Living Wage to direct care workers, the impact of this on pay compression and none care staff may have an impact on market stability as the next financial year unfolds.

Business costs, outside of wages are also increasing with inflation escalating and fuel costs in particular increasing significantly. For Domiciliary Care this has a significant impact on the attractiveness of the role and the financial viability of existing business models.

Recently, we have experienced the repercussions of the requirements for training and registration on the local markets, with some England based providers withdrawing services from Flintshire as they are reluctant to train staff to meet the requirements for registration with Social Care Wales. This has affected our ability to source care in areas which border England, such as Broughton, Sealand and Saltney.

#### **5.7 NON-REGULATED PROVISION [PREVENTATIVE SERVICES]**

A long term priority for Flintshire County Council is to continue to support people to regain their independence, reduce reliance on the statutory care sector. This will be done by providing effective access to the social prescribing / third sector services through the Single Point of Access as well as effective management of admissions to set up / step down placements.

#### **Local examples of community approaches:**

Age Friendly Communities - The Ageing Well in Flintshire Action Plan identifies what needs to be done and by whom, to make growing older in Flintshire a good place to be.

Single Point of Access (SPoA) - SPoA is multi-agency initiatives in Flintshire providing support for adults. By telephoning just one number an individual will be able to speak to someone about community health, wellbeing and care services. Access to information, advice, assistance, assessment and co-ordinated care will be available. SPoA also supports a co-ordinator who can advise and signpost to organisations within the Third Sector.

DEWIS - Dewis Cymru is a website that aims to help people with well-being, whether that's their own well-being or the well-being of a family member or friend.

The website contains information that can help people think about what matters to them and has information on services that can be accessed for support. Organisations across Wales can upload their own information to the site

### **5.8 Social Value**

The **recruitment of volunteers** began at the start of April, initiated by colleagues in FLVC. In mid-April, FLVC handed over a group of around 70 volunteers to the Social Services Deployment Team.

The Workforce Development Team, supported by FLVC, provided some basic training to volunteers, relating to safeguarding, food hygiene, health and safety, consent, data protection, dignity, principles of care and confidentiality. By the end of April 2020, following the training and required DBS checks, a group of 64 volunteers were available for deployment to volunteering opportunities across the county.

The volunteer group provided support from April to August to a number of activities and initiatives including twice-weekly delivery of PPE for staff at older people's care homes and domiciliary providers and schools, weekly shopping deliveries to two Supported Living Homes, delivery of donates chocolate eggs, 1:1 telephone support, Well Fed project and Food Bank Food parcel delivery; and delivery of iPads and Codgers Quarterly Newsletter to reduce isolation in care settings. Volunteers also supported the opening of Tŷ Treffynnon care home and transported an employee to shifts at an independent sector care home.

In 2020/21, the Progress for Providers Programme has been introduced to providers within learning disability services, where person-centred practice has long been a feature of care and support within this sector. Working with Helen Sanderson Associates once again, providers were engaged to review and adapt the existing Progress for Providers self-



assessment tool to ensure it was aspirational and reflective of existing high standards within the sector.

Representatives from in-house and independent provider services worked with the Council to create a new, bespoke version of Progress for Providers, a version that acknowledges the particular importance of digital communication for people with learning disabilities. The programme supports the implementation of both the North Wales Learning Disability Strategy and Welsh Government Improving Lives Programme.

12 independent sector providers and the Council's in-house services have signed up to the part of the programme.

## 5.9 Resources

Flintshire benefits from a strong third sector presence and networks and a positive relationship between the Council and Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC). The Wellbeing Team in FLVC and AVOW (Association of Voluntary Organisations Wrexham) supports the third sector and statutory partners in a number of ways:

- Promoting third sector organisations, services and activities to statutory partners
- Representing the third sector at strategic planning and partnership groups
- Engaging the third sector in consultations and engagement about health and social services
- Promoting partnership working within the third sector and across sectors
- Signpost to or provide business support and funding
- Provide training to organisations to improve their capacity and effectiveness
- Explain the complexities of commissioning and procurement
- Help keep services up to date with the latest evidence base, and guide you through the changes in NHS and local authority structures.
- Help the start-up of new services or groups
- Support the third sector in Flintshire and Wrexham to access FLVC and AVOW's services

## 5.10 Direct Payments

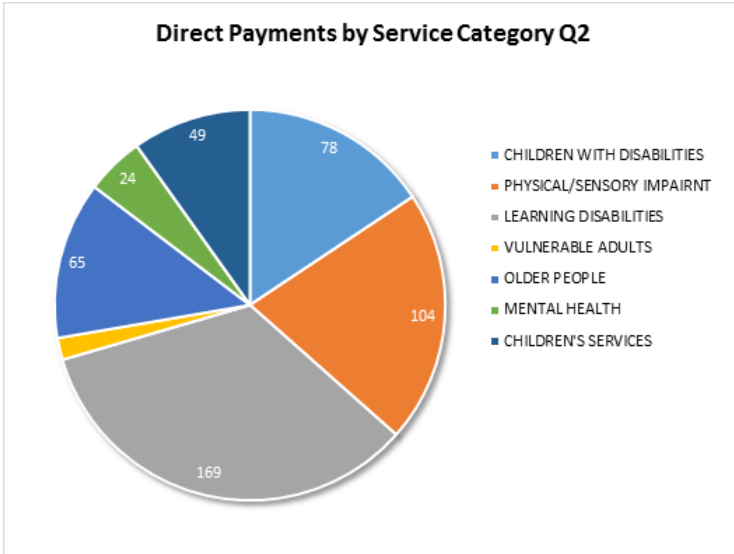
Direct payments are monetary amounts made available by local authorities to individuals, or their representatives, to enable them to arrange bespoke solutions that meet their assessed care and support needs, and achieve agreed well-being outcomes. In the case of informal Carers direct payments can be used to meet their eligible support needs.

Direct Payments support a collaborative approach to designing bespoke care and support solutions. Individuals with eligible care and support needs are empowered to focus on what matters to them, identify key outcomes that enable them to live their best life.

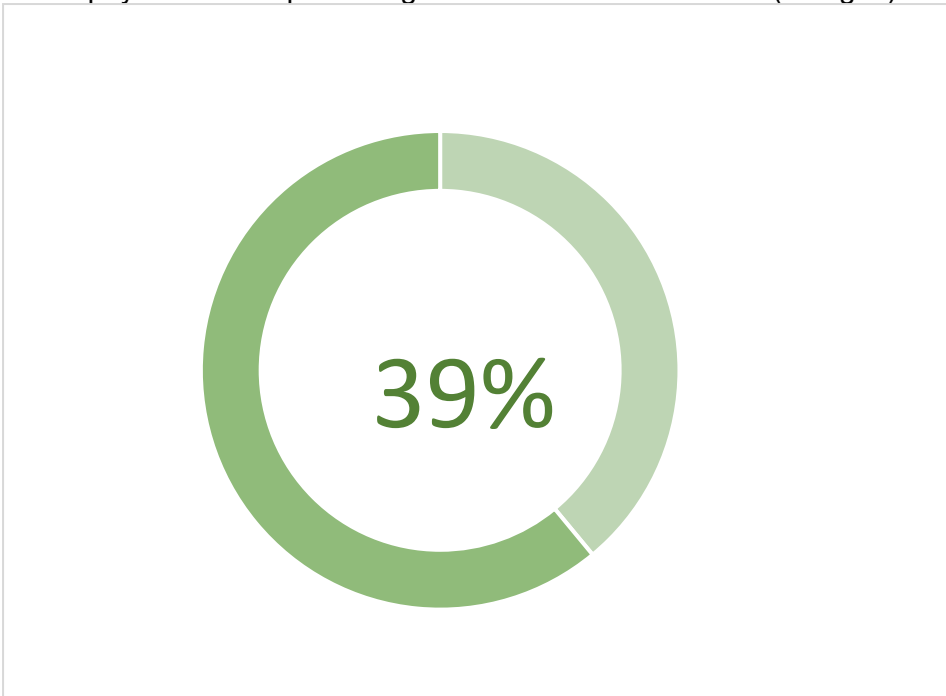
Direct payments are an important mechanism by which people can exercise choice, voice and control to decide how to achieve their needs for care and support and achieve their personal outcomes. In Flintshire our approaches focus on strengths and outcomes, they aim to enable citizens to retain autonomy over their life, support, self-determination and autonomy and efficient use of resources.

Direct payments feature strongly throughout the SSWB (Wales) Act 2014 as a means of helping people exercise choice and control. In the provision of, and operation of direct payments, local arrangements are aligned with The Care and Support (Direct Payments) (Wales) Regulations 2015' made under sections 50, 51, 52 and 54 of the Act.

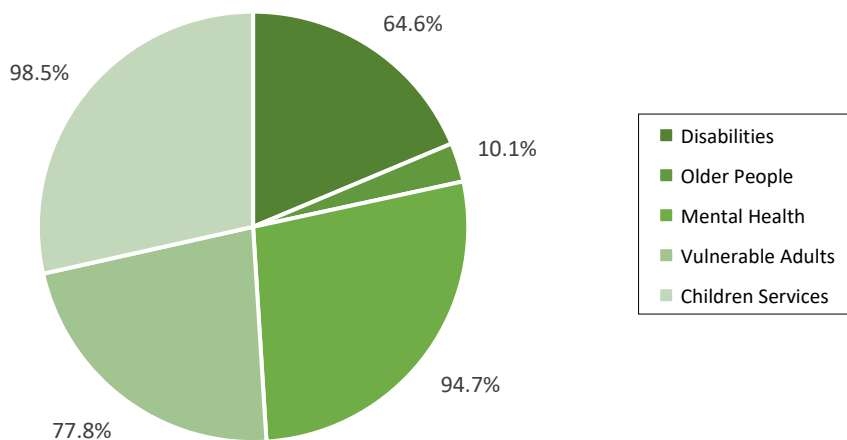
*During Quarter 2 (July to Sept) 498 people received a Direct Payment in Flintshire. This represents the highest number of recipients per head of population of any Welsh Local Authority. Direct Payments currently make up 39% of Home based services.*



Direct payments as a percentage of Home Based Services (All ages) 2021/22



% of "home-based" services delivered via a direct payment by area 2021/22



### Direct Payments Support Service

In recent years the Flintshire Direct Payments Support Services has been completely redesigned and now provides a far more holistic service benefitting both Flintshire Citizens, social services and third sector partners.

#### Key benefits of the service:

- Far greater control over the service and how it meets the department's priorities.
- Service works collaboratively with social work teams to embed person centered practices in line with the SSWB (Wales) 2014 Act
- Shared systems, improved communication, and better access to the service.
- Outcomes focused Referral process centers on what is to be achieved and supports joint working with the individual to own the outcome and develop bespoke solutions.
- Better placed to work in partnership with third sector organisations.
- Autonomy to develop, test and imbed innovation in line with the depts. Ambition and priorities.
- Far more holistic approach centered on the needs of citizens in the first instance, but also practitioners, communities, partners etc.
- Consideration for the Personal Assistant market in terms of standards, quality, training and opportunities for progression.
- Support that is proportionate. Importantly, we don't want to over support people, but enable them to manage their own arrangements.

#### Some feedback from citizens using Direct Payments.

- *"My life before direct payments was sometimes chaotic with Agency support. My team support each other and I am never let down now!"*
- *"Yes, it means our son has time away from the family unit to build on his confidence and gives the rest of the family some down time to do things we couldn't normally do"*
- *"It provides the freedom to use the funds to enrich my son's life in ways best suited to his needs and well-being. I recruit my Personal Assistants for my son so that he has a mix of ages and sexes and train them myself to help them better understand his*

needs”.

- *The system has enabled me to find the most appropriate care for my husband, its flexibility has given me as a carer much needed support”.*
- *“I employ a Personal Assistant, without him I would be lost”*

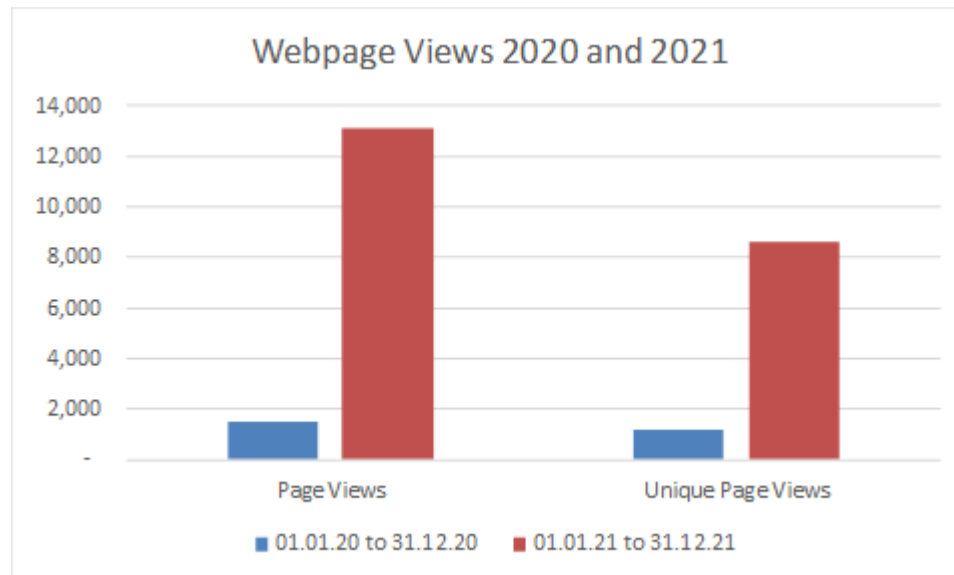
### Direct Payments Web Pages

Working in partnership with Flintshire I.T we redesigned our web based Direct Payments pages. Our focus has been on improving information, accessibility and usability. Our vision was to co-produce a one stop shop for citizens to obtain information, advice and support in relation to direct payments and independent living.

Feedback from citizens, colleagues and third sector stakeholders confirms that our approach has been very well received. The platform aims to encourage people to find out more about direct payments and consider whether they might benefit from increased choice, control and flexibility around available options to meet their assessed care and support needs.

The following graphics help demonstrate the significant difference our newly designed approaches to providing citizens with web based information, advice and support has had.

Total of all webpages	01.01.20 to 31.12.20	01.01.21 to 31.12.21	% increase
<b>Page Views</b>	1,512	13,109	766.99%
<b>Unique Page Views</b>	1,181	8,584	626.84%



Link:

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Direct-Payments/Home.aspx>

### Personal Assistant Workforce

For many citizens having maximum choice and control over how their physical support is met, directly employing Personal Assistants is a very attractive and rewarding option.

We have worked in collaboration with Citizens to design and implement a unique platform that supports both direct payments employers and Personal Assistants.

The Flintshire PA Portal enables direct payments employers to search for available PA's in their area autonomously and for PA's to promote themselves and their availability to work.

Personal Assistants complete a profile describing themselves, their experience, availability etc. and prospective direct payments employers can search the data base and engage with people they feel may be able to help meet their needs and/or achieve personal well-being outcomes.

Recently we have added a vacancy page that enables citizens to post their requirements i.e. needs to be met/outcomes to be achieved, making the system a two way process.

Link:

<https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/Resident/Social-Services/Direct-Payments/PA-Portal.aspx>

### **Direct Payments promotional Films**

Working in partnership with a small local film company (Follow Films) we have supported Flintshire Direct Payments recipients to tell their unique stories of their lives and how direct payments have contributed towards them achieving positive outcomes and improved life experiences.

We are all very proud of the films that have been produced so far. The impact of these films and the feedback received has been significant and the films are now being utilised by local authorities and institutions far and wide.

Links:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ko8MnMw9sS8>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IEPcGb7RwrQ>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MVITQR1q-eA>

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBqY\\_xiBw9U](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qBqY_xiBw9U)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eJPeFZEYrzo>

## **5.11 Self funders**

We have introduced an online financial self-assessment to give people the opportunity to arrange their own self-funded care.

## **5.12 Workforce**

Identified issues include:

- Difficulty of the work duties and how hard it is
- The pandemic has left people wanting to retire early
- The difficulty of the work / clients
- The pay

The North Wales Social Care and Community Health Workforce is in a time of unprecedented change whereby they are required to deliver services differently with a focus on prevention,

protection, intervention, partnership and integrated working, coproduction and empowerment; requiring a different emphasis on workforce skills and training.

The sector provides a wide range of care and support across a range of settings including people's homes, residential and nursing homes, hospitals and community settings, making it one of the most diverse workforces across a range of organisations and people including social care, health, the independent sector including private and third sector organisations and carers.

Delivering the Social Services & Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 requires that not only health and social care partners deliver integrated services, but that there is a greater emphasis on partnership working with other sectors such as housing, education and corporate services, to meet an individual's needs.

The introduction of new working practices in meeting the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 is likely to lead to skills gaps in the social care and health workforce reflecting the substantial changes in social care and health organisations, including the introduction of new legislation and the restructuring of services.

Much has been written on the issues surrounding recruitment and selection in the Domiciliary Care workforce. In March 2016, Welsh Government published a research report on the 'Factors that affect the recruitment and retention of domiciliary care workers and the extent to which these factors impact upon the quality of domiciliary care' (Atkinson et al, 2016). The research, undertaken by Manchester Metropolitan University sought to identify factors that influence whether people choose to 'become and remain working as domiciliary care workers'.

There are approximately 15,000 domiciliary care staff employed by commissioned care providers in Wales (Care Council for Wales, 2015). Welsh Government's consultation in to the Domiciliary Workforce (2016) recommends that those working in the sector are recognised as the skilled professionals they are. The negative image of the sector must be challenged to encourage people to join the social care workforce.

The key factor highlighted by this consultation included:

- Low wages
- Work pressures
- Unsociable hours
- Poor terms and conditions
- 'Zero hours' or 'non-guaranteed hours' contracts deterring people from joining the sector, as there were no guaranteed hours
- Some call times not enough to address the needs of the individual
- Lack of training and career development opportunities
- Seen as a low status job compared to healthcare

Flintshire County Council has bought in to the Carefirst Employee Assistance Programme. Carefirst provides confidential, impartial advice and support 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, online or via the freephone telephone number. The service is free for all employees to access whenever they need it.

Carefirst offers free and confidential assessment, short term counselling and follow up services to employees who have personal and/or work related problems. These can include from complex issues affecting mental and emotional well-being, such as alcohol and

substance abuse, stress, grief, family problems and psychological disorders. A similar form of support may be of benefit to those working in the sector to build a resilient, supported workforce. The effect on sickness levels and retention levels can be monitored alongside and implementation.

For many citizens wanting maximum choice and control over how their physical support is met, employing Personal Assistants is a very attractive option.

Personal Assistants are employed directly by the person needing help and support, or by an appointed Suitable Person. Supported by the Flintshire Direct Payments team citizens are assisted to explore their networks to identify and recruit the perfect person for them. People generally want to employ people they can develop a trusting relationship with and many PA's stay with their employer and adapt to their changing needs over considerable lengths of time.

There are approximately 500 personal Assistants working across Flintshire, supporting some of our most vulnerable citizens. They are a diverse workforce made up of a wide range of people delivering support for numerous different reasons.

The Flintshire direct payments scheme has consciously set out to change the support available for this significant, but sometimes disassociated workforce. Some of the initiatives to date are:

- Personal Assistant Coordinator engaging with the workforce. Pastoral support for PA's working in complex/isolated positions being built into the role.
- Personal Assistant Code of Conduct developed and implemented. This has helped PA's understand their role, where they fit in and what the expectations of them are.
- Flintshire Personal Assistant Induction Certificate developed around 7 core modules and designed specifically around the PA role. Since its introduction 11 PA's have completed the certificate and a further 35 are working towards the award. For PA's enrolled on the scheme there are a further 50 training modules that they are able to access in their own time. This is the first initiative of its kind and we are in discussions with Social Care Wales regarding the potential for a National approach.
- Personal Assistant Portal developed to aid recruitment for direct payments employers and to promote work opportunities for prospective PA's.

Dedicated Direct Payments Social Media pages developed and being embedded

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.

### **5.13 Conclusions and Recommendations**

There are some critical pressures and key issues faced by social services in the areas of workforce, commissioning and funding criteria. There are suggestions on how to address some of these issues through the reviewing of social work roles, improving the career pathway in social care, and offering greater clarity on the criteria applied to particular funding streams.

Other local actions include:

- Move Micro-care from a pilot programme to part of the ongoing Social Services offer.



## **Appendix 1**

### **Summary Findings of Care Home Business Diagnostics (2017)**

#### **General description of business**

The group owned care homes were able to provide varying degrees of back of house support and many administrative tasks were conducted on a central basis. This allowed the registered manager to concentrate more on the delivery of care than worrying about the day to viability of the business.

Smaller independent homes were more reliant on the capability of the registered manager and time pressures and work load were more noticeable in these homes.

#### **Client/Patient Base**

The differing factors between private and Local Authority (LA) sponsored patients were investigated and at no time was any discrimination noted in valuing patients. Because of financial pressures most of the homes are now requesting top up fees from LA sponsored patients. The business advisers observed care and innovative methods adopted by the homes to care for the patients. The level of activities with the patients were high, the care assistants were engaged with the patients and communication between the managers and staff appeared to be positive.

#### **Staff**

The availability of local transport has an impact on some of the homes and those on good bus routes were more likely to be able to staff their homes than those off a main bus route. All of the homes interviewed paid at or above the living wage but recognised that this would be difficult in the future as wages increase above the income streams. Group owned homes had central HR services available to them and several of the family owned homes contracted with external HR agencies such as Peninsula to manage their HR issues.

Sickness and absence rates are high in comparison to other industries but it is accepted as one of the negatives of the sector. The most common causes of absence is sickness and diarrhoea. The impact is for a short term need to replace staff and the added costs associated with this. All homes operated a statutory sickness policies.

When asked directly about the difficulties of recruiting staff there was a variance in replies. Several homes stated that more should be done to increase the image of the sector and that very often potential recruits were unaware and unprepared for the nature of the job. The variation in replies came when some homes stated that they had difficulty in finding suitable candidates and others stated that they had waiting lists. Others suggested that the NHS "poached" the experienced members of staff and several homes were proud of the fact that majority of their staff had been employed by them for many years. It was concluded that the difference is likely to be effected by the size of the home and the way that the home is managed. The fact is that there is a need to attract new entrants into the sector and increases in the living wage will add to the financial pressures on owners in the future.

#### **Training**

All homes visited were very proud of their training record and acknowledged the value of the Flintshire County Council training vouchers. The homes owned by a group have their own training programmes in place and often used external training providers. They recognise the value of career progression and remarked that this policy often assisted in staff retention rates. Smaller family owned homes found the cost element to be more of a handicap but still

recognised the need. There was a willingness for managers to broaden their management skills but stated that time to train was a major barrier in them not proceeding.

### **Premises**

Many homes are converted Victorian merchant houses or country homes and several had recently expanded the premises. Many are old and difficult to alter. Many of the older buildings are not energy efficient and the ability to meet the new care standards is beginning to take effect. One home interviewed had a genuine concern about the prospect of having to decommission 4 rooms which would reduce their income by £100,000 per annum. Others spoke about the cost of heating the buildings with one example of a monthly oil bill of £1,400. Other businesses have used as much of the outside space as practical thus restricting future growth. Homes that are located in an urban area tended to be restricted for future expansion and in the sample we visited, there seemed little capacity for new growth. However, homes located in more rural Flintshire have significant space, excellent outside space but are less convenient to access.

### **Sales and Marketing**

When asked "What is the breakeven figure for the number of patient's resident in the home to make the business viable?" No home could answer this. However, they were fully aware as to whether they were losing money or not. Almost all of the homes were fully occupied and several had waiting lists for rooms. This negated the need to advertise the homes to attract residents.

### **Asset Management**

A recent grant from Flintshire County Council for asset purchase has had a significant effect on the sector and was broadly welcomed by all homes. There is a general acceptance that a good standard of assets is an important part of providing a quality service and all homes stated that they regularly review and upgrade assets. A common comment amongst all homes was the wish that an asset library be established where equipment that is expensive to purchase and only used on occasion could be sourced and a rental scheme for larger equipment be considered.

**Environmental and Energy.** The cost of utilities was highlighted as an issue and there was a distinct difference between group owned and privately owned homes. The group owned homes had a central utilities policy and the purchasing decisions were not made by the registered manager, but the privately-owned homes were very conscious of the cost implications. Heating costs were the biggest concern and many of the businesses had signs of being very inefficient. Several homes suggested that they would be interested in a joint procurement project to give themselves a stronger buying power. The value of a robust Waste policy is an area that is becoming more topical and most homes indicated that if we were able to provide support in this area, it would be welcomed.

### **Finance**

All of the homes are reporting that the financial viability of the business is getting more challenging. The majority of the homes require a top up to LA sponsored fees and need a proportion of private patients to survive. The impact of the new care standards will add to cost in the short term but the biggest threat to the sector will be the cost of employing suitable staff. The increase in the living wage, a general reduction in unemployment rates, increase in employment and the unknown impact of Brexit suggests that the pool of candidates will get smaller. Profit margins are tight and any increase in interest rates plus increases in other overheads such as business rates, fuel costs and food costs will have an impact on the long term sustainability of the sector.

**Compliance**

The new care standards are very much at the forefront of planning for all of the homes. Each home had their own needs to address on compliance, but they have accepted that the intention of the care standard is for “increasing standards”, and have prioritised these issues.

**Growth**

Many of the homes have either recently increased their capacity or are intending to increase their capability. There is limited opportunity for some of the homes visited to extend due to restricted outside space and one home is for sale, so there are no plans for growth. Several of the privately owned homes indicated that they would be prepared to meet a growth adviser in the future.

## Appendix 2 – Feedback from workshops with Responsible Individuals

In October 2021, the Contracts & Commissioning Teams arranged workshops with Responsible Individuals of local regulated services to gather feedback to support the regional Market Stability Report.

The workshops focused on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats to the sector at the present time.



MSR - Dom care  
SWOT 14.10.21.pdf



MSR - Residential  
SWOT 15.10.21.pdf



MSR - Supported  
Living SWOT 15.10.2

## **Appendix 3 – North Wales Regional Survey for Registered Market Providers**

### **Introduction**

This short survey is part of a programme of data analysis and engagement with care providers across the North Wales region as a precursor to the preparation of a Regional Market Stability Report.

This online survey is targeted at non local authority providers located across the 6 Local Authority council areas of Ynys Môn, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham which includes the footprint of the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board.

The survey is for those that provide the following statutory services:

- Care Home Services (Adult)
- Care Home Services (Children)
- Secure Accommodation Services (Children)
- Residential Family Services
- Adoption Services
- Fostering Services
- Adult Placement ('Shared Lives') Services
- Advocacy Services
- Domiciliary Care Services
- Supported Living

Providers have helped design this survey and will seek to provide an up-to-date snapshot of the regional care market and insights as to future business intentions, complemented by detailed analysis of available data.

The survey and data analysis will be followed up with a programme of interviews with providers to explore the issues raised in more depth to inform a series of recommendations at both council and regional level. For those interested in the interviews, there is an opportunity to sign-up at the end of this survey.

### **Commissioning context**

The North Wales Regional Partnership (formed of the 6 County Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board), under the direction of the Regional Partnership Board, has identified integrated commissioning as a key priority and statutory partners are committed to working with providers across sectors in a spirit of co-production to shape future delivery models of care and ensure that the market locally remains robust and is supported to deliver the care that our citizens expect.

This survey is providing you with the chance to tell us what you think the opportunities and challenges are moving forwards. What you tell us will be a vital part in ensuring our focus and our resources remain on supporting an innovative and flourishing care sector in this part of Wales.

### **Completing the survey**

Please complete the survey from the perspective of your registered care sector or service, even if you are part of a larger group of registered care / nursing homes or other care services.

We are encouraging you to answer every question where appropriate, but if you have any queries then please do not hesitate to contact us at:  
[northwalescollaborative@denbighshire.gov.uk](mailto:northwalescollaborative@denbighshire.gov.uk)

### **Data protection and confidentiality**

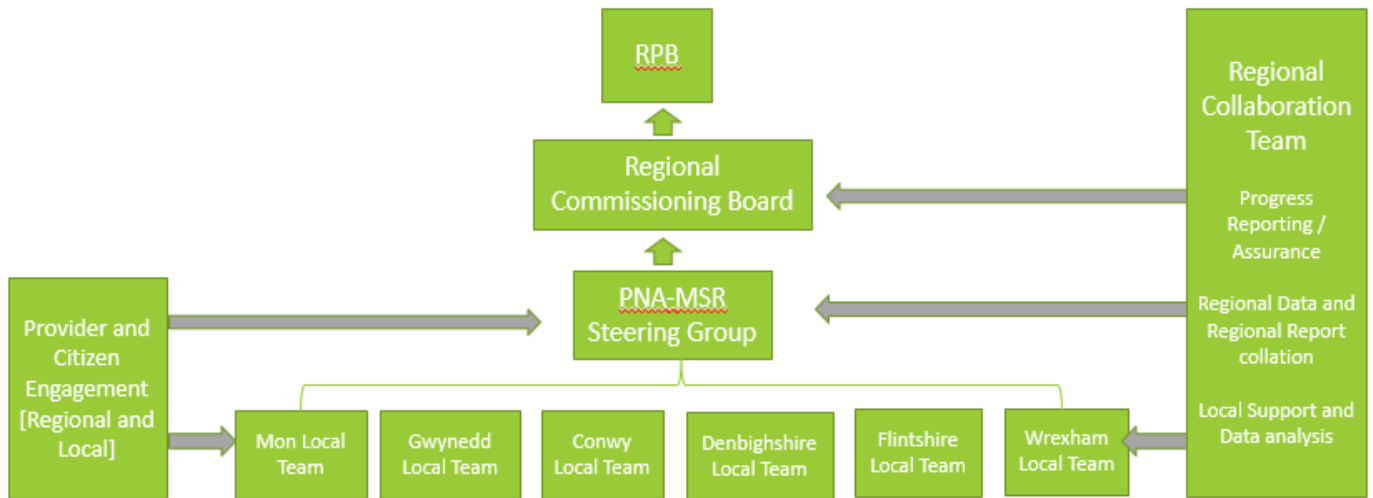
Survey responses will be collected using Snap Survey. For information on how and where your data will be stored, please see Snap Survey's privacy policy. The information you give us will be anonymised and your comments will not be identifiable.

### **Results**

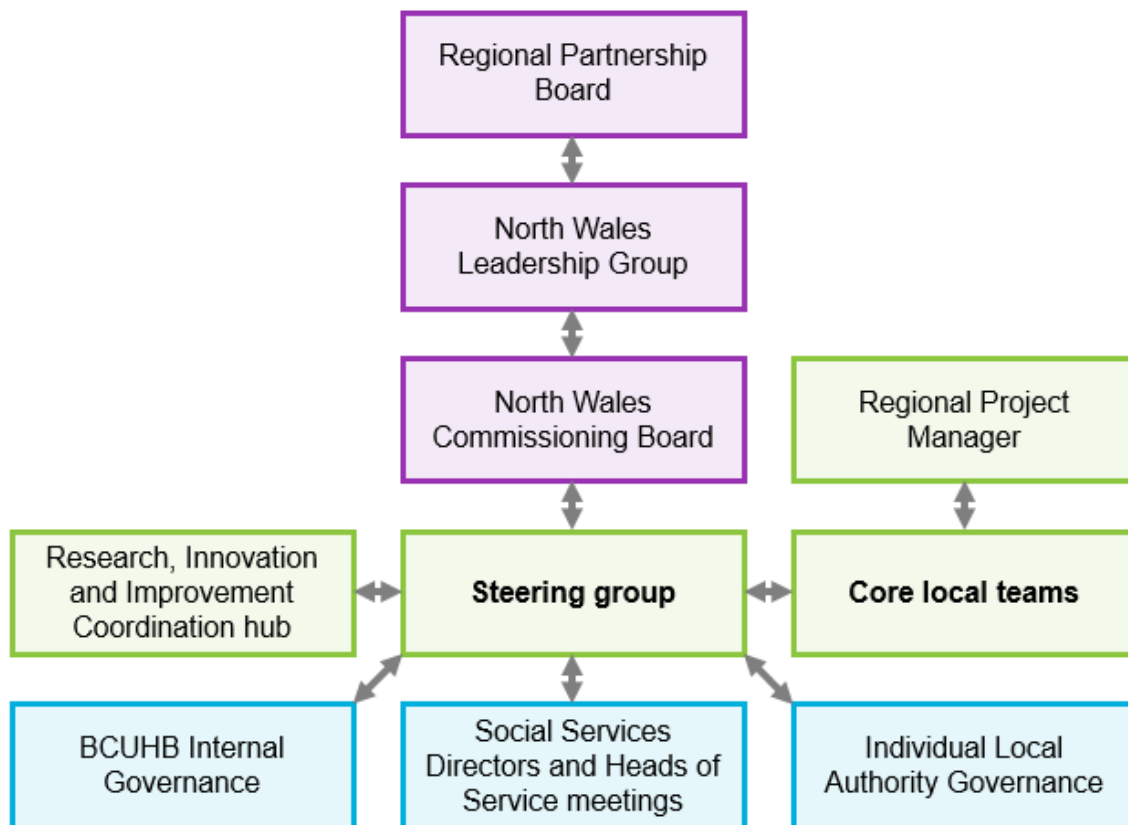


FCC - MSR Provider  
Survey Final 010422

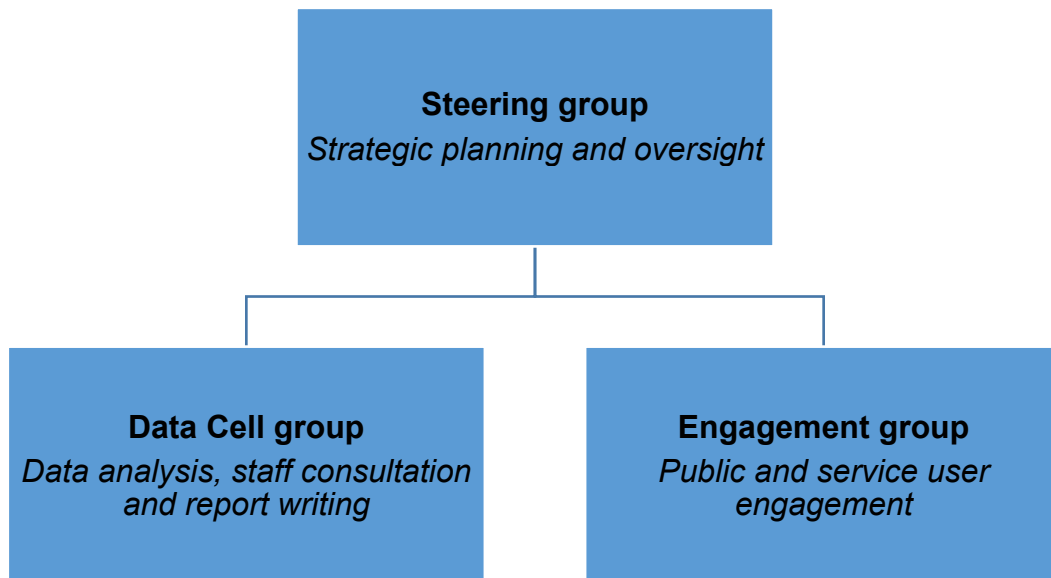
### North Wales Approach to the development of the PNA & MSR



### North Wales MSR Governance structure



## Project Management structure





# Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) (including Welsh Language & Socio-economic Duty) V9

<b>Name of Policy or Practice</b>	North Wales Social Care Market Stability Report		
<b>Responsible Officer / Head of Department</b> (responsible for the Policy or Practice)	Morwena Edwards and Claire Darlington		
<b>Service / Department</b>	North Wales Social Care and Wellbeing Improvement Collaborative	<b>Start Date of Assessment</b>	06/06/22

Name of officer(s) (and partners) completing the EqIA		
Name(s)	Job Title(s)	Signature(s)
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[SG attendees]		

\*Consider including only job titles when publishing

Document Version	Revision Date	Briefly Describe the Changes

EqIA Approved by Responsible Officer / Head of Department / Service / Committee	
<b>Date EqIA Concluded</b>	
<b>Name</b>	
<b>Job Title</b>	

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<b>Signature</b>	
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## Introduction

This document is a multi-purpose tool ensuring the appropriate steps are taken to comply with the [Public Sector Equality Duty](#) Equality Impact Assessment legislation and to demonstrate that we have shown due regard to the need to reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage when taking strategic decisions under the [Socio-economic Duty](#). It also ensures consideration of the [Welsh Language Standards](#).

When we plan to introduce a new, or revise an existing, policy or practice, make changes or cuts to a service or make strategic decisions, we are required to consider if the decision would have a disproportionate impact on people sharing one or more [protected characteristic](#) or whether it could create inequalities of outcome around socio-economic disadvantage. Where this is likely to be the case, we must take appropriate action. The EqIA process is not intended to prevent us doing things but to ensure we have considered the impact. It helps us focus on the actions we can take to remove and/or mitigate any disproportionate or discriminatory impact and introduce measures to advance equality of opportunity.

To comply with the [General Duty](#) and [Socio-economic Duty](#), we must have 'due regard' (or consciously consider the need) to: eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations and to the need to reduce the inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage. The greater the relevance and potential impact, the higher the regard required by the duty. The General Duty will be more relevant to some functions than others and they may also be more relevant to some protected characteristics than others. Our duty must be exercised with rigour, an open mind and considered at a time when it can make a difference to our decisions. Policies with high relevance, such as strategic budgetary decisions, grant-making programmes, changes to service delivery (including withdrawal or reorganisation of services), and recruitment or pay policies should always be subject to an assessment for impact. For further guidance see [EHRC Assessing Impact Guidance](#). Our duty to comply with this legislation cannot be delegated.

This form should demonstrate the steps taken to carry out the assessment including relevant engagement/consultation, the information taken into account, the results of the assessment and any decisions taken in relation to those results. The EqIA should be published where it shows a substantial (or likely) impact on our ability to meet the General Duty.

### Benefits of undertaking an EqIA:

- Gain a better understanding of those who may be impacted by the policy or practice
- Better meet differing needs and become more accessible and inclusive
- Enable planning for success – identifies potential pitfalls and unintended consequences before any damage is done
- Enable improved planning that will make decisions proactive rather than reactive, avoid having to reverse decisions which could have cost and reputational implications
- Demonstrate decisions are thought through and have taken into account the views of those affected
- Enable us to manage expectations by explaining the limitations within which we are working (eg, budget)

- Help avoid risks and improve outcomes for individuals
- Remove inappropriate or harmful practices and eliminate institutional discrimination
- Ensure we put Welsh and English Language on an equal footing. and that decisions are made that safeguard and promote the use of the Welsh language

Whilst this document may seem lengthy, as well as containing the necessary steps in the process, it also contains guidance notes in the key areas to assist you in undertaking the EqlA. Additional links to further information are also included for assistance. Further information can be found on NHS/ WLGA PSED/ EIA [here](#).

## Equality and Welsh Language Impact Assessment Steps

- Step 1 - Identify the Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice
- Step 2 - Data, Engagement and Assessing the Impact
- Step 3 - Procurement and Partnerships
- Step 4 - Dealing with Adverse or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice
- Step 5 - Decision to Proceed
- Step 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data
- Step 7 - Publishing the Equality Impact Assessment

### Important Note to Completing Officer(s):

It is important that the EqlA is completed when the policy or practice is being developed so that the findings from the EqlA can be used to influence and shape the policy or practice. It is recommended as a minimum, it is completed by a lead officer who is responsible for the policy or practice, a subject matter expert and a critical friend with at least one who has received formal EqlA training. This document needs to be presented to the decision makers along with the draft policy or practice as part of the decision making process.

Where you are developing a high level strategy or plan that does not contain sufficient detail to show how it will impact on individuals or groups (ie, where there will be plans and actions sitting beneath the strategy that will determine this), you should still undertake the full Equality Impact Assessment. You may also need to complete additional EqlA(s) on the plans and actions beneath the high level strategy. This will ensure you demonstrate that you have shown due regard to complying with the General Duty, the Public Sector Equality Duty, the Welsh Language Standards and the [Socio-economic Duty](#).

If your policy or practice is as a result of a UK, Welsh Government or Local Authority wide directive, you should still assess the impact of this locally to identify any differential impact due to local difference.

You should consider whether other events, eg, Covid-19, Brexit, Black Lives Matter, etc, have highlighted or exacerbated inequalities that need to be addressed as you work through the EqlA.

## STEP 1 – Identify the Main Aims and Objectives of the Policy or Practice

### 1. What is being assessed? *(Please double click on the relevant box(es) (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)*

- New and revised policies, practices or procedures (which modify service delivery or employment practices)
- Service review or re-organisation proposals which affect the community and/or staff, eg, early years provision, care, education
- Efficiency or saving proposals, eg, resulting in a change in community facilities, activities, support or employment opportunities
- Setting budget allocations for new financial year and strategic financial planning
- Decisions affecting service users, employees or the wider community including (de)commissioning or revised services
- New project proposals affecting staff, communities or accessibility to the built environment, eg, new construction work or adaptations to existing buildings, moving to on-line services, self-service, changing location
- Large Scale Public Events
- Local implementation of National Strategy/Plans/Legislation (refer to any national EqIA and consider local impact)
- Strategic directive and intent, including those developed at Regional Partnership Boards and Public Service Boards which impact on a public bodies functions
- Medium to long term plans (for example, corporate plans, development plans, service delivery and improvement plans)
- Setting objectives (for example, well-being objectives, equality objectives, Welsh language strategy)
- Major procurement and commissioning decisions
- Decisions that affect the ability (including external partners) to offer Welsh language opportunities and services
- Other please explain in the box below:

Page 381

To ensure that the Market stability report draws on the Population Needs Assessment findings to reflect the needs of all people who require support from social care services and highlight gaps in provision for those individuals in North Wales including those with protected characteristics.

All actions arising from this assessment reflect the identified needs of people with protected characteristics and highlight gaps in services which will prevent inequality of service provision in the future through commissioning strategies and area plans.

## 2. What are the overall aims, objectives and intended outcomes of the policy or practice?

The North Wales Market Stability Report (MSR) assesses the supply and sufficiency of the social care market. The aim is to highlight gaps in service provision and provide information to support a more sustainable social care market and will be used as a tool by commissioners to analyse supply and demand alongside the Population Needs Assessment. The purpose of this Equalities Impact Assessment is to ensure that this is done in an inclusive way.

Together the PNA and MSR reports highlight areas of inequalities in social care provision across the region for specific population groups, intended to inform social care strategy, policy, planning and practice

The MSR highlights negative impacts of shortage of supply within the social care market, and have it will have a positive impact across all protected characteristics which will be realised through Local Area Plans, commissioning plans which dictate operational activity which impacts on those at most risk of inequality.

Page 382  
The MSR will provide

A better understanding of the current picture of service provision across the region

Services can be developed based on actual need

Because the assessment is being done on a regional basis it's easier for people with protected characteristics to get involved and can develop regional response to the assessment which may have financial benefits, avoid duplication and so on.

## 3. Who are the main consultative groups (stakeholders)?

*Note: Consider communities of interest or place (where people are grouped together because of specific characteristics or where they live)*

- Regulated social care providers including private, third sector local authority 'in house' providers
- Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)
- Public Health Wales
- Citizens receiving care and support

*In addition to the nine protected characteristics, the needs of the following health population groups were assessed within the PNA. There is a strong link between these groups and some protected characteristics.*

- Children and young people (Age)

- Older people (Age)
- Health, physical disability and sensory impairment (Disability)
- Learning disability (Disability)
- Autism (Disability)
- Mental health (Disability)
- Unpaid carers (Disability)

**4. Is the policy related to, influenced by, or affected by other policies or areas of work (internal or external), eg, strategic EqlAs if this is an operational EqlA and vice versa?**

*Note: Consider this in terms of statutory requirements, local policies, regional (partnership) decisions, national policies, welfare reforms.*

- The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 introduced a new duty on local authorities and health boards to develop a joint assessment of the sufficiency and sustainability of the social care market.
- The Market Stability Report has been produced by the North Wales Regional Partnership Board in line with the Code of Practice (Welsh Government, 2021).
- The Market stability report will inform high level strategic priorities based on supply and demand analysis within Local Area Plans, which will in turn inform Strategic Commissioning Strategies and Market Position Statements.
- This is the first Market Stability Report produced and takes into account the findings from the North Wales Population Needs Assessment 2022, which provides data and insight from all stakeholders, including those receiving care and support to inform this impact assessment.
- Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015
- Regulation of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016
- Children Act 1989
- Childcare Act (2006)
- Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal Bill 2015
- United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child
- Play Sufficiency Duty
- Strategy for Older People in Wales 2013-23
- United Nations Principles for Older Persons
- Welsh Government Declaration of the Rights of Older People in Wales
- Mental Health (Wales) Measure 2010

- Mental Capacity Act 2005
- Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (Wales) Act 2015
- Serious Crimes Act
- Housing (Wales) Act 2014

## STEP 2 - Data, Engagement and Assessing the Impact

When completing this section, you need to consider if you have sufficient information with which to complete your EqIA, or whether you need to undertake a period of engagement/consultation before continuing. The legislation relating to the EqIA process requires you to **engage and involve people who represent the interests of those who share one or more of the protected characteristics and with those who have an interest in the way you carry out your functions**. The socio economic duty also requires us to **take into account the voices of those in the community including those with lived experience of socio economic disadvantage**. You should undertake engagement with communities of interest or communities of place to understand if they are more affected or disadvantaged by your proposals. This needs to be proportionate to the policy or practice being assessed. Remember that stakeholders can also include our own staff as well as partner organisations.

Before carrying out particular engagement activities, you should first look to data from recent consultations, engagement and research. This could be on a recent related policy or recent assessments undertaken by colleagues or other sources, eg, [Is Wales Fairer?](#), [North Wales Background Data Document](#), Info Base Cymru, WIMD. This can help to build confidence among groups and communities, who can see that what they have said is being acted on. If you have very little or no information from previous engagement that is relevant to this EqIA, you should undertake some engagement work with your stakeholders and with relevant representative groups to ensure that you do not unwittingly overlook the needs of each protected group. It is seldom acceptable to state simply that a policy will universally benefit/disadvantage everyone, and therefore individuals will be affected equally whatever their characteristics. The analysis should be more robust than this, demonstrating consideration of all of the available evidence and addressing any gaps or disparities. Specific steps may be required to address an existing disadvantage or meet different needs.

**The Gunning Principles**, established from past court cases, can be helpful in ensuring we apply fairness in engagement and consultation:

Principle 1: Consultation must take place when the proposals are still at a formative stage. You must not have already made up your mind.

Principle 2: Sufficient reasons must be put forward to allow for intelligent consideration and response. Have people been given the information and opportunity to influence?

Principle 3: Adequate time must be given for consideration and response. Is the consultation long enough bearing in mind the circumstances?

Principle 4: The product of consultation must be conscientiously taken into account when finalising the decision.



5. Have you complied with the duty to engage as described above and are you sufficiently informed to proceed?

Yes  No  (please cross as appropriate X)

6. If Yes, what engagement activities did you undertake and who with?

The MSR draws on the consultation and engagement work during the Population Needs Assessment. This includes;

- A survey completed by over 350 individuals, organisations and partners. A detailed consultation report provides further detail on the methods and process.
- A comprehensive literature search undertaken with regard to the protected characteristics
- Findings from relevant research, legislation, strategies, commissioning plans, other needs assessments, position statements and consultation reports.
- A communications sub group of the Market Stability Report Steering Group led on the creation of a Registered Providers Survey. An invitation was sent to all registered providers by local authority commissioners. A total of 63 responses were received.
- Local teams undertook their own engagements where it was not being covered at regional level. Including 1-1's with registered providers.

Page 38

If No, you may wish to consider pausing at this point while you undertake (further) engagement activities which you can include in the action plan below. Please incorporate any information obtained from this additional activity in the boxes in question 8.

Action	Dates	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Information added to EqlA (✓)

8. What information do you hold about the impact on each of the following characteristic and statutory considerations / duties from your experience of current service delivery and recent engagement or consultation? Include any additional relevant data; research and performance management information; surveys; Government, professional body or organisation studies; Census data; Is

Wales Fairer? (EHRC<sup>1</sup> data); information from initial screening; complaints/compliments; service user data and feedback; inspections/ audits; socio-economic data including WIMD<sup>2</sup> data. You may wish to include sub-headings showing where each element of your data has come from, eg, national data, local data, organisation data, general or specific engagement exercises, etc.

Consider any positive or negative impact including trends in data, geography (urban or rural issues), demography, access issues, barriers, etc. Also include any areas where there are inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage or other relevant issues identified by communities of interest or communities of place (ie, where stakeholders, service users, staff, representative bodies, etc. are grouped together because of specific characteristics or where they live) and any issues identified for people living in less favourable social and/or economic circumstances.

<b>Protected Characteristic /Group</b>	<b>Relevant Data</b>	<b>Positive and / or Negative Impact</b>	<b>Prompts</b> (not an exhaustive list)
<p>Race</p>	<p>People from Black, Asian and minority ethnic groups have higher coronavirus mortality rates. (PNA page 22)</p> <p>Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities' mental health were disproportionately affected by mental health needs due to the pandemic. (PNA page 214)</p> <p>BME communities told us that access to mental health services was an area for improvement. (Pg 211 PNA)</p> <p>Children with the lowest educational attainment before the pandemic will have fallen further</p>	<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p>	<p>Consider Ethnicity Nationality Gypsies / Travellers Language: interpreter provision Refugee / Asylum Seekers Migrants Positive Action Awareness events <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination (UNCERD)</a></p>

<sup>1</sup> Equality and Human Rights Commission

<sup>2</sup> Wales Index of Multiple Deprivation

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<p>behind their peers including children of certain ethnicities (PNA Pg 22)</p> <p>There is a lack of research about the experience of people from Black and minority ethnic groups with experience of Autism. This means it can be even harder to get the support they need. We need to understand the experiences of autistic people and families from different backgrounds and cultures and help create a society that works for all autistic people. (PNA page 196)</p>		
Disability	<p><b>Local Data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Average local authority/health board Commissioned domiciliary care hours per week</li> <li>• Average hourly rate of domiciliary care by population group (£)</li> </ul> <p><b><u>People with Mental Health needs</u></b> There is a shortage of mental health provision across North Wales (PNA 2022)</p> <p><b><u>People with Learning Disability</u></b> The level of spend on learning disability services has been increasing but we are now faced with supporting more people with less money (as a result of reducing local authority</p>	<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p> <p>There is no specialist mental health provision including for autism and severe mental illness in Gwynedd. Conwy is the nearest location but the provision is non-Welsh speaking (MSR 2022).</p> <p><b>Positive Impact:</b> The MSR provides evidence to develop new and expand</p>	

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<p>settlements, Independent Living Fund (ILF) closure and Housing Support Grant restrictions) (MSR 2022)</p> <p>There is a high demand for supported living accommodation for people with a LD (PNA 2022)</p> <p>This increase number of people living in the community with dementia and complex needs may increase the demand for home care services, in particular 'double staffed packages of care'. (MSR)</p> <p><b><u>Adults with learning difficulties and others with complex disabilities</u></b></p> <p>More bespoke housing is needed to cater for individual needs, particularly Step up/step down services are needed, where there is a placement breakdown and an individual needs more intense support for a period, rather than admission to hospital (PNA 2022)</p>	<p>existing services where there are gaps in provision.</p> <p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p> <p>The information from the MSR will help commissioners support private and in house providers to improve financial sustainability and plan budgets effectively.</p> <p>The information from the MSR will help commissioners to devise strategy and plans to mitigate the risk of longer waiting times and individuals moving into to residential homes.</p>	
<b>Disability continued</b>	<p><b><u>Unpaid carers</u></b></p> <p>There are around 79,000 people of all ages providing unpaid care in North Wales (2011), and we expect this number to be increasing as</p>	<p>Positive Impact Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p>	<p>Mobility / Dexterity Blind or Visually impaired Deaf or Hearing impaired Mental Health Learning Disabilities Dementia Neurological difference / Autism Access to buildings/ facilities</p>

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<p>the need for care and support increases. The PNA Unpaid carers chapter</p>	<p>The information from the PNA and MSR identifies the lack of provision in the care market leads to additional demands on unpaid carers. Specifically, this is impacting the complexity of care meaning that unpaid carers are experiencing caring responsibilities with higher needs of care. People living longer coupled with Covid-19 increased the pressure on unpaid carers further.</p> <p><b>Positive impact:</b> The MSR provides the evidence needed to support business cases, funding applications and justify increasing resources to support unpaid carers.</p>	<p>Access to communication methods Carers Dietary requirements Other Long Term Health Conditions <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (UNCRPD)</a></p>
<b>Sex</b>	<p>Men have higher corona virus mortality rates (PNA Pg22)</p> <p>Women and girls often struggle to get referred to Autism diagnostic services, with many being forced to pursue private diagnosis. (PNA page 196) .</p> <p>Studies have shown that disabled women are twice as likely to experience domestic abuse and are also twice as likely to suffer assault and rape (Safe Lives: 2017).( PNA Page 150 )</p>	<p><b>Positive Impact;</b> insight into the inequalities faced by men and women will help to identify likely support needs and plan services effectively.</p>	<p>Men / Women Gender Identity Toilet facilities/baby changing Childcare Gender Pay Gap Sex workers <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (UNCEDAW)</a></p>

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<p>Research suggests that women experiencing domestic abuse are more likely to experience a mental health condition, while women with mental health conditions are more likely to be domestically abused. 30-60% of women with a mental health condition have experienced domestic violence (Howard et al: 2009). (PNA page 217)</p>		
<p>Age</p> <p style="writing-mode: vertical-rl; transform: rotate(180deg);">Page 390</p>	<p><b><u>Older People who need residential care</u></b>  <b>Regional/National data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Estimated number of people aged over 65 in 2020 and projected number in 2040 (Mid-year 2020 population estimates, Office for National Statistics; and 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government)</li> <li>- Older people have increased covid-19 mortality rates (Pg 22 PNA)</li> </ul> <p><b>Local data:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Current number of <b>adult care homes</b> (age 18 and over) by type and area (Local authority MSR data toolkits)</li> <li>- Current number of permanent care home placements available to all adults aged 18 and over</li> <li>- Percentage of vacant care home placements, 31 March 2021</li> <li>- Gwynedd older people's care home placements (local authority data)</li> </ul>	<p>The PNA highlighted the need for specialist provision for older people in a residential care setting. The MSR identified this as a gap in provision. This includes residential care for older people including;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Dementia care provision</li> <li>• Older peoples mental health residential and nursing placements</li> <li>• For older people with a learning disability who also have physical health and dementia needs</li> </ul> <p><b>Positive impact:</b> The MSR will provide evidence to make these types of provision a priority when considering development of workforce training needs, establishing and developing new services and development of buildings to meet demand.</p>	<p>Older People  Children  Young People  Working Age People  Young Families  Demographics  NB: Where children / young people are affected complete the <a href="#">Childrens Rights Checklist</a>  <a href="#">United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)</a>  Caring responsibilities</p>

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Anglesey MSR adult residential care market overview</li> <li>- No of out of county placements for specialist residential care provision in Denbighshire (local authority data)</li> <li>- No of care home closures 2019-2021 (local authority)</li> <li>- Feedback from care home residents</li> <li>- Feedback from providers</li> </ul> <p>Due to a combination of people living at home longer and an ageing population, the complexity of those requiring adult residential care, and demand for care placements is increasing. The current mix of general needs and specialist residential care provision does not match projected future demand (MSR)</p>	<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p> <p>Older people requiring specialist residential care are more likely to;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have their discharge delayed (Increase in Delayed Transfers of Care from hospital)</li> <li>• Be placed out of county</li> </ul> <p><b>Positive impact:</b> MSR provides insight which may help providers to repurpose and create new provision where needed to meet demand.</p>	
<b>Age continued</b>	<p><b><u>Older People who need Domiciliary Care National Data</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Predicted number of people aged 65 and over who struggle with activities of daily living (Daffodil, Mid-year population estimates, Office for National Statistics and 2018-based population projections, Welsh Government)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p> <p>There is a lack of available domiciliary care across the region impacted by a shortage of care staff. The nature of current arrangements mean that providers can refuse to give care, or return packages. Frequent emergencies</p>	

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Average local authority/health board Commissioned domiciliary care hours per week (local authority data collection)</li> <li>- Percentage market estimated share of domiciliary care sector by type (local authority data)</li> <li>- Number of providers by operating area (Local authority data)</li> <li>- Numbers of people who receive domiciliary care packages in Conwy (local authority data)</li> <li>- Demographic of people accessing domiciliary care in Flintshire</li> <li>- Number of care hours handed back by providers (</li> </ul> <p>Demand for domiciliary care exceeds supply of domiciliary care provision in every area of North Wales. The majority of people who access domiciliary care across the region are over 65. Although this is also likely to impact on adults with long term health conditions and physical disabilities.</p>	<p>can occur, where providers report that they are no longer able to provide care due to staffing problems</p> <p>The MST provides analysis which may support providers and commissioners to develop mitigating actions to reduce the risk of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People not receiving the care they need and are at risk of ‘slipping’ through the net’.</li> <li>• moving into residential care instead.</li> <li>• increased pressures for those who have family, friends or other support networks taking on the role of an unpaid carers</li> </ul>	
<b>Age (continued)</b>	<p><b><u>Children and Young People who need residential care</u></b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Children and Young People’s Market Position Statement (2021 update)</li> </ul>	<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p>	



Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Out of county placements (StatsWales)</li> </ul> <p>Over 50% of children in residential care from North Wales are placed out of county, away from parents, siblings and support networks, impacting on the whole family (MPS)</p> <p>There is a shortage of;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- local residential providers.</li> <li>- specialist provision for children and young people with complex behavioural and emotional needs</li> <li>- emergency accommodation</li> </ul>	<p>For children and young people who cannot access safe/emergency accommodation due to their complex behavioural and emotional needs; cases of the use of s136 suites, inappropriate presentation/admission to hospital, delays in discharge and the use of unregulated care have been identified by local authority Children’s services.</p> <p><b>Positive Impact:</b> The MSR provides information which may help commissioners to rebalance the care market, develop new models of care and create increased care capacity to meet the needs of children and young people. There is competition for placements, providers can ‘cherry pick’ individuals with least complex needs. Meaning those with a greater level of need wait longer to be placed or are sent further away from home.</p>	
<b>Religion &amp; Belief</b>		<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p>	<p>Faith Communities Non Beliefs Dietary requirements Vegetarianism/Veganism Other philosophical beliefs Dress code/uniforms Religious festivals/activities</p>

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
<b>Sexual Orientation</b>	<p>Surveys suggest older lesbian and gay people also experience higher levels of loneliness. Loneliness is associated with a range of health risks, including coronary heart disease, depression, cognitive decline and premature mortality (Valtorta et al., 2016).</p> <p>Risk factors for poor mental health disproportionately affect people from higher risk and marginalised groups. This includes Lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people (PNA Page 219)</p> <p>Surveys suggest older lesbian and gay people also experience higher levels of loneliness. Loneliness is associated with a range of health risks, including coronary heart disease, depression, cognitive decline and premature mortality (Valtorta et al., 2016).</p>	<b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.	Gay Lesbian Bi-sexual Heterosexual Terminology Confidentiality about sexuality
<b>Gender Reassignment</b>		<b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.	A person who proposes to, starts or has changed their gender identity Transgender Appropriate language use, ie, appropriate pronouns Gender neutral changing facilities and toilets
<b>Marriage &amp; Civil Partnership</b>		<b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.	Marital status Civil Partnership status

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
<b>Pregnancy &amp; Maternity</b>		<b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.	Pregnant mothers Those entitled to maternity and paternity leave Foster/Adoption Breastfeeding mothers
<b>Welsh Language</b>	Shortages of staff, service availability lead and of county placements. This increases the likelihood of first language welsh speakers receiving care in English. This has been highlighted in particular for individuals where welsh language is a fundamental element of service provision, including; children and adults with complex needs such as individuals living with physical and learning disabilities including mental health and Autism.	<b>Positive:</b> The MSR provides an assessment of the gaps in care provision of private providers in the welsh language and identified barriers to receiving care in welsh for planning future provision; including workforce recruitment and retention issues and increased out of county placements.	Ensuring equal status of both Welsh and English languages. Availability of and access to services, activities and information. Technology Rights of individuals to ask for WL services. Impact on Welsh speaking communities, including: Positive / negative effects on opportunities to use the WL. Possible changes to number/percentage of Welsh speakers Migration Job opportunities / Staffing changes. Training needs and opportunities Availability of Welsh medium education
<b>Socio Economic Considerations</b>	People from certain ethnic groups, children, disabled people, carers are all more likely to experience poverty. (PNA Page 22)	<b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market and delivering care closer to home and improving access will have a positive impact on those with lower socio economic status	People living in less favourable social and economic circumstances than others in the same society. Disadvantage may be exacerbated by many factors of

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	<p>Rhyl West 1, Rhyl West 2 and Queensway 1 in Wrexham are within the ten most deprived areas in Wales (Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation 2019)</p> <p>People living within the most deprived communities in North Wales have a 25% higher rate of emergency admissions, there is a stark life expectancy disparity of 7 years and a general poor health and disability discrepancy of 14 years (BCUHB Annual Equality Report 2020-2021).</p>		<p>daily life, not just urban or rural boundaries.</p> <p>'Intersectionality' issues - where identity compounds socio-economic status, eg, single parents (often women), disabled people, some BAME groups.</p>
Human Rights	<p>People from Minority Ethnic groups are more likely to be sectioned under the Mental Health Act (Race and Mental Health – Tipping the Scale, Mind, 2019)</p> <p>The restrictions that have been implemented to manage the pandemic have impacted on children's ability to access their human rights under the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, including the right to access to health care... and less well protected from violence, abuse and neglect. (PNA Page 76)</p> <p>In the report 'Locked Out: Liberating Disabled People's Lives and Rights Beyond Covid-19' (2021) it is recognised that the pandemic has</p>	<p><b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.</p>	<p>See Human Rights Articles below. <a href="https://humanrightstracker.com/en/">https://humanrightstracker.com/en/</a> on EHRC website</p>

Protected Characteristic /Group	Relevant Data	Positive and / or Negative Impact	Prompts (not an exhaustive list)
	had a detrimental impact on many areas of life for those with learning disabilities.		
Other (please state)		<b>Positive Impact</b> Having a stable social care market will have a positive impact on all protected characteristics. Key areas for mitigation in area plans and commissioning strategies below.	Eg, Modern Slavery, Safeguarding, Other Covid effects, Carers, Ex-offenders, Veterans, Care Leavers, Substance Abuse, Homeless

<b>Human Rights Act 1998</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 2 Right to life</li> <li>Article 3 Freedom from torture and inhuman or degrading treatment</li> <li>Article 4 Freedom from Slavery and forced labour</li> <li>Article 5 Right to liberty and security</li> <li>Article 6 Right to a fair trial</li> <li>Article 7 No punishment without law</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Article 8 Respect for private life, family, home and correspondence</li> <li>• Article 9 Freedom of thought, belief and religion</li> <li>• Article 10 Freedom of expression</li> <li>• Article 11 Freedom of Assembly and association</li> <li>• Article 12 Right to marry and start a family</li> <li>• Article 13 Right to access effective remedy if rights are violated</li> <li>• Article 14 Protection from discrimination</li> </ul>
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**9. Are there any data or information gaps and if so what are they and how do you intend to address them?**

To strengthen future work, local authorities could review equality information for those individuals receiving services by protected characteristic to strengthen understanding of needs at a strategic level. Regionally this data could be analysed against population data to check whether groups can access services when they need them and receive the same quality of care as the general population.

Note: If it is not possible to obtain this information now, you should include this in your action plan in Step 6 so that this information is available for future EqIAs.

**10. How does your proposal ensure that you are working in line with the requirements of the Welsh Language Standards (Welsh Language Measure (Wales) 2011), to ensure the Welsh language is not treated less favourably than the English language, and that every opportunity is taken to promote the Welsh language (beyond providing services bilingually) and increase opportunities to use and learn the language in the community?**

Welsh language considerations were taken into account – all consultation was bilingual including surveys and correspondence. The MSR is issues for stakeholder approval bilingually and published bilingually. Where requested documents have been translated for local authority staff who were first welsh speaking.

Page: 397

11. **If this EqIA is being updated from a previous version of a similar policy or practice, were the intended outcomes of the proposal last time achieved or were there other outcomes?** (Please provide details, for example, was the impact confined to the people you initially thought would be affected, or were other people affected and if so, how?)

N/A

12. **What is the cumulative impact of this proposal on different protected groups when considering other key decisions affecting these groups made by the organisation?** (You may need to discuss this with your Service Head or Cabinet Member to consider more widely if this proposal will affect certain groups more adversely because of other decisions the organisation is making, eg, financial impact/poverty, withdrawal of multiple services and whether this is disadvantaging the same groups, eg, disabled people, older people, single parents (who are mainly women), etc)

13. **How does this proposal meet with the 7 goals of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 including to create a More Equal Wales? (Summarise findings if you may have already considered this as part of the screening process)**

For more information, please see: <https://futuregenerations.wales/about-us/future-generations-act/>  
The MSR highlights challenges faced in the last 5 years within the social care market which are barriers to achieving the vision of A Healthier Wales and a More Equal Wales by setting out service provision and providing data, research and analysis to inform future planning.

14. **Describe any intended negative impact identified and explain why you believe this is justified** (for example, on the grounds of advancing equality of opportunity or fostering good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not or because of an objective justification<sup>1</sup> or positive action<sup>2</sup>)

N/A

**Note<sup>1</sup>: Objective Justification** - gives a defence for applying a policy, rule or practice that would otherwise be unlawful direct or indirect discrimination. To rely on the objective justification defence, the employer, service provider or other organisation must show that its policy or rule was for a good reason – that is 'a proportionate means of achieving a legitimate aim'. A **legitimate aim** is the reason behind the discrimination which must not be discriminatory in itself and must be a genuine or real reason, eg, health, safety or welfare of individuals. If the aim is simply to reduce costs because it is cheaper to discriminate, this will not be legitimate. Consider if the importance of the

Page 88

aim outweighs any discriminatory effects of the unfavourable treatment and be sure that there are no alternative measures available that would meet the aim without too much difficulty (proportionate) and would avoid the discriminatory effect.

**Note<sup>2</sup>: Positive Action** - Where an employer takes specific steps to improve equality in the workplace to address any imbalance of opportunity, lessen a disadvantage or increase participation in a particular activity, for example, increasing the number of disabled people in senior roles where they are under-represented by targeting specific groups with job adverts or offering training to help create opportunities for certain groups. The public sector is expected to consider the use of positive action to help them comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty.

**15. Could any of the negative impacts identified amount to unlawful discrimination but are perceived to be unavoidable (eg, reduction in funding)?**

Yes  No  Not Sure  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)

**16. If you answered Yes or Not Sure to question 15, please state below, which protected group(s) this applies to and explain why (including likely impact or effects of this proposed change)**

N/A

**17. If you answered No to question 15, are there any barriers identified which amount to a differential impact for certain groups and what are they?**

The populations health needs are more likely to be more intensive for Older People, Children and Younger People and those with a Physical or Learning disability – impacting significantly on the protected characteristics of Age and Disability.

The work of the MSR and PNA seeks to identify those barriers and will not pose any new negative impacts.

### STEP 3 - Procurement and Partnerships

The Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) requires all public authorities to consider the needs of protected characteristics when designing and delivering public services, including where this is done in partnership with other organisations or through procurement of services. The Welsh

Language Standards also require all public authorities to consider the effects of any policy decision, or change in service delivery, on the Welsh language, which includes any work done in partnership or by third parties. We must also ensure we consider the Socio-economic Duty when planning major procurement and commissioning decisions to consider how such arrangements can reduce inequalities of outcome caused by socio-economic disadvantage.

When procuring works, goods or services from other organisations (on the basis of a relevant agreement), we must have due regard to whether it would be appropriate :

- for the award criteria for that contract to include considerations to help meet the General Duty (to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations);
- to stipulate conditions relating to the performance of the contract to help meet the three aims of the General Duty.

This only applies to contractual arrangements that are “relevant agreements” which means either the award of a ‘public contract’ or the conclusion of a ‘framework agreement’, both of which are regulated by the Public Sector Directive (Directive 2004/18/EC) which regulates the specified EU thresholds. Further information can be found [here](#).

We must consider how such arrangements can improve equal opportunities and reduce inequalities of outcome due to protected characteristics and caused by socio-economic disadvantage, particularly on major procurement and commissioning decisions. The PSED applies to the work that private sector organisations undertake when delivering a public function on our behalf. We therefore need to ensure that those organisations exercise those functions by ensuring our procurement and monitoring of those services complies with the General Duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010. In the same way, the Welsh Language Standards applies to any work undertaken on behalf of, and in the name of, public bodies that are themselves subject to the Standards, and so consideration should be given to how these requirements are monitored and communicated through the procurement documents. The Socio Economic Duty does not pass to a third party through procurement, commissioning or outsourcing. Therefore when we work in partnership with bodies not covered by the Socio Economic Duty, the duty only applies to us as the relevant public body.

**18. Is this policy or practice to be carried out wholly or partly by contractors or in partnership with another organisation(s)?**

Yes x  No  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select ‘checked’ as appropriate)

If No, please proceed to Step 4

**19. If Yes, what steps will you take to comply with the General Equality Duty, Human Rights and Welsh Language Legislation and the Socio-Economic Duty in regard to procurement and/or partnerships? Think about :**

**Procurement**

**Partnerships**



- Setting out clear equality expectations in Tendering and Specification documentation, showing how promotion of equality may be built into individual procurement projects
- On what you based your decisions in the award process, including consideration of ethnical employment and supply chain code of practice
- Ensure that contract clauses cover the Equality Act 2010 (Statutory Duties) (Wales) Regulations 2011 and socio-economic requirements as well as Welsh Language Duties (remember that any duties from the Welsh Language Measure 2011 and Welsh Language Standards are also applicable to services provided on your behalf under contract by external bodies).
- Performance and Monitoring measures are included to monitor compliance, managing and enforcing contracts

Be clear about who is responsible for :

- Equality Monitoring relevant data
- Equality Impact Assessments
- Delivering the actions from the EqIA
- Ensuring that equality, human rights and Welsh Language legislation is complied with by all partners
- Demonstrating due regard to the Public Sector Equality Duty and the Socio-Economic duty

Partners are local authority commissioners and the local health board who are required to fully comply and manage compliance of equality, human rights, welsh language legislation and due regard to Public Sector Equality, and Socio Economic duty within commissioning practices

Page 40

#### STEP 4 - Dealing with Adverse or Unlawful Impact and Strengthening the Policy or Practice

20. **When considering proportionality, does the policy or practice have a significantly positive or negative impact or create inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage?**

(Please give brief details)

Significantly positive impact	Significantly negative impact
<p>Thorough research was undertaken during for the PNA and MSR which will provide insight for stakeholders on which groups of people are most likely to be at risk of socio economic disadvantage and plan to support those individuals effectively. This should have a long term positive impact across the region, influencing strategy, policy making and practice for local authorities and health board commissioners and independent and third sector providers within the social care market.</p>	

21. **It is important that you record the mitigating actions you will take in developing your final policy/practice draft. Record here what measures or changes you will introduce to the policy or practice in the final draft which could reduce or remove any**

unlawful or negative impact or disadvantage and/or improve equality of opportunity/introduce positive change; or reduce inequalities of outcome resulting from socio-economic disadvantage? (This could also inform the Action Plan in Q30)

Unlawful or Negative Impact Identified	Mitigation / Positive Actions Taken in the Policy/Practice	Completed (✓)
N/A		

22. Will these measures remove any unlawful impact or disadvantage?

Yes  No  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)

23. If No, what actions could you take to achieve the same goal by an alternative means?

N/A

24.

Wh

at measures or changes in the following important legislative areas have you included to strengthen or change the policy/practice:

- a) to foster good relations and advance equality of opportunity as covered by the General Duty in the Equality Act 2010;
- b) to reduce inequalities of outcome as a result of socio-economic disadvantage;
- c) to increase opportunities to use the Welsh language and in treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language as set out in the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure 2011 and reduce or prevent any adverse effects that the policy/practice may have on the Welsh language?

N/A

25. Do you have enough information to make an informed judgement?

Yes  No  (Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)

26. If you answered Yes, please justify:

N?A

27. If you answered No, what information do you require and what do you need to do to make a decision?  
(Note: Should data collection be included in the action plan (Step 6)?)

**[You may need to stop here until you have obtained the additional information]**

### STEP 5 - Decision to Proceed

28. Using the information you have gathered in Steps 1 – 4 above, please state on the table below whether you are able to proceed with the policy or practice and if so, on what basis?

*Please double click on the relevant box (X) and select 'checked' as appropriate)*

Decision	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue with policy or practice in its current form
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue with policy or practice but with amendments for improvement or to remove any areas of adverse impact identified in Step 4
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes	Continue with the plan as any detrimental impact can be justified
<input type="checkbox"/> No	Do not continue with this policy or practice as it is not possible to address the adverse impact. Consider alternative ways of addressing the issues.

29. Are there any final recommendations in relation to the outcome of this Equality Impact Assessment?

### STEP 6 - Actions and Arrangements for Monitoring Outcomes and Reviewing Data

The EqIA process is an ongoing one that doesn't end when the policy/practice and EqIA is agreed and implemented. There is a specific legal duty to monitor the impact of policies/practices on equality on an ongoing basis to identify if the outcomes have changed since you introduced or

amended this new policy or practice. If you do not hold relevant data, then you should be taking steps to rectify this in your action plan. To review the EHRC guidance on data collection you can review their [Measurement Framework](#).

30. Please outline below any actions identified in Steps 1-5 or any additional data collection that will help you monitor your policy/practice once implemented:

Action	Dates	Timeframe	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan (✓)

31. Please outline below what arrangements you will make to monitor and review the ongoing impact of this policy or practice including timescales for when it should be formally reviewed:

Monitoring and Review arrangements (including where outcomes will be recorded)	Timeframe & Frequency	Lead Responsibility	Add to Service Plan (✓)

### STEP 7 - Publishing the Equality Impact Assessment

Please arrange for this completed EqIA to be agreed by your Head of Service/Department and arrange for translation and publishing with a copy sent to the Equality Officer.

Page 404



## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26th September, 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Revenue Budget Monitoring Report 2022/23 (Month 4)
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Finance Manager
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

An interim budget monitoring report was presented to Cabinet in July. Based on high level assumptions at that time the potential variations to budget identified by Portfolios equated to a minimum net additional expenditure requirement of around £0.300m.

This report provides the first detailed overview of the budget monitoring position for the 2022/23 financial year.

The projected year end position is as follows:

#### **Council Fund**

- An operating deficit of £0.285m (excluding the impact of the pay award which will need to be met by reserves)
- A projected contingency reserve available balance as at 31 March 2023 of £6.911m (before the impact of final pay awards)

#### **Housing Revenue Account**

- Net in-year revenue expenditure forecast to be £0.188m higher than budget
- A projected closing balance as at 31<sup>st</sup> March, 2023 of £6.287m

Hardship Funding from Welsh Government helped secure £16m of direct financial help last year, and we continue to claim payments in 2022/23 for Self-isolation and Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement, along with Free School Meals direct payments.

A brought forward amount of £2.066m remains available from the original £3m emergency ring-fenced fund. The 2022/23 budget approved in February included a further top up of £3.250m to this Reserve to provide a prudent safeguard against any ongoing impacts of the pandemic. Early indications are that whilst the risks due to COVID-19 has diminished considerably, the inflationary risk has increased.

The position will be monitored closely over the coming months and any impacts reflected in future reports.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To note the report and the estimated financial impact on the 2022/23 budget.
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## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING 2022/23</b>																																		
1.01	<p>An interim budget monitoring report was presented to Cabinet in July. Based on high level assumptions at that time the potential variations to budget identified by Portfolios equated to a minimum net additional expenditure requirement of £0.300m. The report provides the first detailed overview of the budget monitoring position for the 2022/23 financial year.</p> <p>The projected year end position is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>An operating deficit of £0.285m (excluding the impact of the pay award which will need to be met by reserves)</li> <li>A projected contingency reserve available balance as at 31 March 2023 of £6.911m (before the impact of pay awards)</li> </ul>																																		
1.02	<p>Hardship Funding from Welsh Government helped secure over £16m direct financial help last year, and we continue to claim payments for Self-isolation and Statutory Sick Pay Enhancement payments, along with Free School Meals direct payments.</p>																																		
1.03	<p><b>Table 1. Projected Position by Portfolio</b></p> <p>The table below shows the projected position by portfolio:</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th style="text-align: center;">Portfolio/Service Area</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Approved Budget</th> <th style="text-align: center;">Projected Outturn</th> <th style="text-align: center;">In-Year Over / (Under) spend</th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;">£m</th> <th style="text-align: center;">£m</th> <th style="text-align: center;">£m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Social Services</td> <td style="text-align: right;">77.969</td> <td style="text-align: right;">78.292</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.323</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Out of County Placements</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15.101</td> <td style="text-align: right;">15.926</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.825</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education &amp; Youth</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9.935</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9.644</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(0.290)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Schools</td> <td style="text-align: right;">108.420</td> <td style="text-align: right;">108.420</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.000</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Streetscene &amp; Transportation</td> <td style="text-align: right;">38.466</td> <td style="text-align: right;">39.531</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.064</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning Env &amp; Economy</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6.797</td> <td style="text-align: right;">6.561</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(0.236)</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>			Portfolio/Service Area	Approved Budget	Projected Outturn	In-Year Over / (Under) spend		£m	£m	£m	Social Services	77.969	78.292	0.323	Out of County Placements	15.101	15.926	0.825	Education & Youth	9.935	9.644	(0.290)	Schools	108.420	108.420	0.000	Streetscene & Transportation	38.466	39.531	1.064	Planning Env & Economy	6.797	6.561	(0.236)
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People & Resources	4.324	4.164	(0.160)
Governance	10.772	10.442	(0.330)
Strategic Programmes	6.116	6.096	(0.020)
Assets	0.312	0.266	(0.046)
Housing & Communities	14.662	14.145	(0.518)
Chief Executive	2.256	2.186	(0.071)
Central & Corporate Finance	31.552	31.295	(0.256)
<b>Total</b>	<b>326.682</b>	<b>326.967</b>	<b>0.285</b>

1.04 The reasons for the projected variances are summarised within Appendix 1 and shows the detail of all variances over £0.050m and a summary of minor variances for each portfolio.

### **Significant Variances to highlight this month**

#### **1.05 Social Services £0.323m**

##### Localities (£0.612m)

Based on current activity (including Direct Payments) the commissioned Older People's domiciliary service is projected to underspend by (£0.747m).

The Residential Care budget is projected to overspend by £0.286m due to the current cost of placements net of income such as Free Nursing Care, Regional Integration Fund (RIF) funding and property income.

There is a projected underspend of (£0.020m) on the Minor Adaptations budget due to a reduction of in-year activity. The Localities staffing budget is projected to underspend by (£0.056m) taking into account current grades and anticipated recharges.

Day Care is expected to underspend by (£0.033m) and the Sensory SLA (Service Level Agreement) will be (£0.042m) underspent.

##### Resources & Regulated Services £0.249m

In-House residential care is projected to overspend by £0.286m due to staff and running costs. In-house homecare is estimated to underspend by (£0.003m), Extra Care by (£0.005m) and Day Care by (£0.029m). Built into projections is an assumption that we will receive £0.185m Winter Pressures funding from Welsh Government.

##### Mental Health Services £0.353m

The projection is based on the net costs of current commissioned care packages within the Mental Health service.

##### Children's Services Family Support £0.139m

Due to the current levels of activity there is a potential overspend of £0.139m within this service area.

	<p><u>Children’s Services Legal &amp; Third Party £0.516m</u></p> <p>There is a projected overspend on legal costs of £0.281m due to the number of cases going through the courts and the use of external legal professionals. Continuing high demand for Direct Payments is resulting in a £0.235m overspend.</p> <p><u>Children’s Services Residential (£0.406m)</u></p> <p>The in-year opening of Children’s Residential care facilities will result in some budget slippage in the first year of opening. In addition, some non-recurring grant funding has been made available to offset start-up costs.</p> <p><u>Children’s Services Professional Support £0.178m</u></p> <p>To support adequate levels of child protection, the established staffing structure needs to be at a sufficient level to meet mandatory safeguarding standards. Vacancies are minimised and additional temporary posts are sometimes required to be able to meet the challenges and demands of Children’s Services. There is an assumption within the projected outturn that Welsh Government will allow for flexible use of Children’s Services grants of £0.615m which will allow for most cost pressures to be offset.</p> <p><u>Liberty Protection Safeguards (LPS) (£0.210m)</u></p> <p>Welsh Government are continuing to consult with Local Government and partner organisations around the implementation of the updated Liberty Protection Safeguards. This has resulted in anticipated costs being delayed and there is therefore likely to be an in-year underspend position.</p>
1.06	<p><b>Out of County Placements £0.825m</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children’s Services £1.189m</li> <li>• Education &amp; Youth (£0.364m)</li> </ul> <p>Continued high demand for support for children and young people that cannot be met from in house provision. There have been 40 new placements in the first four months, some of which are high cost residential placements for young people with high levels of need.</p>
1.07	<p><b>Education &amp; Youth (£0.290m)</b></p> <p>The Early Entitlement service is projecting a surplus balance of (£0.132m) but this is still subject to change due to the confirmation of Education Improvement and Pupil Deprivation grants. The Council has, however, received notification of top-up funding so this uncertainty is mitigated.</p> <p>Pupil numbers are a primary factor within the service area, so is volatile in terms of outturn increasing/decreasing throughout the year.</p> <p>Cumulative minor variances across the Portfolio in Inclusion &amp; Progression, Youth Justice, Business Change &amp; Support, School Planning &amp; Provision and Archives of under (£0.050m) for each account for the remainder of (£0.158m).</p>



1.08	<p><b>Streetscene &amp; Transportation £1.064m</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Service Delivery £0.247m – 1) a recurring pressure of £0.100m for security costs due to vandalism at Household Recycling Centres (HRCs) 2) a shortfall of £0.070m in Street-lighting income from Town/Community Council's and 3) high sickness levels £0.080m</li> <li>• Highways Network £0.487m – rising fuel costs in Fleet of over £0.400m and £0.050m pressure for increased weed spraying.</li> <li>• Transportation £0.164m - increased costs and rising fuel prices incorporated in the provision of key service routes e.g. Bus Service 5, following the re-procurement exercise in 2021 which is in part mitigated by the utilisation of Bus Emergency Scheme (BES) Funding.</li> <li>• Impact of COVID-19 £0.190m – COVID-19 sickness levels have increased workforce costs and additional contractors providing traffic management and training to the workforce. These costs are subject to an internal claim against the COVID-19 Emergency Reserve.</li> </ul> <p>Minor variances across the Portfolio account for the remainder (£0.024m).</p>
1.09	<p><b>Planning, Environment &amp; Economy (£0.236m)</b></p> <p>The favourable variance in the main results from projected Planning Fee income levels following receipt of a 'one off' large planning application fee (£0.300m) in the first Quarter of the financial year within Development Management.</p> <p>The remainder of the variance results from:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• savings from Vacant Posts across the Land Drainage Service (£0.080m)</li> <li>• fee income shortfalls in Licensing, Pest Control and Building Control £0.093m.</li> </ul> <p>Cumulative minor variances account for the remainder of £0.051m.</p>
1.10	<p><b>Governance (£0.330m)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democratic Services (£0.089m) – new rate of Allowance not implemented until May with lower than anticipated uptake of allowances</li> <li>• Customer Services (£0.116m) – savings from vacant posts and higher than anticipated level of fee income</li> <li>• Revenues (£0.113m) – potential surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund</li> </ul> <p>Minor variances across the Portfolio account for the remainder (£0.012m).</p>
1.11	<p><b>Assets (£0.046m)</b></p> <p>Variance results from projected underspend on caretaking and security salaries due to vacancy savings (£0.082m)</p>

	Minor variances across the Service account for the remainder of £0.036m.
1.12	<p><b>Housing &amp; Communities (£0.518m)</b></p> <p><u>Benefits (£0.350m)</u> Projected underspend on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) of £0.640m offset by pressures relating to recovery of overpayments and subsequent increase to the Bad Debt Provision together with a shortfall against the income target, which has previously been compensated by the WG COVID-19 Hardship Fund.</p> <p><u>Housing Solutions (£0.163m)</u> Savings on salaries due to vacancies and ongoing recruitment challenges</p> <p>Minor variances across the Service account for the remainder of (£0.005m).</p>
1.13	<p><b>Corporate Services</b></p> <p><u>Chief Executive's (£0.071m)</u> A saving of £0.071m is forecast based mainly on projected vacancy savings.</p> <p><u>People &amp; Resources (£0.160m)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Human Resources &amp; Organisational Design (£0.133m) - staff vacancies based within the Occupational Health Service (£0.148m). Minor variances across the Service account for the remainder of £0.015m.</li> <li>• Corporate Finance (£0.027m) – savings from vacant posts.</li> </ul>
1.14	<p><b>Central &amp; Corporate Finance (£0.256m)</b></p> <p>Underspend of employer pension contributions based on the current level of contributions received during the year (£0.335m) mitigated by current shortfall in the Windfall Income Target of £0.098m.</p> <p>Minor variances account for the remainder of (£0.019m).</p>
1.15	<p><b>Tracking of In-Year Risks and Emerging Issues</b></p> <p>Members were made aware when setting the budget that there were a number of open risks that would need to be kept under close review. An update on these is provided below.</p>
1.16	<p><b>Council Tax Income</b></p> <p>In 2021/22 the Council achieved an 'in-year' collection level of 97.73% - the second highest collection rate in Wales.</p> <p>For 2022/23 up to July, the 'in-year' collection level is 38.42%, compared to 38.58% in the previous year. The marginal fall in collection levels is mainly due to resources being diverted to administering the Cost of Living Support Scheme as well as the impact on households more generally of rising costs-of-living.</p>

1.17	<p><b>Pay Award (Teacher and Non-Teacher)</b></p> <p>National negotiations have commenced between Employers and Trade Unions. The Council has provided for an uplift of 3.5% for Teaching and Non-Teaching staff – any increase above this level would require the Council to utilise reserves to fund the difference in the current financial year and would add to the additional budget requirement for 2023/24.</p> <p>The current pay offer for teachers is 5% and there is an offer from the National employers for NJC employees of £1,925 on all spinal column points. This equates to an increase of 2.54% on the highest scale point to 10.5% on the lowest point.</p> <p><b>The impact on 2022/23 is as follows:</b>  Teachers pay - in year impact of an additional £0.674m for the period September to March (full year effect 2023/24 of £1.144m) over and above the budgeted level of 3.5%.</p> <p>NJC pay - in year impact of an additional £4.594m (Schools £1.637m and non-schools £2.957m) over and above the budgeted level of 3.5%.</p> <p><b>Additional amount needing to be met from reserves in 2022/23 based on the above is £5.268m.</b></p> <p>The above will also impact on the MTFs with the full year impact of the teachers' pay award increasing the impact for 2023/24 to £5.738m.</p> <p>The above pay offers are subject to agreement and out for consultation with the Trade Unions.</p>
1.18	<p><b>Other Tracked Risks</b></p> <p>In addition, there are a number of risks being tracked which may be subject to change and these are summarised below.</p>
1.19	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) Impact</b></p> <p>Cabinet considered the latest projection for the MTFs in July which showed an additional budget requirement of £16.503m. Further work is ongoing to consider emerging issues from increasing service pressures, the latest position on pay awards and revisions to reflect the impact on energy and fuel inflation which remains subject to constant change due to market volatility.</p> <p>All Portfolios consider their financial position, the risks within their service and the impacts on the Medium Term on a monthly basis as part of their Portfolio Management Team meetings.</p> <p>An update on the budget forecast for 2023/24 is also included on this agenda.</p>

1.20	<p><b>Out of County Placements</b></p> <p>The risks include continued high demand for placements where children and young people cannot be supported within in-house provision, and market supply limitation factors and inflationary pressures leading to higher placement costs.</p> <p>There is a projected overspend for the current cohort of placements of circa £0.825m, although with 8 months of the year remaining this is likely to increase and a contingency of £0.300m is currently built into the outturn position for this with £0.250m in for Children’s Services and £0.050m for Education placements.</p> <p>The service areas within this pooled budget will continue to do everything possible to manage these risks and additional investment has already been made to further develop in-house provision to help to mitigate against such financial pressures.</p>
1.21	<p><b>Benefits</b></p> <p>Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) – Based on current demand, costs are currently projected to be £0.640m below budget, although this will be monitored closely throughout the year due to the potential for growth.</p> <p>There is continued high demand across the whole of the Benefits service which is expected to remain the case for the foreseeable future. Although some WG Hardship Fund support continues up to the end of September in respect of Self-Isolation payments, other funding support received in the past two years for additional staffing costs has now ceased.</p> <p>The increased staffing levels are still required and those costs are now being met in full from the additional funding of £0.300m previously approved to provide the service with the additional flexibility needed to adapt to and meet the sustained increase in customer demand.</p>
1.22	<p><b>Homelessness</b></p> <p>The risk is a consequence of the cessation of funding support from the Welsh Government COVID-19 Hardship Fund at the end of 2021/22.</p> <p>Although, there is continued support via the new Homelessness – No One Left Out grant this still falls well below the amount of support we received via the Hardship Fund in 2020/21 and 2021/22.</p> <p>Although it has been possible to contain some of the expected pressure through prepaid accommodation to the end of September 2022, which has been funded by the COVID-19 Hardship Fund, the expected continued high demand for temporary accommodation including short term Bed &amp; Breakfast provision will continue to present significant challenges.</p> <p>We continue to strategically use increased allocations of Housing Support Grant working with external partners, but there remains a risk that the costs of statutory provision of support for Homelessness may exceed existing funding provision from base budget and available grant funding.</p>

1.23	<p><b>Achievement of Planned In-Year Efficiencies</b></p> <p>The 2022/23 budget contains £1.341m of specific efficiencies which are tracked and monitored throughout the year. The Council aims to achieve a 95% rate in 2022/23 as reflected in the MTFs KPI's and fully achieved all efficiencies in the previous financial year</p> <p>It is projected that all efficiencies will be achieved in 2022/23 and further details can be seen in Appendix 2.</p>
1.24	<p><b>Unearmarked Reserves</b></p> <p>The final level of Council Fund Contingency Reserve brought forward into 2022/23 was £7.098m as detailed in the 2021/22 outturn report (subject to Audit). In addition, the Council has set-aside a further £3.250m to the carried forward £2.066m COVID-19 Emergency Reserve as a safeguard against the continuing impacts of the pandemic (additional costs and lost income).</p> <p>Internal claims for Quarter 1 have been made in 2022/23 and awaiting authorisation relating to additional costs in Schools and Streetscene &amp; Transportation and for income losses within AURA.</p> <p>A projected contingency reserve available balance as at 31 March 2023 is anticipated of £6.911m (before the impact of final pay awards).</p>
1.25	<p><b>Earmarked Reserves</b></p> <p>A summary of earmarked reserves as at 1 April 2022 and an estimate of projected balances as at the end of the financial year will be included in the month 5 report.</p>
1.26	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account</b></p> <p>The 2021/22 Outturn Report to Cabinet on 12 July 2022 showed an un-earmarked closing balance at the end of 2021/22 of £3.616m and a closing balance of earmarked reserves of £1.622m.</p>
1.27	<p>The 2022/23 budget for the HRA is £38.119m which includes a movement of £2.858m to reserves.</p>
1.28	<p>The monitoring for the HRA is projecting in year expenditure to be £0.188m higher than budget and a closing un-earmarked balance as at 31 March 2023 of £6.287m, which at 17.9% of total expenditure satisfies the prudent approach of ensuring a minimum level of 3%. Appendix 4 attached refers.</p>
1.29	<p>The budget contribution towards capital expenditure (CERA) is £10.898m.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	As set out within the report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	The financial impacts as set out in the report are a combination of actual costs and losses to date and estimates of costs and losses for the future. There is the possibility that the estimates will change over time. The budget will be monitored closely and mitigation actions taken wherever possible.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None specific.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1: Council Fund – Budget Variances Appendix 2: Council Fund – Programme of Efficiencies Appendix 3: Council Fund – Movement on Un-earmarked Reserves Appendix 4: Housing Revenue Account Variances

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Various budget records.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Dave Ledsham Strategic Finance Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704503 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:dave.ledsham@flintshire.gov.uk">dave.ledsham@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Budget:</b> a statement expressing the Council’s policies and service levels in financial terms for a particular financial year. In its broadest sense it includes both the revenue budget and capital programme and any authorised amendments to them.  <b>Council Fund:</b> the fund to which all the Council’s revenue expenditure is charged.  <b>Financial Year:</b> the period of twelve months commencing on 1 April.  <b>Housing Revenue Account:</b> the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) is a local authority account showing current income and expenditure on

housing services related to its own housing stock. The account is separate from the Council Fund and trading accounts and is funded primarily from rents and government subsidy.

**Intermediate Care Fund:** Funding provided by Welsh Government to encourage integrated working between local authorities, health and housing.

**Projected Outturn:** projection of the expenditure to the end of the financial year, made on the basis of actual expenditure incurred to date.

**Reserves:** these are balances in hand that have accumulated over previous years and are held for defined (earmarked reserves) and general (general reserves) purposes. Councils are required to regularly review the level and purpose of their reserves and to take account of the advice of the Chief Finance Officer.

**Revenue:** a term used to describe the day-to-day costs of running Council services and income deriving from those services. It also includes charges for the repayment of debt, including interest, and may include direct financing of capital expenditure.

**Variance:** difference between latest budget and actual income or expenditure. Can be to date if reflecting the current or most up to date position or projected, for example projected to the end of the month or financial year.

**Virement:** the transfer of budget provision from one budget head to another. Virement decisions apply to both revenue and capital expenditure heads, and between expenditure and income, and may include transfers from contingency provisions. Virements may not however be approved between capital and revenue budget heads.

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## Budget Monitoring Report

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Impact of Covid-19 (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
<b>Social Services</b>						
<b>Older People</b>						
Localities	20.679	20.066	-0.612		The commissioned Older Peoples domiciliary and Direct Payment budget is expected to underspend by £0.747m based on recent months activity. There are recruitment and retention challenges within this service which is limiting the amount of care purchased. The residential care budget is projecting a £0.286m overspend due to the cost of placements net of income such as Free Nursing Care, Regional Integration Fund contributions and property income. The Localities staffing budget is expected to underspend by £0.056m as not all staff are currently top of grade and some costs are to be recharged. There are also underspends on the Minor Adaptation budget of £0.020m, the Day Care budget of £0.033m and the Sensory service level agreements of £0.042m.	
Resources & Regulated Services	8.921	9.170	0.249		In-house residential care is expected to overspend by £0.286m due to staff and running costs. In-house homecare is estimated to underspend by £0.003m, the Extra Care budget by £0.005m, and Day Care by £0.029m. There is an assumption that we will receive £0.185m in Winter Pressures funding and this is built into these projections.	
Impact of Covid-19	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Minor Variances	1.269	1.248	-0.021			
<b>Adults of Working Age</b>						
Resources & Regulated Services	29.525	29.624	0.098		The Physically Disabled and Sensory Impaired (PDSI) budget is showing a £0.108m overspend due to net costs of care packages. The in-house supported living service is £0.039m overspent but will likely increase if required recruitment is successful. The Learning Disability and Work Scheme budget is £0.067m overspent due in part to recent inflationary pressures. The care package costs for independently provided care for Learning Disability services is a £0.116m underspend.	
Children to Adult Transition Services	0.951	1.036	0.084		These are the estimated costs of young adults who have, in this financial year, transferred from Childrens Services.	
Residential Placements	1.956	2.309	0.353		This is based on the net costs of current commissioned care packages within the Mental Health service.	
Minor Variances	3.989	3.945	-0.044			
<b>Children's Services</b>						
Family Support	0.375	0.514	0.139		Costs are based upon the current activity levels over the last few months and projected forward for the year. Workforce costs, a large proportion of which are sessional staff, are the primary cost for this service.	
Legal & Third Party	0.232	0.748	0.516		Legal costs are overspent due to the number of cases going through the courts and some use of external legal professionals. Direct Payments also continue to increase in demand.	
Residential Placements	1.312	0.907	-0.406		The in-year opening of some Childrens Residential care settings will mean that there will be one off cost savings, in addition it is expected that one off, non-recurring grant from Welsh Government will be received for start-up costs.	

## Budget Monitoring Report

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Impact of Covid-19 (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Professional Support	6.173	6.351	0.178		To support adequate levels of child protection, the established staffing structure needs to be at a sufficient level to meet mandatory safeguarding standards. Vacancies are minimised and additional temporary posts are sometimes required to meet the challenges and demands of Children's Services. There is an assumption the Welsh Government will allow for flexible use of Children's Services grants which will allow for some cost pressures to be offset.	
Minor Variances	3.537	3.577	0.040			
<b>Safeguarding &amp; Commissioning</b>						
Safeguarding Unit	1.291	1.081	-0.210		A consultation for the updated Liberty Protection Safeguard legislation continues to be undertaken. Due to the delay in implementing the legislation there will be an in-year saving.	
Impact of Covid-19	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.000		
Minor Variances	-2.242	-2.283	-0.040			
<b>Total Social Services (excl Out of County)</b>	<b>77.969</b>	<b>78.292</b>	<b>0.323</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Out of County</b>						
Children's Services	10.097	11.286	1.189		The projected overspend reflects significant additional demands on the service in the year to date with 24 new placements having been made in the year to date - most of which are high cost residential placements - there is provision for a contingency sum of £0.250m, for net impacts of further new placements and other placement changes but this may not prove to be enough.	
Education & Youth	5.004	4.640	-0.364		The underspend reflects the current cohort of placements and there have been 16 new placements in the year to date with further new placements also likely to emerge as the year progresses.	
<b>Total Out of County</b>	<b>15.101</b>	<b>15.926</b>	<b>0.825</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Education &amp; Youth</b>						
Inclusion & Progression	5.233	5.211	-0.021		Minor net savings mainly within the Pupil Referral Unit (PRU) service with some offsetting the pressure at Canolfan Enfys.	
School Improvement Systems	1.889	1.757	-0.132		Payments to Non-Maintained Settings (NMS) and Maintained Settings (MS) are projected similar to those of 2021/22. WG have announced continuation of top-up funding to £5/hr so provides the Early Entitlement (EE) budget increasing financial capacity. Alongside this, Recruit, Recover and Raise Standards (RRRS) Grant and Early Years pupil Development Grant (EYPDG) have had increases announced, allowing core budget to be released. Proposed efficiency savings currently under review.	
Minor Variances	2.813	2.676	-0.137		Cumulative minor variances of less than £0.050m across Youth Justice, Business Change & Support, School Planning & Provision and Archives.	
<b>Total Education &amp; Youth</b>	<b>9.935</b>	<b>9.644</b>	<b>-0.290</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Schools</b>	<b>108.420</b>	<b>108.420</b>	<b>-0.000</b>			
<b>Streetscene &amp; Transportation</b>						

## Budget Monitoring Report

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Impact of Covid-19 (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Service Delivery	9.047	9.294	0.247		The service has a recurring pressure of £0.100m for security costs due to vandalism at the Household Recycling Centres. Street lighting is also incurring a £0.070m shortfall on the Community Council Income Budget. The remaining £0.080m is attributable to high sickness levels.	
Highways Network	8.096	8.583	0.487		Highways is incurring a pressure of £0.400m in Fleet services as a result of rising fuel costs. Also an additional £0.050m cost increase for weed spraying following a recommendation from Environment Scrutiny, which is not covered by the existing service budget.	
Transportation	10.031	10.195	0.164		Local Bus Service Budget is incurring additional overspend of £0.100m due to the Park and Ride Service and Service 5 re-procurement. School Transport is incurring a pressure of £0.090m, due to additional pressure on the budget for 3 school days because of Easter timelines in this financial year. Minor positive variances account for the remainder.	
Impact of Covid-19	0.000	0.190	0.190	0.190	Service Delivery has a recurring pressure of £0.100m for additional contractors spend and Traffic Management, as the service has been unable to provide the required training and has also faced recruitment delays during the Covid-19 Pandemic. Workforce is also incurring an additional £0.090m of costs due to COVID related sickness levels.	Quarter 1 claim to be submitted for consideration from the Emergency Hardship Fund Contingency Reserve.
Other Minor Variances	11.292	11.269	-0.023			
<b>Total Streetscene &amp; Transportation</b>	<b>38.466</b>	<b>39.531</b>	<b>1.064</b>	<b>0.190</b>		
<b>Planning, Environment &amp; Economy</b>						
Community	0.890	0.967	0.077		Fee income shortfalls in Licensing and Pest Control and historic business planning efficiency £0.024m not realised	
Development	0.146	-0.100	-0.246		Favourable variance following receipt of a 'one off' Planning Fee £0.300m	
Regeneration	0.807	0.765	-0.042		Staff savings following continuation of Grant Funding secured for the Social Enterprise Post, minor variances across the Service	
Management & Strategy	1.385	1.269	-0.116		Staff savings due to vacant posts	
Impact of Covid-19	0.000	0.036	0.036	0.036	COVID-19 related additional cleaning costs for Countryside Service and Environmental Health Officer costs	
Minor Variances	3.569	3.581	0.012			
<b>Total Planning &amp; Environment</b>	<b>6.797</b>	<b>6.562</b>	<b>-0.236</b>	<b>0.036</b>		
<b>People &amp; Resources</b>						
HR & OD	2.284	2.151	-0.133		Staff savings due to vacant posts in Occupational Health Service plus commitment challenge across the Service	
Corporate Finance	2.041	2.014	-0.027			
<b>Total People &amp; Resources</b>	<b>4.324</b>	<b>4.164</b>	<b>-0.160</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Governance</b>						
Democratic Services	2.374	2.284	-0.089		Variance as a result of the Members Allowances new rate not being implemented until May, 2022 and lower than anticipated take up of both Broadband and Pension Allowances (£0.108m) ; plus minor variances across Service	
Customer Services	1.018	0.902	-0.116		Registrars Fee Income higher than anticipated and savings from vacant posts	

## Budget Monitoring Report

Service	Approved Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Annual Variance (£m)	Impact of Covid-19 (£m)	Cause of Major Variances greater than £0.050m	Action Required
Revenues	0.201	0.088	-0.113		The variance results from the projected potential surplus on the Council Tax Collection Fund (£0.117m) based on current information; minor variances across the Service account for the remainder	
Impact of Covid-19	0.000	0.001	0.001	0.001		
Minor Variances	7.180	7.168	-0.012			
<b>Total Governance</b>	<b>10.772</b>	<b>10.442</b>	<b>-0.330</b>	<b>0.001</b>		
<b>Strategic Programmes</b>						
Minor Variances	6.116	6.096	-0.020			
<b>Total Strategic Programmes</b>	<b>6.116</b>	<b>6.096</b>	<b>-0.020</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Assets</b>						
Caretaking & Security	0.264	0.182	-0.082		Savings on salaries due to vacancies	
Minor Variances	0.048	0.084	0.036	0.000		
<b>Total Assets</b>	<b>0.312</b>	<b>0.266</b>	<b>-0.046</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Housing and Community</b>						
Benefits	13.260	12.910	-0.350		Projected underspend of -£0.640m on the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS) which is offset by pressures on recovery of overpayments including a shortfall against the income budget target which has previously been compensated by the WG COVID-19 Hardship Fund and also due to the need to increase the bad debt provision for recovery of overpayments	
Housing Solutions	1.154	0.990	-0.163		Mostly due to savings on salaries due to vacancies and ongoing recruitment challenges	
Minor Variances	0.248	0.244	-0.004			
<b>Total Housing and Community</b>	<b>14.662</b>	<b>14.145</b>	<b>-0.518</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Chief Executive's</b>						
	<b>2.256</b>	<b>2.186</b>	<b>-0.071</b>		Variance due to vacant post and not all staff at top of scale, together with commitment challenge across the Services	
<b>Central &amp; Corporate Finance</b>						
	<b>28.769</b>	<b>28.543</b>	<b>-0.226</b>		Over recovery of planned pension contributions recoupement against actuarial projections based on the current level of contributions	
Centralised Costs	2.783	2.752	-0.030			
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>326.682</b>	<b>326.967</b>	<b>0.285</b>	<b>0.226</b>		

## 2022/23 Efficiencies Outturn Tracker - Mth 4

Efficiency Description	Accountable Officer	Efficiency Target	Projected Efficiency	(Under)/Over Achievement	Efficiency Open/Closed (O/C)	Confidence in Achievement of Efficiency - Based on (see below) R = High Assumption A = Medium Assumption G = Figures Confirmed
<b>Portfolio</b>						
<b>Corporate</b>						
Increase in Reserves	Rachel Parry Jones	0.471	0.471	0.000	C	G
Utility Inflation	Rachael Corbelli	0.085	0.085	0.000	C	G
Efficiency from Restructure	Corporate Policy Rachel Parry Jones	0.025	0.025	0.000	C	G
Recharge to HRA	Chief Executive post to HRA 50% Rachel Parry Jones	0.027	0.027	0.000	C	G
<b>Total Corporate Services</b>		<b>0.608</b>	<b>0.608</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Housing &amp; Assets</b>						
Connahs Quay Power Station	Neal Cockerton	0.290	0.290	0.000	C	G
Rent Newydd	Neal Cockerton	0.020	0.020	0.000	C	G
<b>Total Housing &amp; Assets</b>		<b>0.310</b>	<b>0.310</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Social Services</b>						
Sleep in Pressure not Required	Neil Ayling	0.123	0.123	0.000	C	G
<b>Total Social Services</b>		<b>0.123</b>	<b>0.123</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Governance</b>						
Single Person Discount Review (One Off)	Gareth Owen	0.300	0.300	0.000	O	G
<b>Total Governance</b>		<b>0.300</b>	<b>0.300</b>	<b>0.000</b>		
<b>Total 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies</b>		<b>1.341</b>	<b>1.341</b>	<b>0.000</b>		

	%	£
Total 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies	100	1.341
Total Projected 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies Underachieved	0	0.000
Total Projected 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies Achieved	100	1.341
<b>Total 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies (Less Previously agreed Decisions)</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>0.000</b>
Total Projected 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies Underachieved	0	0.000
Total Projected 2022/23 Budget Efficiencies Achieved	0	0.000

## Corporate Efficiencies Remaining from Previous Years

Income Target Remaining	£m	
Income Target Efficiency remaining from Previous Years	0.041	
Fees and charges increase 1st October, 2022	(0.026)	
<b>Total Income Efficiency Remaining</b>	<b>0.015</b>	(0.015)

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**Movements on Council Fund Unearmarked Reserves**

	£m	£m
Total Reserves as at 1 April 2022	18.438	
Less - Base Level	(5.769)	
<b>Total Reserves above base level available for delegation to Cabinet</b>		12.669
Less - COVID-19 Emergency Funding Allocation		5.316
Less - Childrens Services Social Work Costs (approved 21/22)		0.157
Less - impact of the final pay awards (still awaited)		
Less - Month 4 projected outturn		0.285
<b>Total Contingency Reserve available for use</b>		<b>6.911</b>

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**Budget Monitoring Report**  
**Housing Revenue Account Variances**

**MONTH 4 - SUMMARY**

Service	Revised Budget (£m)	Projected Outturn (£m)	Variance (£m)	Last Month Variance (£m)	Cause of Major Variance	Action Required
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>						
Income	(38.119)	(37.714)	0.405	0.377	We are currently projecting a variance of £0.405m due to loss of rental income in relation to void properties. Of this, £0.315m relates to void properties, £0.067m relates to utilities costs on void properties and £0.039m relates to void garages. The remaining (£0.016m) relates to other minor variances.	
Capital Financing - Loan Charges	6.723	6.723				
Estate Management	2.321	2.162	(0.159)	(0.131)	Additional cost of agency positions of £0.140m, which is offset by vacancy savings of (£0.176m) and additional funding from the Housing Support Grant of (£0.120m). Other minor variances of (£0.003m).	
Landlord Service Costs	1.572	1.623	0.051	(0.007)	Salary savings of (£0.025m) are currently being projected within the service. There is a forecasted pressure on utilities costs of £0.062m. The remaining variance of £0.014m is down to other minor movements.	
Repairs & Maintenance	10.908	10.925	0.017	0.015	There are a number of vacant trades positions which are being covered by agency, leading to an additional net cost of £0.059m. Vacancy savings of (£0.056m) in respect of Admin posts have also been identified. Savings on the cost of materials of (£0.102m). Additional cost of fleet forecasted to be £0.154m due to factors such as rising fuel costs. Other minor variances of (£0.038m).	
Management & Support Services	2.716	2.590	(0.127)	(0.119)	Savings of (£0.051m) have been projected based on current vacancies within the service and a further (£0.100m) efficiency has been identified through a review of central support recharges. Costs of legal advice in respect of the Renting Homes Wales Act £0.017m. Other minor variances of £0.007m.	
Capital Expenditure From Revenue (CERA)	10.898	10.898				
HRA Projects	0.122	0.122	(0.000)	0.000		
Contribution To / (From) Reserves	2.858	2.858				
<b>Total Housing Revenue Account</b>		<b>0.188</b>	<b>0.188</b>	<b>0.135</b>		

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday 26th September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 4)
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Finance Manager
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report summarises changes made to the Capital Programme 2022/23 since it was set in December 2021 to the end of Month 4 (July 2022), along with expenditure to date and projected outturn.

The Capital Programme has seen a net increase in budget of £29.590m during the period which comprises of:-

- Net budget increase in the programme of £15.864m (See Table 2 - Council Fund (CF) £17.621m, Housing Revenue Account (HRA) (£1.757m));
- Introduction of Carry Forward from 2021/22 of £13.726m (CF £13.726m, HRA £0.000m)

Actual expenditure was £14.290m (See Table 3).

Capital receipts received in the first quarter of 2022/23, total £1.058m. This gives a revised projected surplus in the Capital Programme at Month 4 of £3.126m (from an opening funding position surplus of £2.068m) for the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Capital Programme, prior to the realisation of additional capital receipts and/or other funding sources.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

	Cabinet are requested to:
1	Approve the overall report.
2	Approve the carry forward adjustments, as set out at 1.19.
3	Approve the additional allocations, as set out in 1.22.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING POSITION – MONTH 4 2022/23</b>																																																																																			
1.01	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>The Council approved a Council Fund (CF) Capital Programme of £37.469m for 2022/23 at its meeting on 7<sup>th</sup> December 2021 and a Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Capital Programme of £25.074m for 2022/23 at its meeting on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.</p>																																																																																			
1.02	For presentational purposes the Capital Programme is shown as a whole, with sub-totals for the Council Fund and HRA. In reality the HRA programme is 'ring fenced' and can only be used for HRA purposes.																																																																																			
1.03	<p><b>Changes since Budget approval</b></p> <p>Table 1 below sets out how the programme has changed during 2022/23. More detailed cumulative information relating to each Portfolio is provided in Appendix A:-</p> <p><b>Table 1</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th rowspan="2">REVISED PROGRAMME</th> <th>Original Budget 2022/23</th> <th>Carry Forward from 2021/22</th> <th>2022/23 Savings</th> <th>Changes - This Period</th> <th>Revised Budget 2022/23</th> </tr> <tr> <th>£m</th> <th>£m</th> <th>£m</th> <th>£m</th> <th>£m</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>People &amp; Resources</td> <td>0.350</td> <td>0.155</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.505</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Governance</td> <td>0.363</td> <td>0.383</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.746</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Education &amp; Youth</td> <td>10.010</td> <td>6.057</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>(0.112)</td> <td>15.955</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Social Services</td> <td>1.364</td> <td>1.038</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>2.169</td> <td>4.571</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Planning, Environment &amp; Economy</td> <td>0.128</td> <td>0.817</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>2.394</td> <td>3.339</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Streetscene &amp; Transportation</td> <td>3.519</td> <td>2.683</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>12.849</td> <td>19.051</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Strategic Programmes</td> <td>19.400</td> <td>0.964</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>20.364</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Housing and Communities</td> <td>1.660</td> <td>0.386</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.286</td> <td>2.332</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Capital Programme and Assets</td> <td>0.675</td> <td>1.243</td> <td>0.000</td> <td>0.035</td> <td>1.953</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Council Fund Total</b></td> <td><b>37.469</b></td> <td><b>13.726</b></td> <td><b>0.000</b></td> <td><b>17.621</b></td> <td><b>68.816</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>HRA Total</b></td> <td><b>25.074</b></td> <td><b>0.000</b></td> <td><b>0.000</b></td> <td><b>(1.757)</b></td> <td><b>23.317</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Programme Total</b></td> <td><b>62.543</b></td> <td><b>13.726</b></td> <td><b>0.000</b></td> <td><b>15.864</b></td> <td><b>92.133</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	REVISED PROGRAMME	Original Budget 2022/23	Carry Forward from 2021/22	2022/23 Savings	Changes - This Period	Revised Budget 2022/23	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m	People & Resources	0.350	0.155	0.000	0.000	0.505	Governance	0.363	0.383	0.000	0.000	0.746	Education & Youth	10.010	6.057	0.000	(0.112)	15.955	Social Services	1.364	1.038	0.000	2.169	4.571	Planning, Environment & Economy	0.128	0.817	0.000	2.394	3.339	Streetscene & Transportation	3.519	2.683	0.000	12.849	19.051	Strategic Programmes	19.400	0.964	0.000	0.000	20.364	Housing and Communities	1.660	0.386	0.000	0.286	2.332	Capital Programme and Assets	0.675	1.243	0.000	0.035	1.953	<b>Council Fund Total</b>	<b>37.469</b>	<b>13.726</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>17.621</b>	<b>68.816</b>	<b>HRA Total</b>	<b>25.074</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(1.757)</b>	<b>23.317</b>	<b>Programme Total</b>	<b>62.543</b>	<b>13.726</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>15.864</b>	<b>92.133</b>
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1.04	<p><b>Carry Forward from 2021/22</b></p> <p>Carry forward sums from 2021/22 to 2022/23, totalling £13.727m (CF £13.727m, HRA £0.000m), were approved as a result of the quarterly monitoring reports presented to Cabinet during 2021/22.</p>																																																																																	
1.05	<p><b>Changes during this period</b></p> <p>Funding changes during this period have resulted in a net increase in the programme total of £15.864m (CF £17.621m, HRA (£1.757m)). A summary of the changes, detailing major items, is shown in Table 2 below:-</p> <p><b>Table 2</b></p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="3" style="text-align: center;"><b>CHANGES DURING THIS PERIOD</b></th> </tr> <tr> <th></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><b>Para</b></th> <th style="text-align: center;"><b>£m</b></th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b><u>COUNCIL FUND</u></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Increases</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transportation Grants</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.06</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9.596</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Highways</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.07</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2.376</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Children's Services</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.08</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.883</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Townscape Heritage Initiatives</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.09</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.260</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Secondary Schools</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.10</td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.010</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Energy Services</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.11</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.918</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Waste Services</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.12</td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.877</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Aggregate Increases</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">1.777</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">19.697</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Decreases</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>School Modernisation</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.13</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(2.076)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(2.076)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>17.621</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b><u>HRA</u></b></td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Increases</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>WHQS Improvements</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.14</td> <td style="text-align: right;">2.207</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Aggregate Increases</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">0.591</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">2.798</td> </tr> <tr> <td colspan="3"><b>Decreases</b></td> </tr> <tr> <td>SHARP</td> <td style="text-align: center;">1.15</td> <td style="text-align: right;">(3.555)</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other Aggregate Decreases</td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(1.000)</td> </tr> <tr> <td></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;">(4.555)</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>Total</b></td> <td></td> <td style="text-align: right;"><b>(1.757)</b></td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	<b>CHANGES DURING THIS PERIOD</b>				<b>Para</b>	<b>£m</b>	<b><u>COUNCIL FUND</u></b>			<b>Increases</b>			Transportation Grants	1.06	9.596	Highways	1.07	2.376	Children's Services	1.08	1.883	Townscape Heritage Initiatives	1.09	1.260	Secondary Schools	1.10	1.010	Energy Services	1.11	0.918	Waste Services	1.12	0.877	Other Aggregate Increases		1.777			19.697	<b>Decreases</b>			School Modernisation	1.13	(2.076)			(2.076)	<b>Total</b>		<b>17.621</b>	<b><u>HRA</u></b>			<b>Increases</b>			WHQS Improvements	1.14	2.207	Other Aggregate Increases		0.591			2.798	<b>Decreases</b>			SHARP	1.15	(3.555)	Other Aggregate Decreases		(1.000)			(4.555)	<b>Total</b>		<b>(1.757)</b>
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1.06	<p>It is usual in the early part of the financial year to receive notification of funding allocations that were not available at budget setting time. This is the</p>																																																																																	

	case with the Local Transport, Active Travel, Road Safety and Safe Routes grants from Welsh Government (WG). These grants will provide a range of transportation schemes across the County.
1.07	This is the introduction of additional allocations approved in the 2021/22 Outturn report, along with grant funding to support the Highway Asset Management Plan.
1.08	Re-profiling of the Child Care Offer Capital Grant for delivery of the final schemes in 2022/23.
1.09	Introduction of additional allocations approved in the 2021/22 Outturn report along with Transforming Town Place Making and Targeted Regeneration Investment grants for improvement of properties in the County.
1.10	Introduction of grant funding from WG for community focused schools, supporting projects to safely and effectively open schools to the community outside traditional hours.
1.11	Introduction of funding to complete the solar farm scheme in Connahs Quay and other energy efficiency schemes on Council assets.
1.12	WG funding has been introduced for improvement works at Standard Yard Transfer Stations, along with funding to purchase two waste vehicles.
1.13	Re-profiling of prudential borrowing for school modernisation schemes to match projected actual expenditure in this financial year.
1.14	Introduction of additional budget into the WHQS programme to match anticipated expenditure in this financial year.
1.15	Re-profiling of prudential borrowing for the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), due to delays in the number of schemes programmed in for this financial year.
1.16	<p><b>Capital Expenditure compared to Budget</b></p> <p>Expenditure as at Month 4, across the whole of the Capital Programme was £14.290m. The breakdown of expenditure is analysed in Table 3, along with the percentage spend against budget.</p> <p>This shows that 15.51% of the budget has been spent (CF 10.73%, HRA 29.61%). Corresponding figures for Month 4 2021/22 were 32.87% (CF 37.22%, HRA 24.89%).</p>
1.17	The table also shows a projected underspend (pending carry forward and other adjustments) of £1.543m on the Council Fund and a break even position on the HRA.

**Table 3**

EXPENDITURE	Revised Budget	Cumulative Expenditure Month 4	Percentage Spend v Budget	Projected Outturn	Variance Budget v Outturn (Under)/Over
	£m	£m	%	£m	£m
People & Resources	0.505	0.000	0.00	0.505	0.000
Governance	0.746	0.136	18.23	0.746	0.000
Education & Youth	15.955	0.992	6.22	15.494	(0.461)
Social Services	4.571	1.344	29.40	4.382	(0.189)
Planning, Environment & Economy	3.339	0.232	6.95	3.089	(0.250)
Streetscene & Transportation	19.051	3.351	17.59	19.005	(0.046)
Strategic Programmes	20.364	0.557	2.74	20.364	0.000
Housing & Communities	2.332	0.582	24.96	2.332	0.000
Capital Programme & Assets	1.953	0.193	9.88	1.356	(0.597)
<b>Council Fund Total</b>	<b>68.816</b>	<b>7.387</b>	<b>10.73</b>	<b>67.273</b>	<b>(1.543)</b>
Disabled Adaptations	1.114	0.151	13.55	1.114	0.000
Energy Schemes	1.101	0.753	68.39	1.101	0.000
Major Works	0.726	0.241	33.20	0.726	0.000
Accelerated Programmes	0.561	0.144	25.67	0.561	0.000
WHQS Improvements	15.562	4.683	30.09	15.562	0.000
SHARP Programme	4.253	0.931	21.89	4.253	0.000
<b>Housing Revenue Account Total</b>	<b>23.317</b>	<b>6.903</b>	<b>29.61</b>	<b>23.317</b>	<b>0.000</b>
<b>Programme Total</b>	<b>92.133</b>	<b>14.290</b>	<b>15.51</b>	<b>90.590</b>	<b>(1.543)</b>

1.18 Details of the variances for individual programme areas are listed in Appendix B, which includes the reasons, and remedial actions which may be required, where those variances exceed +/- 10% of the revised budget. In addition, where carry forward into 2023/24 has been identified, this is also included in the narrative.

1.19 **Carry Forward into 2023/24**  
During the quarter, carry forward requirements of £1.543m (all CF) has been identified which reflects reviewed spending plans across all programme areas; these amounts can be split into 2 areas, those required to meet the cost of programme works and/or retention payments in 2023/24 and Corporate provision that are allocated as requested and approved.

1.20 The Corporate provision is as follows:-

- Community Asset Transfers - Community groups have a number of years to draw down their funding once approved. These sums are set aside to ensure that funds are available when called upon.

1.21 Information relating to each programme area is contained in Appendix B and summarised in Table 4 below:

**Table 4**

<b>CARRY FORWARD INTO 2023/24</b>	<b>Month 4 £m</b>
Education & Youth	0.461
Social Services	0.189
Planning, Environment & Economy	0.250
Streetscene & Transportation	0.046
Capital Programme & Assets	0.597
<b>Council Fund</b>	<b>1.543</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>1.543</b>

1.22	<p><b>Additional Allocations</b></p> <p>Additional allocations have been identified in the programme in this quarter as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Ty Nyth Children’s Assessment Centre - £0.060m. Additional funding required to complete works at Ty Nyth. The service will also bid for additional grant funding, which if successful, will allow this additional allocation to be returned back to the core programme.</li></ul> <p>This can be funded from within the current ‘headroom’ provision.</p>
1.23	<p><b>Savings</b></p> <p>No savings have been identified in the programme in this quarter.</p>
1.24	<p><b>Funding of 2022/23 Approved Schemes</b></p> <p>The position at Month 4 is summarised in Table 5 below for the three year Capital Programme between 2022/23 – 2024/25:-</p>



**Table 5****FUNDING OF APPROVED SCHEMES 2022/23 - 2024/25**

	£m	£m
Balance carried forward from 2021/22		(2.149)
<b>Increases</b>		
Shortfall in 2022/23 to 2024/25 Budget	0.867	
		0.867
<b>Decreases</b>		
Additional GCG - 2022/23 Confirmed	(0.786)	
Actual In year receipts	(1.058)	(1.844)
<b>Funding - (Available)/Shortfall</b>		<b>(3.126)</b>

1.25 Capital receipts received in the first quarter of 2022/23, total £1.058m. This gives a revised projected surplus in the Capital Programme at Month 4 of £3.126m (from an opening funding position surplus of £2.068m) for the 2022/23 – 2024/25 Capital Programme, prior to the realisation of additional capital receipts and/or other funding sources.

1.26 **Investment in County Towns**

At its meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2017, the Council approved a Notice of Motion relating to the reporting of investment in county towns. The extent and format of the reporting was agreed at the Corporate Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 14<sup>th</sup> June 2018.

1.27 Table 6 below shows a summary of the 2021/22 actual expenditure, the 2022/23 revised budget and budgets for future years as approved by Council at its meeting of 7<sup>th</sup> December, 2021. Further detail can be found in Appendix C, including details of the 2022/23 spend to Month 4.

**Table 6****INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS**

	<b>2021/22 Actual £m</b>	<b>2022/23 Revised Budget £m</b>	<b>2023 - 2025 Budget £m</b>
Buckley / Penyffordd	1.928	4.894	9.602
Connah's Quay / Shotton	0.842	2.515	1.500
Flint / Bagillt	0.368	1.782	7.750
Holywell / Caerwys / Mostyn	4.495	7.975	0.000
Mold / Treuddyn / Cilcain	6.968	21.016	22.101
Queensferry / Hawarden / Sealand	8.031	3.492	3.000
Saltney / Broughton / Hope	4.929	1.217	27.430
Unallocated / To Be Confirmed	1.540	4.796	18.092
<b>Total</b>	<b>29.101</b>	<b>47.687</b>	<b>89.475</b>

1.28 The inclusion of actuals for 2021/22 and approved schemes for future years allows a slightly fuller picture of investment plans. However, expenditure which has occurred in years' prior to 2021/22 has not be included, and the expenditure and budgets reported should be considered in that context.

1.29 There are two significant factors which increase allocations to particular areas, which are homes developed under SHARP, and new or remodelled schools. The impact of these can be seen in the detail shown in Appendix C.

1.30 Some expenditure cannot yet be allocated to specific towns as schemes are not yet fully developed or are generic in nature and not easily identifiable to one of the seven areas. As such schemes are identified the expenditure will be allocated to the relevant area.

1.31 Information on the split between internal and external funding can be found in Appendix C.

1.32 In addition to the information contained in Appendix C, there is also considerable capital expenditure on the HRA Welsh Housing Quality Standard (WHQS), which was originally outside the scope of this analysis. A summary is provided in Table 7 below, albeit using a slightly different catchment area basis.

**Table 7**

<b>WHQS Programme</b>		
	<b>2021/22 Actual £m</b>	<b>2022/23 Budget £m</b>
Holywell	0.850	4.550
Flint	0.870	1.450
Deeside & Saltney	4.430	1.700
Buckley	4.820	1.250
Mold	5.150	4.262
Connah's Quay & Shotton	0.960	2.350
<b>Total</b>	<b>17.080</b>	<b>15.562</b>

**2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS**

2.01 Financial implications - As set out in the body of the report.

2.02 Personnel implications - None directly as a result of this report.

**3.00 IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

3.01 The impact of the pandemic will continue to be monitored closely during this financial year. Due to the re-profiling of schemes from the 2021/22 and resources available to manage and deliver schemes, the levels of planned expenditure in 2022/23 may be affected, resulting in a high level of carry forward requests to re-phase budgets into the 2023/24 programme.

In addition to the above there are currently indications that material supplies, and demand, are being impacted by overseas supply market disruption leading to potential cost increases, higher tender prices and project delays.

Grants received will also to be closely monitored to ensure that expenditure is incurred within the terms and conditions of the grant. The capital team will work with project leads to report potential risks of achieving spend within timescales and assist in liaising with the grant provider.

The Council has a prudent policy of allocating its own capital receipts to fund capital projects only when receipts are actually received rather than when it is anticipated the receipt will be received, and this position continues to be the case. Due to the pandemic there may be a delay in obtaining capital receipts as the timing of these receipts are also subject to market forces

	outside of the Council's control. In line with current policy no allowance has been made for these receipts in reporting the Council's capital funding position.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	No consultation is required as a direct result of this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix A: Capital Programme - Changes during 2022/23
5.02	Appendix B: Variances
5.03	Appendix C: Investment in Towns

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Capital Programme monitoring papers 2022/23.

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Chris Taylor, Strategic Finance Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703309 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk">christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Budget Re-profiling:</b> Capital schemes are very dynamic and a number of factors can influence their timing and funding. Budget re-profiling assures that the correct resources are available in the correct accounting period to finance the actual level of expenditure.</p> <p><b>Capital Expenditure:</b> Expenditure on the acquisition of <b>non-current assets</b> or expenditure which extends the useful life of an existing asset</p> <p><b>Capital Programme:</b> The Council's financial plan covering capital schemes and expenditure proposals for the current year and a number of future years. It also includes estimates of the capital resources available to finance the programme.</p> <p><b>Capital Receipts:</b> Receipts (in excess of £10,000) realised from the disposal of assets.</p> <p><b>Carry Forward:</b> Carry forward occurs when schemes due to be completed in a given financial year are delayed until a subsequent year. In this case</p>

the relevant funding is carried forward to meet the delayed, contractually committed expenditure.

**CERA: Capital Expenditure** charged to **Revenue Account**. The Council is allowed to use its revenue resources to fund capital expenditure. However the opposite is not permissible.

**Council Fund (CF):** The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure is charged.

**Housing Revenue Account (HRA):** The fund to which all the Council's revenue and capital expenditure relating to its housing stock is charged.

**MRA: Major Repairs Allowance.** A general capital grant from WG for HRA purposes.

**Non-current Asset:** A resource controlled (but not necessarily owned) by the Council, from which economic benefits or service potential are expected to flow to the Council for more than 12 months.

**Section 106:** Monies are received from developers/contractors pursuant to Section 106 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990. These sums are available for use once the relevant terms of the individual agreement have been met. The monies are most commonly used for educational enhancement, play areas, highways and affordable housing.

**Target Hardening:** Measures taken to prevent unauthorised access to Council sites.

**Unhypothecated Supported Borrowing (USB), commonly referred to as Supported Borrowing** - Each year Welsh Government provide Councils with a Supported Borrowing allocation. Councils borrow to fund capital expenditure equivalent to that annual allocation, Welsh Government then include funding to cover the revenue costs associated with the borrowing for future years within the Revenue Support Grant. The Council decides how this funding is spent.

**Unsupported (Prudential) Borrowing:** Borrowing administered under the Prudential Code, whereby Authorities can set their own policies on acceptable levels and types of borrowing. The Prudential Framework allows Authorities to take out loans in response to overall cash flow forecasts and other factors provided they can show that the borrowing is to meet planned capital expenditure in the current year or the next three years.

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## CAPITAL PROGRAMME - CHANGES DURING 2022/23

	Original Budget 2022/23	Carry Forward from 2021/22	2022/23 Savings	Changes (Current)	Revised Budget 2022/23
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Council Fund :</b>					
<b>People &amp; Resources</b>					
'Headroom'	0.350	0.140	0.000	0.000	0.490
Corporate Finance - H & S	0.000	0.015	0.000	0.000	0.015
	<b>0.350</b>	<b>0.155</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.505</b>
<b>Governance</b>					
Information Technology	0.363	0.383	0.000	0.000	0.746
	<b>0.363</b>	<b>0.383</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.746</b>
<b>Education &amp; Youth</b>					
Education - General	0.650	4.778	0.000	(0.003)	5.425
Primary Schools	1.257	0.666	0.000	0.714	2.637
Schools Modernisation	7.303	0.000	0.000	(2.076)	5.227
Secondary Schools	0.300	0.357	0.000	1.253	1.910
Special Education	0.500	0.256	0.000	0.000	0.756
	<b>10.010</b>	<b>6.057</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(0.112)</b>	<b>15.955</b>
<b>Social Services</b>					
Services to Older People	0.650	0.156	0.000	0.286	1.092
Learning Disability	0.270	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.270
Children's Services	0.444	0.882	0.000	1.883	3.209
	<b>1.364</b>	<b>1.038</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>2.169</b>	<b>4.571</b>
<b>Planning, Environment &amp; Economy</b>					
Closed Landfill Sites	0.000	0.250	0.000	0.000	0.250
Engineering	0.038	0.349	0.000	0.000	0.387
Energy Services	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.918	0.918
Townscape Heritage Initiatives	0.050	0.218	0.000	1.260	1.528
Private Sector Renewal/Improv't	0.040	0.000	0.000	0.216	0.256
	<b>0.128</b>	<b>0.817</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>2.394</b>	<b>3.339</b>
<b>Streetscene &amp; Transportation</b>					
Waste Services	1.875	1.930	0.000	0.877	4.682
Cemeteries	0.000	0.265	0.000	0.000	0.265
Highways	1.644	0.424	0.000	2.376	4.444
Local Transport Grant	0.000	0.018	0.000	9.596	9.614
Solar Farms	0.000	0.046	0.000	0.000	0.046
	<b>3.519</b>	<b>2.683</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>12.849</b>	<b>19.051</b>

APPENDIX A (Cont.)

	Original Budget 2022/23	Carry Forward from 2021/22	2022/23	Changes (Current)	Revised Budget 2022/23
			Savings		
	£m	£m	£m	£m	£m
<b>Strategic Programmes</b>					
Leisure Centres	0.200	0.286	0.000	0.000	0.486
Play Areas	0.200	0.394	0.000	0.000	0.594
Libraries	0.000	0.009	0.000	0.000	0.009
Theatr Clwyd	19.000	0.275	0.000	0.000	19.275
	<b>19.400</b>	<b>0.964</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>20.364</b>
<b>Housing &amp; Communities</b>					
Disabled Facilities Grants	1.660	0.386	0.000	0.286	2.332
	<b>1.660</b>	<b>0.386</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.286</b>	<b>2.332</b>
<b>Capital Programme &amp; Assets</b>					
Administrative Buildings	0.675	0.588	0.000	0.035	1.298
Community Asset Transfers	0.000	0.655	0.000	0.000	0.655
	<b>0.675</b>	<b>1.243</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.035</b>	<b>1.953</b>
<b>Housing Revenue Account :</b>					
Disabled Adaptations	1.114	0.000	0.000	0.000	1.114
Energy Schemes	0.510	0.000	0.000	0.591	1.101
Major Works	0.726	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.726
Accelerated Programmes	0.561	0.000	0.000	0.000	0.561
WHQS Improvements	13.355	0.000	0.000	2.207	15.562
Modernisation / Improvements	1.000	0.000	0.000	(1.000)	0.000
SHARP Programme	7.808	0.000	0.000	(3.555)	4.253
	<b>25.074</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>(1.757)</b>	<b>23.317</b>
<b>Totals :</b>					
<b>Council Fund</b>	37.469	13.726	0.000	17.621	68.816
<b>Housing Revenue Account</b>	25.074	0.000	0.000	(1.757)	23.317
<b>Grand Total</b>	<b>62.543</b>	<b>13.726</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>15.864</b>	<b>92.133</b>



PEOPLE & RESOURCES

Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
'Headroom'	0.490	0.000	0.490	0.000	0	0.000		Corporate provision - to be allocated as requested and approved.	Any unspent allocation will be the subject of a carry forward request at outturn.
Corporate Finance - Health & Safety	0.015	0.000	0.015	0.000	0	0.000		Corporate provision - to be allocated as requested and approved.	Any unspent allocation will be the subject of a carry forward request at outturn.
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.505</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0.505</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

GOVERNANCE

Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Information Technology	0.746	0.136	0.746	0.000	0	0.000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>0.746</b>	<b>0.136</b>	<b>0.746</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

## EDUCATION &amp; YOUTH

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Education - General	5.425	0.388	5.221	(0.204)	-4	0.000	Joint archive scheme (£0.197m) and Gronant CP roof works retention (£0.007m) to fall into 2023/24.	<b>Carry Forward</b> - Request approval to move funding of <b>£0.204m</b> into 2023/24.	
Primary Schools	2.637	0.406	2.380	(0.257)	-10	0.000	Ysgol Penyffordd classroom extension works due to commence in April 2023, £0.257m.	<b>Carry Forward</b> - Request approval to move funding of <b>£0.257m</b> into 2023/24.	
Schools Modernisation	5.227	(0.166)	5.227	0.000	0	0.000			
Secondary Schools	1.910	0.125	1.910	0.000	0	0.000			
Special Education	0.756	0.239	0.756	0.000	0	0.000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>15.955</b>	<b>0.992</b>	<b>15.494</b>	<b>(0.461)</b>	<b>-3</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn
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## SOCIAL SERVICES

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Services to Older People	1.092	0.130	0.903	(0.189)	-17	0.000	An element of design costs for Croes Atti Residential Home, Flint to fall into 2023/24.	<b>Carry Forward</b> - Request approval to move funding of <b>£0.189m</b> into 2023/24.	
Learning Disability Services	0.270	0.000	0.270	0.000	0	0.000			
Children's Services	3.209	1.214	3.209	0.000	0	0.000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.571</b>	<b>1.344</b>	<b>4.382</b>	<b>(0.189)</b>	<b>-4</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Projected Outturn

## PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT &amp; ECONOMY

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Closed Landfill Sites	0.250	0.000	0.000	(0.250)	-100	0.000	Project to progress into 2023/24.	<b>Carry Forward</b> - Request approval to move funding of <b>£0.250m</b> into 2023/24.	
Engineering	0.387	0.000	0.387	0.000	0	0.000			
Energy Services	0.918	0.083	0.918	0.000	0	0.000			
Townscape Heritage Initiatives	1.528	0.066	1.528	0.000	0	0.000			
Private Sector Renewal/Improvement	0.256	0.083	0.256	0.000	0	0.000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.339</b>	<b>0.232</b>	<b>3.089</b>	<b>(0.250)</b>	<b>-7</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

## STREETSCENE &amp; TRANSPORTATION

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Waste Services	4.682	(0.246)	4.682	0.000	0	0.000			A tender exercise is underway in relation to Standard Yard waste transfer station in Buckley; further market testing and additional funding options are now being explored, along with alternative designs.
Cemeteries	0.265	0.001	0.265	0.000	0	0.000			
Highways	4.444	(0.442)	4.444	0.000	0	0.000			
Local Transport Grant	9.614	4.038	9.614	0.000	0	0.000			
Solar Farms	0.046	0.000	0.000	(0.046)	-100	0.000	Works to take place in 2023/24 for the installation of solar PV at Standard Yard waste transfer station, to ensure site is energy neutral. This is a requirement as part of the wider improvement scheme on the site.	<b>Carry Forward</b> - Request approval to move funding of <b>£0.046m</b> into 2023/24.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>19.051</b>	<b>3.351</b>	<b>19.005</b>	<b>(0.046)</b>	<b>-0</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

## STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget	Actual Exp.	Projected Outturn	Variance (Under)/ Over	Variance %age	Variance Prev Qtr	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m			
Leisure Centres	0.486	0.000	0.486	0.000	0	0.000			
Play Areas	0.594	0.159	0.594	0.000	0	0.000			
Libraries	0.009	0.000	0.009	0.000	0	0.000			
Theatr Clwyd	19.275	0.398	19.275	0.000	0	0.000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>20.364</b>	<b>0.557</b>	<b>20.364</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

## HOUSING &amp; COMMUNITIES

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget	Actual Exp.	Projected Outturn	Variance (Under)/ Over	Variance %age	Variance Prev Qtr	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m			
Disabled Facilities Grants	2.332	0.582	2.332	0.000	0	0.000			DFG spend is customer driven and volatile.
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.332</b>	<b>0.582</b>	<b>2.332</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

## CAPITAL PROGRAMME &amp; ASSETS

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget	Actual Exp.	Projected Outturn	Variance (Under)/ Over	Variance %age	Variance Prev Qtr	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
	£m	£m	£m	£m	%	£m			
Administrative Buildings	1.298	0.185	1.298	0.000	0	0.000			
Community Asset Transfers	0.655	0.008	0.058	(0.597)	-91	0.000	Expenditure is incurred as and when schemes are signed off.	<b>Carry Forward</b> - Request approval to move funding of <b>£0.597m</b> into 2023/24.	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1.953</b>	<b>0.193</b>	<b>1.356</b>	<b>(0.597)</b>	<b>-31</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

## HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
Disabled Adaptations	1.114	0.151	1.114	0.000	0	0.000			
Energy Services	1.101	0.753	1.101	0.000	0	0.000			Programme of works to assist with energy efficiency in homes.
Major Works	0.726	0.241	0.726	0.000	0	0.000			
Accelerated Programmes	0.561	0.144	0.561	0.000	0	0.000			
WHQS Improvements	15.562	4.683	15.562	0.000	0	0.000			Contract accelerated at Leeswood due to the number of external repairs highlighted. It is cost effective to carry out these works in year whilst contractors are currently on site as opposed to revisiting.
SHARP	4.253	0.931	4.253	0.000	0	0.000			Delay to the Nant Y Gro Scheme.
<b>Total</b>	<b>23.317</b>	<b>6.903</b>	<b>23.317</b>	<b>0.000</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn



## SUMMARY

## Capital Budget Monitoring 2022/23 - Month 4

Programme Area	Total Budget £m	Actual Exp. £m	Projected Outturn £m	Variance (Under)/ Over £m	Variance %age %	Variance Prev Qtr £m	Cause of Variance	Action Required	Comments
People & Resources	0.505	0.000	0.505	0.000	0	0.000			
Governance	0.746	0.136	0.746	0.000	0	0.000			
Education & Youth	15.955	0.992	15.494	(0.461)	-3	0.000			
Social Services	4.571	1.344	4.382	(0.189)	-4	0.000			
Planning, Environment & Economy	3.339	0.232	3.089	(0.250)	-7	0.000			
Streetscene & Transportation	19.051	3.351	19.005	(0.046)	-0	0.000			
Strategic Programmes	20.364	0.557	20.364	0.000	0	0.000			
Housing & Communities	2.332	0.582	2.332	0.000	0	0.000			
Capital Programme & Assets	1.953	0.193	1.356	(0.597)	-31	0.000			
<b>Total - Council Fund</b>	<b>68.816</b>	<b>7.387</b>	<b>67.273</b>	<b>(1.543)</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>0.000</b>			
Housing Revenue Account	23.317	6.903	23.317	0.000	0	0.000			
<b>Total</b>	<b>92.133</b>	<b>14.290</b>	<b>90.590</b>	<b>(1.543)</b>	<b>-2</b>	<b>0.000</b>			

Variance = Budget v Outturn

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INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS - 2021/22 ACTUAL SPEND

APPENDIX C

TOWN FUNDING	21/22 ACTUAL £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS			
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000	
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>																					
<b>HOUSING - HRA</b>																					
SHARP	2,024					20		1,635	289	5		2					73		1,715	309	2,024
<b>EDUCATION &amp; YOUTH</b>																					
Queensferry Campus	7,651											2,214	5,437						2,214	5,437	7,651
Ysgol Glanrafon	3,157										3,157								0	3,157	3,157
Castell Alun High School	4,216													3,121	1,095				3,121	1,095	4,216
<b>SOCIAL CARE</b>																					
Marleyfield EPH	605	605																	605	0	605
Ty Nyth, Children's Residential Care	462										462								0	462	462
<b>PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT &amp; ECONOMY</b>																					
Solar PV Farms	600				600														600	0	600
<b>STREETSCENE &amp; TRANSPORTION</b>																					
Improvements to Standard Yard Waste Transfer Station	386		386																0	386	386
Improvements to Greenfield Waste Transfer Station	795							27	768										27	768	795
Highways Maintenance	2,506	137	28		35		197		421		92	433	242		103	68			1,556	950	2,506
Transport Grant	4,133		772			207			1,011			253				542		406	0	4,133	4,133
													136				1,061		0		
<b>STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES</b>																					
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	1,984										661	1,323							661	1,323	1,984
<b>HOUSING &amp; ASSETS</b>																					
Affordable Housing	582										582								582	0	582
	29,101	742	1,186	635	207	197	171	2,006	2,489	1,340	5,628	2,458	5,573	3,224	1,705	479	1,061	11,081	18,020	29,101	

AREA TOTAL

1,928      842      368      4,495      6,968      8,031      4,929      1,540

P000451

INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS - 2022/23 REVISED BUDGET

APPENDIX C (Cont)

TOWN FUNDING	REVISED BUDGET £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS				
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>																						
<b>HOUSING - HRA</b>																						
SHARP	7,808	32				162		7,581					33							7,808	0	7,808
<b>EDUCATION &amp; YOUTH</b>																						
Ysgol Glanrafon	398									302	96									302	96	398
Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton	750				262	488														262	488	750
Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint	350										350									0	350	350
Penyffordd CP	377	377																		377	0	377
Joint Archive Facility, FCC and DCC	197									197										197	0	197
<b>SOCIAL CARE</b>																						
Ty Nyth, Children's Residential Care	803																			0	803	803
Croes Atti Residential Care Home, Flint	1,000						1,000													1,000	0	1,000
Relocation of Tri-Ffordd Day Service provision	270														270					270	0	270
<b>PLANNING, ENVIRONMENT &amp; ECONOMY</b>																						
Solar PV Farms	410				410															410	0	410
<b>STREETSCENE &amp; TRANSPORTION</b>																						
Improvements to Standard Yard Waste Transfer Station	3,871	3,405	466																	3,405	466	3,871
Highways Maintenance	2,592		33								4				2	2,152	401		2,152	440	2,592	
Transport Grant	9,614		581		1,355		270	27	363		371		3,459		947		2,241		27	9,587	9,614	
<b>STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES</b>																						
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	19,247										247	19,000								247	19,000	19,247
	47,687	3,814	1,080	672	1,843	1,162	620	7,608	367	746	20,270	33	3,459	270	949	2,152	2,642		16,457	31,230	47,687	
<b>AREA TOTAL</b>			4,894	2,515	1,782	7,975	21,016	3,492	1,219	4,794												

Page 452

TOWN FUNDING	ACTUAL TO DATE £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS				
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000		
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>																						
<b>HOUSING - HRA</b>																						
SHARP	931	32				162		704					33							931	0	931
<b>EDUCATION &amp; YOUTH</b>																						
Ysgol Glanrafon	347									250	97									250	97	347
<b>SOCIAL CARE</b>																						
Ty Nyth, Children's Residential Care	501									501										501	0	501
Croes Atti Residential Care Home, Flint	133						133													133	0	133
<b>STREETSCENE &amp; TRANSPORTION</b>																						
Improvements to Standard Yard Waste Transfer Station	16		16																	0	16	16
Highways Maintenance	43		33						4						2				0	43	43	
Transport Grant	4,038				1,250			9	92		288		2,399						9	4,029	4,038	
<b>STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES</b>																						
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	237										237									0	237	237
	6,246	32	49	0	1,250	295	0	713	96	751	622	33	2,399	0	2	0	4		1,824	4,422	6,246	
<b>AREA TOTAL</b>			81		1,250		295		809		1,373		2,432		2		4					

INVESTMENT IN COUNTY TOWNS - 2023- 2025 BUDGET

APPENDIX C (Cont)

TOWN FUNDING	FUTURE BUDGET £000	BUCKLEY		CONNAH'S QUAY		FLINT		HOLYWELL		MOLD		QUEENSFERRY		SALTNEY		UNALLOCATED		TOTALS			
		Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Internal £000	External £000	Total £000			
<b>EXPENDITURE</b>																					
<b>EDUCATION &amp; YOUTH</b>																					
Ysgol Croes Atti, Flint	5,150					1,925	3,225												1,925	3,225	5,150
Drury County Primary	3,650	2,372	1,278																2,372	1,278	3,650
Elfed High School	4,488	1,571	2,917																1,571	2,917	4,488
Mynydd Isa Area	1,464	512	952																512	952	1,464
Saltney/Broughton Area	25,000													8,750	16,250				8,750	16,250	25,000
Joint Archive Facility, FCC and DCC	2,783									2,783									2,783	0	2,783
<b>SOCIAL CARE</b>																					
Relocation of Tri-Ffordd Day Service provision	2,430													2,430					2,430	0	2,430
<b>STREETSCENE &amp; TRANSPORTION</b>																					
Highways Asset Management Plan	2,000																2,000		2,000	0	2,000
<b>STRATEGIC PROGRAMMES</b>																					
Theatr Clwyd - Redevelopment	19,000										7,000	12,000							7,000	12,000	19,000
<b>HOUSING &amp; ASSETS</b>																					
Affordable Housing	23,510			1,500	0	2,600				318			3,000				16,092		23,510	0	23,510
	89,475	4,455	5,147	1,500	0	4,525	3,225	0	0	10,101	12,000	3,000	0	11,180	16,250	18,092	0	52,853	36,622	89,475	
<b>AREA TOTAL</b>			9,602	1,500		7,750		0		22,101		3,000		27,430		18,092					



## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
<b>Report Author</b>	Corporate Finance Manager
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The report presents the draft Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22 (attached as Appendix 1).

As required by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, the Annual Report was reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee on 27 July where officers responded to questions to the satisfaction of the Committee and there are no specific issues to bring to the attention of Cabinet.

It is recommended that the report be presented to Council on 18 October for final approval.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet recommends the draft Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22 to Council on 18 October for final approval.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE ANNUAL REPORT</b>
1.01	On 16 February 2021, following the recommendation of the Cabinet and consideration by the Audit Committee, the Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22.
1.02	The Council delegates responsibility for the implementation and regular monitoring of its treasury management policies and practices to Cabinet, and for execution and administration of treasury management decisions to the Corporate Finance Manager, who acts in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement, Strategy and Practices.
1.03	The Council has nominated the Governance and Audit Committee to be responsible for ensuring effective scrutiny of Treasury Management Strategy and Policies.
	<b><u>CONSIDERATIONS</u></b>
1.04	<p>The draft Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22 is attached as Appendix 1. As required by the Council's Financial Procedure Rules, this Annual Report was reviewed by the Governance and Audit Committee on 27 July where officers responded to questions to the satisfaction of the Committee and there are no specific issues to bring to the attention of Cabinet.</p> <p>It is recommended that the report be presented to Council on 18 October for final approval.</p>
	<b><u>Summary of Key Points</u></b>
1.05	<p>The continuing economic recovery from the coronavirus pandemic, the war in Ukraine, higher inflation, and higher interest rates were major issues over the period.</p> <p>The Bank Rate was 0.1% at the beginning of the reporting period. The beginning of the year saw the economy gathering momentum as pandemic restrictions were eased. Despite the improving outlook, market expectations were that the Bank of England would delay rate rises until 2022, however, rapidly rising inflation has now disrupted that projection.</p> <p>Section 2 of the report provides a full economic and interest rate review for 2021/22.</p>
1.06	Short term money market rates remained at very low levels which continued to have a significant impact on investment income. The average return on Council investments for the year was 0.07%. Section 4 provides further details of the Council's investment activity during the year.
1.07	Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) long term rates remained low during 2021/22 and a total of £10.582m PWLB loans were taken out during the year. Of these, £0.582m have been on-lent to NEW Homes, the Council's wholly owned subsidiary, to fund the building of affordable homes in



	Flintshire. Section 3 provides more information on borrowing and debt management during the year.
1.08	Debt rescheduling opportunities were considered by officers and the Council's Treasury Management advisors. The premium charged for early repayment of PWLB debt remained relatively expensive for the loans in the Council's portfolio and therefore unattractive for debt rescheduling activity. No rescheduling activity was undertaken as a consequence.
1.09	The treasury function operated within the limits detailed in the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Financial implications are addressed in the report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT</b>
3.01	Arlingclose Ltd, being the Council's treasury management advisors.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
4.01	Risk Management directly addressed within the report and appendices including identification of risks and measures to mitigate likelihood and impact of risks identified.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	1. Draft Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22

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

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Chris Taylor – Strategic Finance Manager <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703309 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk">christopher.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p><b>Authorised Limit:</b> A statutory limit that sets the maximum level of external debt for the Council.</p> <p><b>Balances and Reserves:</b> Accumulated sums that are held, either for specific future costs or commitments (known as earmarked) or generally held to meet unforeseen or emergency expenditure.</p> <p><b>Bank Rate:</b> The official interest rate set by the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee and what is generally termed at the "base rate".</p> <p><b>Basis Point:</b> A unit of measure used in finance to describe the percentage change in the value or rate of a financial instrument. One basis point is equivalent to 0.01% (1/100th of a percent). In most cases, it refers to changes in interest rates and bond yields. For example, if interest rates rise by 25 basis points, it means that rates have risen by 0.25% percentage points.</p> <p><b>Bond:</b> A certificate of debt issued by a company, government, or other institution. The bond holder receives interest at a rate stated at the time of issue of the bond. The price of a bond may vary during its life.</p> <p><b>Capital Expenditure:</b> Expenditure on the acquisition, creation or enhancement of capital assets.</p> <p><b>Capital Financing Requirement (CFR):</b> The Council's underlying need to borrow for capital purposes representing the cumulative capital expenditure of the local authority that has not been financed.</p> <p><b>Certificates of Deposits (CD's):</b> A savings certificate entitling the bearer to receive interest. A CD bears a maturity date, a specified fixed interest rate and can be issued in any denomination. CDs are generally issued by commercial banks. The term of a CD generally ranges from one month to five years.</p> <p><b>Consumer Price Index (CPI):</b> The UK's main measure of inflation (along with Retail Price Index or 'RPI') The Monetary Policy Committee of the Bank of England set the Bank Rate in order to try and keep CPI at or close to the target set by the Government. The calculation of CPI includes many items of normal household expenditure but excludes some items such as mortgage interest payments and Council Tax.</p> <p><b>Corporate Bonds:</b> Corporate bonds are bonds issued by companies. The term is often used to cover all bonds other than those issued by governments in their own currencies and includes issues by companies, supranational organisations and government agencies.</p> <p><b>Cost of Carry:</b> The "cost of carry" is the difference between what is paid to borrow compared to the interest which could be earned. For example, if one takes out borrowing at 5% and invests the money at 1.5%, there is a cost of carry of 3.5%.</p>

**Counterparty List:** List of approved financial institutions with which the Council can place investments.

**Credit Rating:** Formal opinion by a registered rating agency of a counterparty's future ability to meet its financial liabilities; these are opinions only and not guarantees.

**Debt Management Office (DMO):** The DMO is an Executive Agency of Her Majesty's Treasury and provides direct access for local authorities into a government deposit facility known as the Debt Management Account Deposit Facility (DMADF). All deposits are guaranteed by HM Government and therefore have the equivalent of a sovereign credit rating.

**Federal Reserve:** The US central bank, the equivalent of the Bank of England. (Often referred to as "the Fed").

**Financial Instruments:** Financial instruments are tradable assets of any kind. They can be cash, evidence of an ownership interest in an entity, or a contractual right to receive or deliver cash or another financial instrument

**Gilts:** Gilts are bonds issued by the UK Government. They take their name from 'gilt-edged'. They are deemed to be very secure as the investor expects to receive the full face value of the bond to be repaid on maturity.

**IFRS:** International Financial Reporting Standards.

**LIBID:** The London Interbank Bid Rate (LIBID) is the rate bid by banks on Eurocurrency deposits (i.e. the rate at which a bank is willing to borrow from other banks).

**LIBOR:** The London Interbank Offered Rate (LIBOR) is the rate of interest that banks charge to lend money to each other. The British Bankers' Association (BBA) work with a small group of large banks to set the LIBOR rate each day. The wholesale markets allow banks who need money to borrow from those with surplus amounts. The banks with surplus amounts of money are keen to lend so that they can generate interest which it would not otherwise receive.

**LOBO:** Stands for Lender Option Borrower Option. The underlying loan facility is typically very long-term - for example 40 to 60 years - and the interest rate is fixed. However, in the LOBO facility the lender has the option to call on the facilities at pre-determined future dates. On these call dates, the lender can propose or impose a new fixed rate for the remaining term of the facility and the borrower has the 'option' to either accept the new imposed fixed rate or repay the loan facility.

**Maturity:** The date when an investment or borrowing is repaid.

**Maturity Structure / Profile:** A table or graph showing the amount (or percentage) of debt or investments maturing over a time period.

**Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP):** An annual provision that the Council is statutorily required to set aside and charge to the Revenue Account for

the repayment of debt associated with expenditure incurred on capital assets.

**Monetary Policy Committee (MPC):** Government Body that sets the Bank Rate. Its primary target is to keep inflation within 1% of a central target of 2%. Its secondary target is to support the Government in maintaining high and stable levels of growth and employment.

**Money Market Funds (MMF):** Pooled funds which invest in a range of short term assets providing high credit quality and high liquidity.

**Non Specified Investment:** Investments which fall outside the WG Guidance for Specified investments (below).

**Operational Boundary:** This linked directly to the Council's estimates of the CFR and estimates of other day to day cash flow requirements. This indicator is based on the same estimates as the Authorised Limit reflecting the most likely prudent but not worst case scenario but without the additional headroom included within the Authorised Limit.

**Premiums and Discounts:** In the context of local authority borrowing,  
(a) the premium is the penalty arising when a loan is redeemed prior to its maturity date and  
(b) the discount is the gain arising when a loan is redeemed prior to its maturity date.

**Prudential Code:** Developed by CIPFA and introduced in April 2004 as a professional code of practice to support local authority capital investment planning within a clear, affordable, prudent and sustainable framework and in accordance with good professional practice.

**Prudential Indicators:** Indicators determined by the local authority to define its capital expenditure and asset management framework. They are designed to support and record local decision making in a manner that is publicly accountable; they are not intended to be comparative performance indicators

**Public Works Loans Board (PWLB):** The PWLB is a statutory body operating within the United Kingdom Debt Management Office, an Executive Agency of HM Treasury. The PWLB's function is to lend money from the National Loans Fund to local authorities and other prescribed bodies, and to collect the repayments.

**Quantitative Easing (QE):** In relation to the UK, it is the process used by the Bank of England to directly increase the quantity of money in the economy. It does not involve printing more banknotes. Instead, the Bank buys assets from private sector institutions – that could be insurance companies, pension funds, banks or non-financial firms – and credits the seller's bank account. So the seller has more money in their bank account, while their bank holds a corresponding claim against the Bank of England (known as reserves). The end result is more money out in the wider economy.

**Retail Price Index (RPI):** A monthly index demonstrating the movement in the cost of living as it tracks the prices of goods and services including mortgage interest and rent.

**Revenue Expenditure:** Expenditure to meet the continuing cost of delivery of services including salaries and wages, the purchase of materials and capital financing charges.

**Specified Investments:** Term used in the Welsh Assembly Guidance for Local Authority Investments. Investments that offer high security and high liquidity, in sterling and for no more than one year. UK government, local authorities and bodies that have a high credit rating.

**Supported Borrowing:** Borrowing for which the costs are supported by the government or third party.

**Supranational Bonds:** Instruments issued by supranational organisations created by governments through international treaties (often called multilateral development banks). The bonds carry an AAA rating in their own right. Examples of supranational organisations are the European Investment Bank, the International Bank for Reconstruction and Development.

**Temporary Borrowing:** Borrowing to cover peaks and troughs of cash flow, not to fund capital spending.

**Term Deposits:** Deposits of cash with terms attached relating to maturity and rate of return (Interest).

**Treasury Bills (T-Bills):** Treasury Bills are short term Government debt instruments and, just like temporary loans used by local authorities, are a means to manage cash flow. They are issued by the Debt Management Office and are an eligible sovereign instrument, meaning that they have an AAA-rating.

**Treasury Management Code:** CIPFA's Code of Practice for Treasury Management in the Public Services, initially brought in 2003, subsequently updated in 2009 and 2011.

**Treasury Management Practices (TMP):** Treasury Management Practices set out the manner in which the Council will seek to achieve its policies and objectives and prescribe how it will manage and control these activities.

**Unsupported Borrowing:** Borrowing which is self-financed by the local authority. This is also sometimes referred to as Prudential Borrowing.

**Yield:** The measure of the return on an investment instrument.

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# **FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

## **TREASURY MANAGEMENT**

DRAFT

**ANNUAL REPORT 2021/22**

## **1.00 INTRODUCTION**

The Council approved the Treasury Management Strategy 2021/22 (the Strategy) including key indicators, limits and an annual investment strategy on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

The Strategy was produced based on the 2017 edition of the *CIPFA Treasury Management in the Public Services: Code of Practice*.

The purpose of this report is to review the outcomes from 2021/22 treasury management operations and compare these with the Strategy.

Treasury management comprises the management of the local authority's cash flows, its banking, money market and capital market transactions; the effective control of the risks associated with those activities; and the pursuit of optimum performance consistent with those risks.

## **2.00 ECONOMIC & INTEREST RATE REVIEW 2021/22**

*This is provided by Arlingclose Ltd, the Council's treasury management advisors.*

### **2.01 Economic background**

The continuing economic recovery from coronavirus pandemic, together with the war in Ukraine, higher inflation, and higher interest rates were major issues over the period.

Bank Rate was 0.1% at the beginning of the reporting period. April and May saw the economy gathering momentum as the shackles of the pandemic restrictions were eased. Despite the improving outlook, market expectations were that the Bank of England would delay rate rises until 2022. Rising, persistent inflation changed that.

UK CPI was 0.7% in March 2021 but thereafter began to steadily increase. Initially driven by energy price effects and by inflation in sectors such as retail and hospitality which were re-opening after the pandemic lockdowns, inflation then was believed to be temporary. Thereafter price rises slowly became more widespread, as a combination of rising global costs and strong demand was exacerbated by supply shortages and transport dislocations. The surge in wholesale gas and electricity prices led to elevated inflation expectations. CPI for February 2022 registered 6.2% year on year, up from 5.5% in the previous month and the highest reading in the National Statistic series. Core inflation, which excludes the more volatile components, rose to 5.2% y/y from 4.4%.

The government's jobs furlough scheme insulated the labour market from the



worst effects of the pandemic. The labour market began to tighten and demand for workers grew strongly as employers found it increasingly difficult to find workers to fill vacant jobs. Having peaked at 5.2% in December 2020, unemployment continued to fall and the most recent labour market data for the three months to January 2022 showed the unemployment rate at 3.9%, while the employment rate rose to 75.6%. Headline 3-month average annual growth rates for wages were 4.8% for total pay and 3.8% for regular pay. In real terms, after adjusting for inflation, total pay growth was up 0.1% while regular pay fell by 1.0%.

With the fading of lockdown – and, briefly, the ‘pingdemic’ – restraints, activity in consumer-facing sectors improved substantially, as did sectors such as oil and mining with the reopening of oil rigs, but materials shortages and the reduction in the real spending power of households and businesses dampened some of the growth momentum. Gross domestic product (GDP) grew by an upwardly revised 1.3% in the fourth calendar quarter of 2021 according to the final estimate (initial estimate 1.0%) and took UK GDP to just 0.1% below where it was before the pandemic. The annual growth rate was revised down slightly to 7.4% (from 7.5%) following a revised 9.3% fall in 2020.

Having increased Bank Rate from 0.10% to 0.25% in December, the Bank of England hiked it further to 0.50% in February and 0.75% in March. At the meeting in February, the Monetary Policy Committee (MPC) voted unanimously to start reducing the stock of its asset purchase scheme by ceasing to reinvest the proceeds from maturing bonds as well as starting a programme of selling its corporate bonds.

In its March interest rate announcement, the MPC noted that the invasion of Ukraine had caused further large increases in energy and other commodity prices, with the expectation that the conflict will worsen supply chain disruptions around the world and push CPI inflation to around 8% later in 2022, even higher than forecast only a month before in the February Monetary Policy Report. The Committee also noted that although GDP in January was stronger than expected with business confidence holding up and the labour market remaining robust, consumer confidence had fallen due to the squeeze in real household incomes.

GDP growth in the euro zone increased by 0.3% in calendar Q4 2021 following a gain of 2.3% in the third quarter and 2.2% in the second. Headline inflation remains high, with CPI registering a record 7.5% year-on-year in March, the ninth successive month of rising inflation. Core CPI inflation was 3.0% y/y in March, well above the European Central Bank’s target of ‘below, but close to 2%’, putting further pressure on its long-term stance of holding its main interest rate of 0%.

The US economy expanded at a downwardly revised annualised rate of 6.9% in Q4 2021, a sharp increase from a gain of 2.3% in the previous quarter. In its

March 2022 interest rate announcement, the Federal Reserve raised the Fed Funds rate to between 0.25% and 0.50% and outlined that further increases should be expected in the coming months. The Fed also repeated its plan to reduce its asset purchase programme which could start by May 2022.

## **2.02 Financial markets**

The conflict in Ukraine added further volatility to the already uncertain inflation and interest rate outlook over the period. The Dow Jones started to decline in January but remained above its pre-pandemic level by the end of the period, while the FTSE 250 and FTSE 100 also fell and ended the quarter below their pre-March 2020 levels.

Bond yields were similarly volatile as the tension between higher inflation and flight to quality from the war pushed and pulled yields, but with a general upward trend from higher interest rates dominating as yields generally climbed.

The 5-year UK benchmark gilt yield began the quarter at 0.82% before rising to 1.41%. Over the same period the 10 year gilt yield rose from 0.97% to 1.61% and the 20-year yield from 1.20% to 1.82%.

The Sterling Overnight Rate (SONIA) averaged 0.39% over the quarter.

## **3.00 BORROWING REQUIREMENTS AND DEBT MANAGEMENT**

### **3.01 PWLB (Public Works Loans Board) Certainty Rate**

The Council qualified for the PWLB Certainty Rate, allowing the authority to borrow at a reduction of 20 basis points on the Standard Rate for a further 12 months from 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

### **3.02 Borrowing Activity in 2021/22.**

The total long term borrowing outstanding, brought forward into 2021/22 was £289.02 million.

	<b>Balance 01/04/2021 £m</b>	<b>Debt Maturing £m</b>	<b>New Debt £m</b>	<b>Balance 31/03/2022 £m</b>
<b>Capital Financing Requirement</b>	<b>351.7</b>	<b>(6.1)</b>	<b>7.0</b>	<b>352.6</b>
<b>Short Term Borrowing</b>	<b>58.0</b>	<b>(58.0)</b>	<b>10.0</b>	<b>10.0</b>
<b>Long Term Borrowing</b>	<b>289.0</b>	<b>(5.1)</b>	<b>10.7</b>	<b>294.6</b>
<b>TOTAL BORROWING</b>	<b>347.0</b>	<b>(63.1)</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>304.6</b>
<b>Other Long Term Liabilities</b>	<b>3.9</b>	<b>(0.6)</b>	<b>0.0</b>	<b>3.3</b>
<b>TOTAL EXTERNAL DEBT</b>	<b>350.9</b>	<b>(63.7)</b>	<b>20.7</b>	<b>307.9</b>
<b>Increase/(Decrease in Borrowing (£m))</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>(43.0)</b>	

The Council's Capital Programme is financed by a combination of capital receipts and grants, capital expenditure charged to the revenue account (CERA) and borrowing. The borrowing strategy in recent years, in accordance with advice received from the Council's treasury management advisors, Arlingclose, has been to use existing cash balances and short term borrowing to confirm the long term borrowing requirement. This is to ensure that the Council does not commit to long term borrowing too early and borrow unnecessarily, which will be costly. This is balanced against securing low interest costs and achieving cost certainty over the period for which the funds are required so as not to compromise the long term stability of the portfolio.

Short term borrowing continued to be available throughout the year at much lower rates than long term borrowing and was utilised as far as possible without exposing the Council to excessive refinancing risk. The total short term (temporary) borrowing as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was £10m with an average rate of 0.16%.

The relative costs and benefits of internal / short term borrowing and long term borrowing were monitored closely, in conjunction with Arlingclose, throughout the year. The Council continues to have a long term borrowing requirement and as PWLB long term rates remained low during the year the following loans were taken out:

Start Date	Maturity Date	Amount	Rate	Loan Type
30 Apr 2021	30 Apr 2061	£0.582m	2.15%	Annuity
28 Jan 2022	28 Jan 2044	£10.0m	2.07%	EIP

The loan for £0.582m has been lent on to NEW Homes, the Council's wholly owned subsidiary, to fund the building of affordable homes in Flintshire.

At 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022, £270.9m of the Council's loans were in the form of fixed rate with the PWLB, £18.95m were variable rate in the form of LOBOs (Lender Option Borrower Option) and £4.8m were interest free loans from the Government, available for specific schemes. The Council's average rate for long term borrowing was 4.52%.

The Council's underlying need to borrow as measured by the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was £352.6. The Council's total external debt was £307.9m.

### **3.03 Lender Option Borrower Option loans (LOBOs)**

The Council holds £18.95m of LOBOs, loans where the lender has the option to propose an increase in the interest rate at set dates, following which the Council has the option to either accept the new rate or to repay the loan at no additional cost. All of these LOBOs had options during the year, none of which were exercised by the lender.

### **3.04 Debt Rescheduling**

Options for debt rescheduling were explored in conjunction with our treasury management advisors. The premium charged for early repayment of PWLB debt remained relatively expensive for the loans in the Council's portfolio and therefore unattractive for debt rescheduling activity. As a consequence no rescheduling activity was undertaken.

The Corporate Finance Manager, in conjunction with the Council's treasury management advisors, will continue to review any potential opportunities for restructuring the Council's debt in order to take advantage of potential savings as interest rates change and to enhance the balance of the long term portfolio (amend the maturity profile and/or the balance of volatility).

### **3.05 Revised CIPFA Codes, Updated PWLB Lending Facility Guidance**

In August 2021 HM Treasury significantly revised guidance for the PWLB lending facility, with more detail and 12 examples of permitted and prohibited use of PWLB loans. Authorities that are purchasing or intending to purchase investment assets primarily for yield will not be able to access the PWLB except to refinance

existing loans or externalise internal borrowing. Acceptable use of PWLB borrowing includes service delivery, housing, regeneration, preventative action, refinancing and treasury management.

CIPFA published its revised Prudential Code for Capital Finance and Treasury Management Code on 20th December 2021. The key changes in the two codes are around permitted reasons to borrow, knowledge and skills, and the management of non-treasury investments.

The principles of the Prudential Code took immediate effect although local authorities could defer introducing the revised reporting requirements until the 2023/24 financial year if they wish. The Councils changes are to be included in the 2023/24 financial year. However, the view is that we are largely compliant with the revised Code.

To comply with the Prudential Code, authorities must not borrow to invest primarily for financial return. The Code also states that it is not prudent for local authorities to make investment or spending decision that will increase the CFR unless directly and primarily related to the functions of the authority. Existing commercial investments are not required to be sold; however, authorities with existing commercial investments who expect to need to borrow should review the options for exiting these investments.

Borrowing is permitted for cash flow management, interest rate risk management, to refinance current borrowing and to adjust levels of internal borrowing. Borrowing to refinance capital expenditure primarily related to the delivery of a local authority's function but where a financial return is also expected is allowed, provided that financial return is not the primary reason for the expenditure. The changes align the CIPFA Prudential Code with the PWLB lending rules.

Unlike the Prudential Code, there is no mention of the date of initial application in the Treasury Management Code. The Treasury Management Code now includes extensive additional requirements for service and commercial investments, far beyond those in the 2017 version.

The Council will follow the same process as the Prudential Code.

## 4.00 INVESTMENT ACTIVITY

### 4.01 Guidance

The Welsh Government's Investment Guidance gives priority to security and liquidity and the Council's aim is to achieve a yield commensurate with these principles.

### 4.02 Investment Activity in 2021/22

#### Summary of investments as at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022.

Country	Total	<1 month	1 –12 months	>12 months
	£m	%	£m	£m
UK BANKS	3.8	3.8		
UK BUILDING SOCIETIES				
OVERSEAS				
MMF's	26.7	26.7		
LOCAL AUTHORITIES	3.0	3.0		
DMO	16.7	11.7	5.0	
<b><u>TOTAL</u></b>	<b>50.2</b>	<b>45.2</b>	<b>5.0</b>	<b>0.0</b>

The investment for £5m was classified as a short term investment in the Council's Balance Sheet. The remainder of the investments had maturities of less than 3 months, so were classified as cash.

Security of capital remained the Council's main investment objective. This was maintained by following the Council's counterparty policy as set out in its Strategy for 2021/22. Investments during the year included:

- Deposits with the Debt Management Office
- Deposits with other local authorities
- Investments in AAA-rated Low Volatility Net Asset Value (LVNAV) money market funds
- Call accounts and deposits with banks and building societies

### 4.03 Credit Risk

The Council assessed and monitored counterparty credit quality with reference to credit ratings, credit default swaps, GDP of the country in which the institution operate, the country's net debt as a percentage of GDP, and share price. The minimum long-term counterparty credit rating determined by the Council for the 2021/22 treasury strategy was A-/A-/A3 across rating agencies Fitch, S&P and

Moody's.

#### **4.04 Counterparty Update**

In the first half of 2021-22, credit default swap (CDS) spreads were flat over most of period and are broadly in line with their pre-pandemic levels. In September, spreads rose by a few basis points due to concerns around Chinese property developer Evergrande defaulting, but then fell back. Fitch and Moody's revised upward the outlook on a number of UK banks and building societies on the Authority's counterparty list to 'stable', recognising their improved capital positions compared to 2020 and better economic growth prospects in the UK.

Fitch also revised the outlook for Nordea, Svenska Handelsbanken and Handelsbanken plc to stable. The agency considered the improved economic prospects in the Nordic region to have reduced the baseline downside risks it previously assigned to the lenders.

The successful vaccine rollout programme was credit positive for the financial services sector in general and the improved economic outlook meant some institutions were able to reduce provisions for bad loans. However, in 2022, the uncertainty engendered by Russia's invasion of Ukraine pushed CDS prices modestly higher over the first calendar quarter, but only to levels slightly above their 2021 averages, illustrating the general resilience of the banking sector.

Having completed its full review of its credit advice on unsecured deposits, in September Arlingclose extended the maximum duration limit for UK bank entities on its recommended lending list from 35 days to 100 days; a similar extension was advised in December for the non-UK banks on this list. As ever, the institutions and durations on the Authority's counterparty list recommended by Arlingclose remains under constant review.

#### **4.05 Liquidity**

In keeping with the WG's Guidance on Investments, the Council maintained a sufficient level of liquidity through the use of money market funds and call accounts.

#### **4.06 Yield**

The UK Bank Rate increased from 0.10% to 0.25% in December 2021, to 0.50% in February 2022 and to 0.75% in March 2022. Short term money market rates remained at very low levels which continued to have a significant impact on investment income. The low rates of return on the Council's short-dated money market investments reflect prevailing market conditions and the Council's objective of optimising returns commensurate with the principles of security and

liquidity.

The Council's budgeted investment income for the year had been prudently estimated at £10k. The average investment balance was £42.2m during the period and interest earned was £29.1k, at an average interest rate of 0.07%.

#### **4.07 Loans to NEW Homes**

The loans to NEW Homes do not meet the definition of an investment and are not therefore included in the Council's investment figures. They are classed as capital expenditure.

#### **5.00 COMPLIANCE**

The Council can confirm that it has complied with its Prudential Indicators for 2021/22. These were approved by Council as part of the Treasury Management Strategy on 16<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

In compliance with the requirements of the CIPFA Code of Practice this report provides members with a summary report of the treasury management activity during 2021/22. None of the Prudential Indicators have been breached and a prudent approach has been taken in relation to investment activity with priority being given to security and liquidity over yield.

The treasury function operated within the limits detailed in the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy Statement 2021/22.

#### **6.00 OTHER ITEMS**

The following were the main treasury activities during 2021/22

- The Council's Governance and Audit Committee received a Mid-Year Report on 17<sup>th</sup> November 2021.
- Quarterly update reports were presented to the Governance and Audit Committee.
- The 2022/23 Investment Strategy Statement was approved by Council on 15<sup>th</sup> February 2022.
- The Council's cash flow was managed on a daily basis. During the year the Council acted both as a borrower and as a lender and was a net borrower over the year in question. The maximum investments the Authority had on deposit at any one time were £68.1m and the maximum long-term borrowing at any one time was £296.3m.

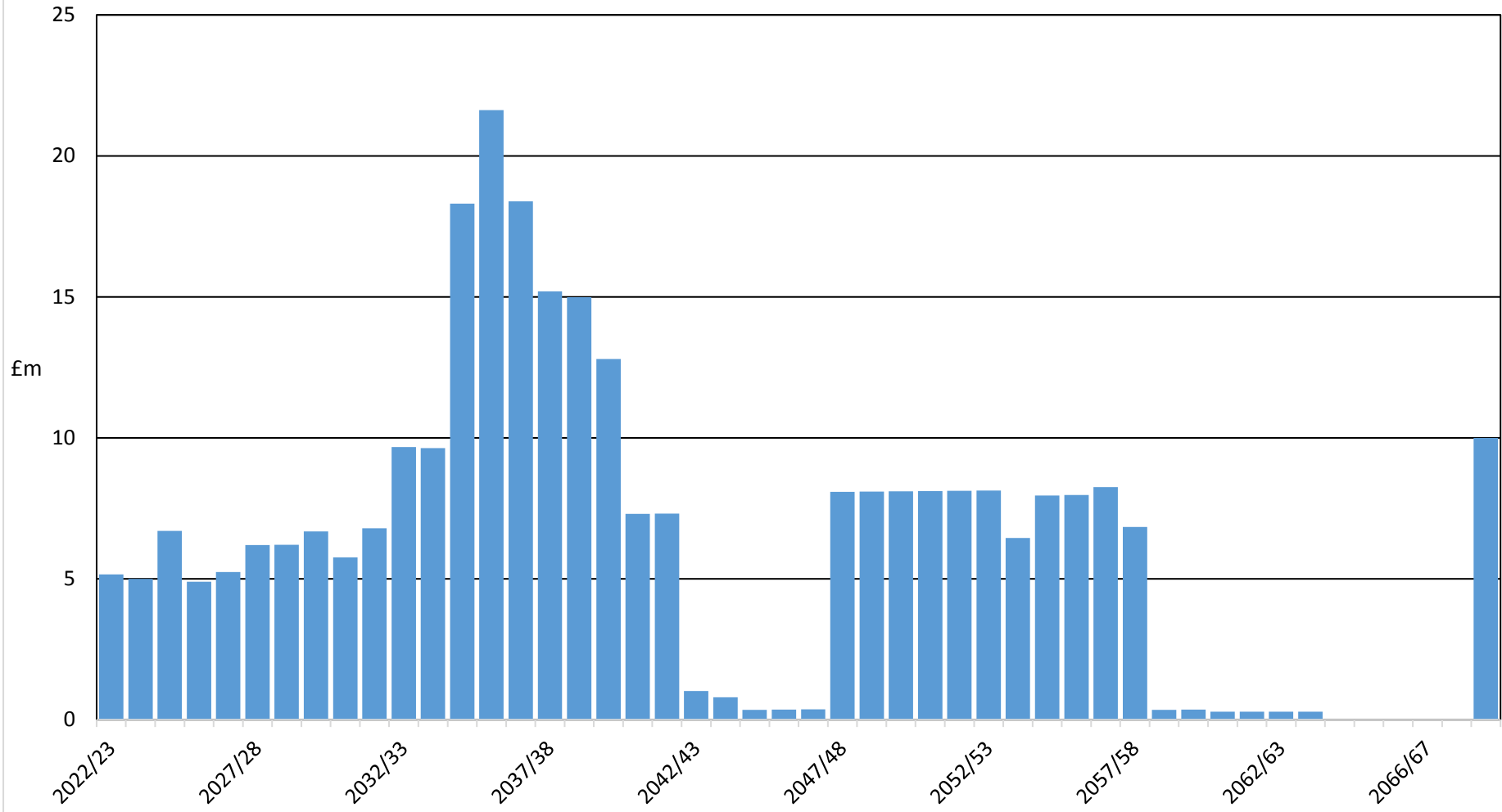


## **7.00 CONCLUSION**

The treasury management function has operated within the statutory and local limits detailed in the 2021/22 Treasury Management Strategy.

The Treasury Management Policy was implemented in a pro-active manner with security and liquidity as the primary focus.

### Debt Maturity Profile - Mar 2022





## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Welsh Government Consultation - Council Tax Reform
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Governance)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides Cabinet Members with information on a Welsh Government (WG) phase 1 consultation seeking views on the reform of Council Tax. The proposals, include:

- completing a Council Tax revaluation
- designing a new system of bands and tax rates that is more progressive
- improving the framework of discounts, disregarded persons, exemptions, and premiums
- improving the Council Tax Reduction Scheme

The report provides Cabinet with a series of recommended responses on the reform proposals (as set out in Appendix 1) to specific questions posed by WG.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Cabinet is asked to consider the proposals of the Welsh Government Consultation to reform Council Tax and authorise the Revenues and Procurement Manager to respond to the consultation, as set out in this report.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE COUNCIL TAX REFORM PROPOSALS																																	
1.01	<p>The Welsh Government phase 1 consultation is seeking views on a package of reforms to Council Tax in Wales. The proposals include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• completing a Council Tax revaluation of all 1.5 million domestic properties in Wales to rebalance the system to reflect property values, especially since the current banding system is now nearly twenty years out of date;</li> <li>• designing a new system of bands and tax rates that is seen to be more progressive, including considering adding more bands to the top and bottom ends of the scale if needed;</li> <li>• re-valuing more frequently to keep Council Tax fairly distributed on a more regular basis;</li> <li>• improving the framework of discounts, disregarded persons, exemptions and premiums;</li> <li>• improving the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which provides support to low-income households.</li> </ul>																																	
1.02	<p>The expressed aim of the reforms is not to raise more revenue but to make the system fairer, rebalancing the liability for Council Tax between residents who can ostensibly afford to pay more and thereby easing the burden of residents who may be on lower incomes, as well as targeting reductions more effectively.</p>																																	
103	<p>Welsh Government consider the current system needs major reform as the Council Tax places a higher tax burden, proportionately, on those with lower levels of wealth. For example, the amount of Council Tax charges for a Band I property is three and a half times as much as Band A, yet homes in the top band can often be worth at least nine times as much as those in the bottom band.</p>																																	
1.04	<p>The table below shows the percentage of Flintshire Council Tax properties by band and how this compares to the Welsh average:</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Number</th> <th>A</th> <th>B</th> <th>C</th> <th>D</th> <th>E</th> <th>F</th> <th>G</th> <th>H</th> <th>I</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Flintshire</td> <td>70,685</td> <td>6%</td> <td>14%</td> <td>29%</td> <td>19%</td> <td>16%</td> <td>11%</td> <td>5%</td> <td>0.80%</td> <td>0.30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Welsh average</td> <td>1,463,005</td> <td>14%</td> <td>21%</td> <td>22%</td> <td>16%</td> <td>13%</td> <td>8%</td> <td>4%</td> <td>0.90%</td> <td>0.40%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>		Number	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	Flintshire	70,685	6%	14%	29%	19%	16%	11%	5%	0.80%	0.30%	Welsh average	1,463,005	14%	21%	22%	16%	13%	8%	4%	0.90%	0.40%
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1.05	<p>There are also a range of Council Tax discounts, disregards and exemptions that can apply to specific circumstances, but most reduction schemes have not been reviewed since the Council Tax system was first introduced in 1993. Although phase 1 of the WG consultation does not include specific proposals for reform, WG intend to review discount and exemption schemes to improve and modernise the system so that it makes Council Tax fairer.</p> <p>This could include making the system more accessible for taxpayers, making it easier to take up entitlements and targeting support and liability more effectively. WG propose to carefully review each category of</p>																																	

	discount, disregarded or exemption to ensure the schemes are aligned to create a fairer Council Tax system.
1.06	The report provides Cabinet with a series of recommended responses (as set out in Appendix 1) to specific questions posed by WG on the reform proposals.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	Local authorities in Wales would see changes in their local tax-bases and potential changes in revenue in each area if Welsh Government undertake the national revaluation as set out. In other words, this would have a redistributive impact on the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which is allocated by a complex formula.
2.02	Following a national revaluation if a local authority tax-base decreased it would receive proportionately more in RSG to compensate for lower Council Tax revenue. On the other hand, if the tax-base increased it would receive less in RSG.
2.03	While there would be some effects on the tax-bases across Wales as a result of any revaluation, WG also advise there should be no significant overall changes in funding for council services.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	WG is considering a new revaluation exercise to address the perceived unfairness in the current system and bring bands up to date. This could also enable the development of more property bands at the top and bottom ends of the banding system to distribute the taxable capacity in a more detailed and fairer way. Adding additional bands will also help to make the Council Tax more progressive, noting that property-based taxes are regarded as inherently regressive.
3.02	The expressed purpose of a national re-valuation is not raise additional income from Council Tax overall but to redistribute the same income from Council Tax more fairly and evenly.
3.03	The phase 1 consultation proposals in relation to the national revaluation would be an extensive exercise and mainly resourced through the Valuation Office Agency, the independent central government agency responsible for valuing domestic and non-domestic properties in England and Wales.
3.04	Welsh Government consider that a 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2025 effective date would be a realistic date to implement reforms, using property and sales data as at 1 <sup>st</sup> April 2023.
3.05	At this stage, it would be impossible to predict the outcome of the national revaluation as properties would be re-valued using market prices at a date

	<p>which is 6 months away. While the value of homes has increased significantly since the last revaluation in Wales in 2003, the system should remain a relative one, save for any local and regional variations in property prices.</p> <p>As with any national revaluation, especially if additional bands are introduced, it is generally recognised that some households will pay more, some will broadly stay the same, and some will pay less.</p>
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	<p>This WG phase 1 implements the commitment to create a fairer and more progressive Council Tax system, which is contained within the Programme for Government and the cooperation agreement between Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru.</p> <p>A phase 2 consultation will offer detailed proposals at a later date.</p>
4.02	<p>The purpose of the report is to provide cabinet with the opportunity to comment on the phase 1 consultation proposals to reform Council Tax and to consider the proposed responses prepared by officers in the Revenue service.</p>

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	<p>Appendix 1 to this report contains the recommended responses to the list of 18 questions within the consultation paper.</p>
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
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6.01	<p>The Welsh Government Consultation documents are accessible at:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <a href="https://gov.wales/fairer-council-tax">https://gov.wales/fairer-council-tax</a></li> <li>• <a href="https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2022-07/consultation-wg45022.pdf">https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/consultations/2022-07/consultation-wg45022.pdf</a></li> </ul>
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<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
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7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> David Barnes, Revenues Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703652  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk">david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>
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8.00	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Revenue Support Grant:</b> the annual amount of money the Council receives from Welsh Government to partly fund services, alongside revenue from Council Tax and other income the Council raises locally. Councils can decide how to use this grant across services although their freedom to allocate according to local choice can be limited by guidelines set by Government.</p> <p><b>Tax Base:</b> is a measure of the Councils ‘taxable capacity’ taking into account the number of chargeable properties after exemptions and discounts.</p> <p><b>Progressive Tax:</b> is a tax that is seen to impose higher rates of tax on those who can afford to pay more and is generally geared around your ability to pay.</p> <p><b>Regressive Tax:</b> is the direct opposite of a progressive tax and is seen to particularly affect low-income earners because they pay a disproportionately higher amount compared to their ability to pay.</p>

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## **Appendix 1 – Responses to the Welsh Government Phase 1 Consultation on Council Tax Reform to create “A Fairer Council Tax”**

**Question 1:** The Council Tax bands are currently based on property values from 1 April 2003, almost twenty years ago. Do you agree there should be a Council Tax revaluation in 2025, with property values based on 1 April 2023, to maintain the credibility of the system and distribute the tax burden more fairly?

**Question 2:** Do you agree the Welsh Government should consider adding more Council Tax bands (for example at the top and bottom ends of the scale) and refit the bands to help make the system more progressive?

Yes we support the proposition of a national revaluation in 2025. The property market has changed so much since 2003 and it is difficult for residents to align their property bands based on a system of valuation thresholds that are not a reflection of modern day house prices. We also fully support the creation of new properties bands and the bottom and top of the scales to make the Council Tax more progressive. We also believe the banding ratios from ‘A to I’ should also be brought into the scope of this reform to ensure the taxable capacity is more distributed fairly between the bands.

**Question 3:** The Welsh Government is committed to considering transitional arrangements if needed to smooth the effects of reforms. What factors should we take into account when designing these arrangements?

We believe a transitional relief scheme is an important feature when implementing any national revaluation to limit the short term impact of any changes in bills – and over a three year period as a minimum. We also believe the transitional relief scheme needs to be a universal scheme, and one that is easily understood by residents and is fairly easy for councils to administer.

If additional bands are introduced to make the Council Tax more progressive, any transitional relief scheme will need to operate not only based on the banding changes but also on the financial impact on the changes in the bands. As a minimum, we would suggest any transitional scheme should factor in an impact threshold of £200 to ensure any annual increases above £200 in the Council Tax payable (excluding the annual inflationary rise) also contains the necessary protections to phase in the Council Tax increases over a three year period.

A Transitional Relief scheme similar to the one that existed for the three year period from 1 April 2005 would be a welcome step – this was set out in The Council Tax (Transitional Arrangements) (Wales) Regulations 2004.

**Question 4:** Do you agree the Welsh Government's Revenue Support Grant to Councils should be adjusted to take account of changes to revenues raised in each local area as a result of Council Tax reforms?

The Council understands the principle that changes in the Tax Base would result in the need to redistribute RSG based on the overall effects of the national revaluation.

However, as a local authority that has a higher proportion of properties in the middle to upper property bands, compared to the Welsh average, we believe changes in the Tax Base should not have a significant negative impact in future RSG settlements we receive as a result of Flintshire being a relatively prosperous area but with levels of deprivation in many parts of the County.

We believe a review of the overall funding formula to distribute RSG is increasingly necessary, especially if, as a direct result of the national revaluation, there is a risk of the Council receiving a smaller proportion of RSG per head of population.

**Question 5:** Do you agree there should be frequent Council Tax revaluations at least every five years in the future, to ensure the tax burden is shared fairly amongst taxpayers on a regular basis?

We fully support proposals to ensure Council Tax revaluations are scheduled on a more frequent basis, noting the last one was undertaken in Wales nearly 19 years ago. We believe a national revaluation every 5 years is too frequent, and too costly, and would not result in major changes in the banding of properties, especially if domestic properties are re-banded at the point when structural changes or home improvements are completed.

We think a national revaluation every 10 years would be more appropriate and would still deliver on WG aims to ensure the Council Tax system remains up-to-date and fair.

**Question 6:** When properties are significantly improved, properties are only reviewed and potentially re-banded in certain circumstances, for example when the property is sold to a new owner. The Welsh Government is seeking views on whether this policy should change in the future.

Yes we strongly support a review of this area. We think properties that have undergone alterations should be reviewed at the relevant time based on the completion date of the alterations, rather than waiting for a sale to take place or for the next revaluation to take account of the change to the structure of the property.

We also believe this will add to the fairness of Council Tax system as it is not unreasonable for taxpayers to be subject to a banding review if their properties are enhanced as any property based tax system should keep abreast with changes in property values.

The current delayed system of re-bandings often has a detrimental and disproportionate impact on new owners who purchase properties based on a published Council Tax banding to then face an increased, and unexpected, Council Tax a few months after purchasing a property that may have been extended previously but not revalued. The current arrangements undermine fairness and transparency in the system.

**Question 7:** Do you have any views on rights of appeal for taxpayers or how Council Tax debt is managed? Please include any suggested improvements for either of these elements.

We think the appeals system is fair, transparent and independent and provides taxpayers with the ability to challenge decisions around property banding, as well as local authority decisions on liability discounts and exemption determinations.

The role of the Valuation Tribunal for Wales is critical to providing an independent review of VOA and local authority decisions.

To enhance the appeals system, we would recommend changes to the timescales for appealing to the Valuation Tribunal for Wales by allowing taxpayers to submit an appeal within 3 months of the billing authority's decision/response (instead of the existing 2 months' timeframe). This will provide taxpayers with greater flexibility to consider an appeal within 90 of a decision being taken by the local authority.

We also believe our approach to the recovery of Council Tax is fair and proportionate and we work closely with taxpayers who struggle to pay. In doing so we always make payment agreements with taxpayers and maximise the take-up of CTRS as well as discount and exemption schemes.

The ability to pay is an increasing issue for many households and reform of the banding structure should help to address the imbalances within the existing system.

Council Tax forms a vital part of the Councils income and our success over a number of years in maximising collections and being one of the top collectors of Council Tax is testament to the way in which we constantly engage with residents, providing practical help and support at every opportunity.

Although the overriding majority of households are committed to paying Council Tax, there are a very small number of residents who have the ability to pay but who sadly refuse to pay or engage with the Council. Although the loss of committal action is accepted, we believe there needs to be a wider review of the debt recovery remedies open to local authorities, including accessibility to HMRC data to maximise the use of attachment of earnings where a local authority has secured a Liability Order.

**Question 8:** What are your views on how the Welsh Government, the Valuation Office Agency, councils, or other organisations can modernise the service provided to taxpayers and improve transparency of the Council Tax system?

We believe there are greater opportunities for data sharing between the Valuation Office and local authorities, especially in relation to the banding of properties.

**Question 9:** What is your view on the existing discounts, disregarded persons, exemptions or premiums? For example, do you think the current rules are appropriate and fit-for purpose? Are there particular aspects of the rules which you think need to change or new rules created?

We welcome proposals to review the system for discounts, disregards, exemptions and premiums as part of a phase 2 consultation.

Some of the schemes are in need of improvement and a review of the eligibility criteria would be worthwhile. The discounts and disregards are very much designed to fit the demographics of the early 1990`s and require a refresh and possible simplification to make them fit for purpose. For example, there are several discounts for young people – Child Benefit, School Leaver, Student, Apprentice, but people now reaching 18 tend to stay in education so these schemes could be simplified.

Also there needs to be consistency in exemptions. E.g., 40 years ago, Apprentices were typically 16–18-year-olds whereas now they are much older and may have their own home, yet they only receive a disregard and not an exemption like students.

We would also consider amending the “in receipt of or entitled to” element to just “in receipt of” for relevant disregards, this will ensure easier verification and correct application.

The away “receiving care” and “resident in care home” require some consistency. The first requires no permanency, but the second does but the circumstances are usually the same.

The carers discount scheme is difficult to assess, especially when the person providing care provides intensive care but may also work full time, meaning they are typically ineligible for a Council Tax discount.

Council Tax discounts for long term hospital patients are very difficult for taxpayers to understand and many health board will not complete the application form as it is difficult to assess whether the patient is considered to be in need of long term care.

**Question 10:** What is your view on whether the Welsh Government should have more flexibility in future to set the rules for the statutory single adult and empty property discounts?

We support the proposals for Welsh Government to have greater autonomy to amend and improve existing discount schemes, as well as adding new discount schemes. We also believe local authorities should be provided with powers to set local rates for discounts.

**Question 11:** What is your view on how reductions in Council Tax for properties adapted for use by people living with a disability could be amended, simplified or improved?

We believe this reduction scheme needs to be reviewed. The scheme was originally designed over 30 years ago and does not reflect modern day living needs for residents who are disabled and whose properties need to meet the needs of a disabled resident.

Modern day housing has, for many years, been constructed with accessibility in mind and most properties are reasonably accessible or have downstairs cloakrooms, without the need for adaptations. Also, as an increasing number of properties have two or more bathrooms it becomes difficult to determine if the second bathroom is for the disabled person or not or would have been there anyway.

**Question 12:** Should the Welsh Government be able to amend titles and descriptions of any discount, disregarded person or exemption? Do you think any of the current titles should be changed? What would you consider to be a more appropriate term to replace 'severely mentally impaired'?

We support proposals to review the titles and descriptions of certain discount schemes to reflect modern day language and which reduces barriers and encourages take-up.

**Question 13:** The Welsh Government expects there to be a continued need to support low-income households in paying their Council Tax bills. Do you have any views about the design of the current scheme, including whether it should continue to be means-tested? Do you have any general views about the scheme?

The CTRS system should continue as a means-tested scheme based on the existing framework of assessing income against needs.

The scheme generally works well but possible improvements include streamlining the process to make it easier for residents to claim CTRS, especially as part of the Universal Credit application process. It would improve CTRS take-up if a single application form to claim UC and CTRS could be established, similar to what used to happen with income support/JSA claimants.

We believe residents often get into arrears with their Council Tax when they should be entitled to CTRS. Some residents believe that an entitlement to UC provides an automatic (and passported) entitlement and award to CTRS.

A review of the CTRS backdating rules may also help to improve take-up as the 3 months backdate restriction can cause issues and lead to an inflexible system for vulnerable households.

**Question 14:** Should Welsh Ministers have a duty to set a national scheme to be administered locally by councils, which allows the Welsh Government to make in-year changes if required?

Yes

**Question 15:** Should the existing local arrangements form part of the new national scheme for consistency, whilst acknowledging that councils still retain existing discretionary powers under legislation?

Yes

**Question 16:** We would like to know your views on the effects that the proposed policies would have on the Welsh language, specifically on opportunities for people to use Welsh and on treating the Welsh language no less favorably than English. What effects do you think there would be? How positive effects could be increased, or negative effects be mitigated

No comments to make

**Question 17:** Please also explain how you believe the proposed policies could be formulated or changed so as to have positive effects or increased positive effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language, and no adverse effects on opportunities for people to use the Welsh language and on treating the Welsh language no less favourably than the English language.

No comments to make

**Question 18:** We have asked a number of specific questions. If you have any related issues which we have not specifically addressed, please use this space to report them.

No comments to make



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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Cost of Living Crisis
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Housing & Communities)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The recent increase in the cost of living has come at a time when a combination of factors are impacting on individuals, families, and our communities, driving more people into poverty, and creating social needs that were not an issue pre-pandemic. It is therefore important for the Council and its partners to consider what action and support may be provided to our communities to mitigate some of these impacts.

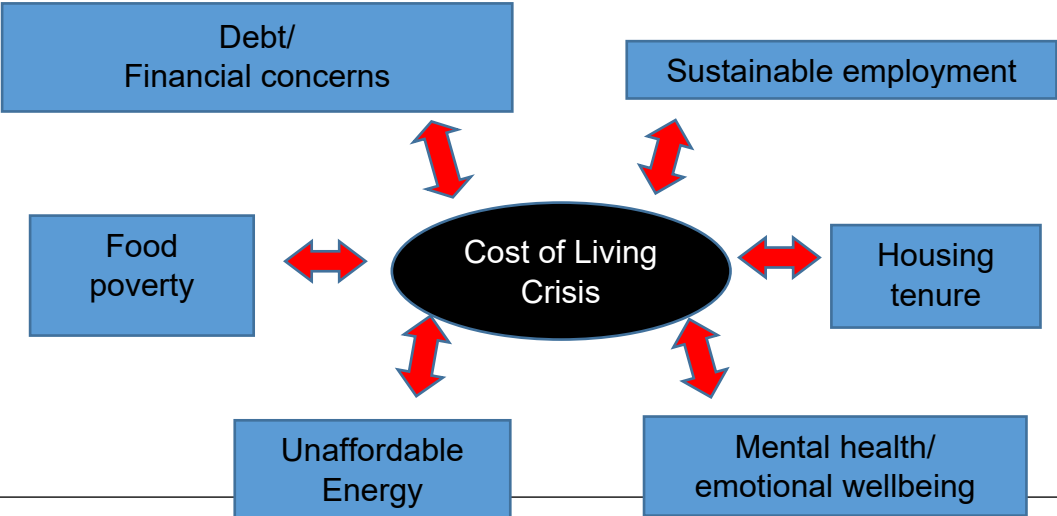
The report explores some of the reasons for this, reflects on the response so far and looks to the future response.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To provide Cabinet with an update on cost of living support schemes and to seek support and approval for the development of warm hubs
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### REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE COST OF LIVING CRISIS</b>
1.01	The recent increase in the cost of living has come at a time when a combination of factors are impacting on individuals, families, and our communities, driving more people into poverty, and creating social needs that were not an issue pre-pandemic. It is therefore important for the

	Council and its partners to consider what action and support may be provided to our communities to mitigate some of these impacts.
1.02	A perfect storm of inflation, increased energy costs, and the impact of interest rate and tax increases is contributing to what is being widely referred to as the “cost of living crisis”. The “cost of living crisis” refers to the fall in ‘real’ incomes (i.e. adjusted for inflation and tax) that the United Kingdom (UK) has experienced since late 2021, caused by a combination of high inflation outstripping wage increases, tax increases that have squeezed incomes for many families and significantly increased energy costs (negatively influenced by the current war in Ukraine). The crisis is expected to deepen over the winter and despite central government measures to alleviate some of the high energy prices, inflation is expected to continue to increase much more rapidly compounding this situation further.
1.03	As the “crisis” deepens, it is predicted that poorer households will be hit the hardest, more families will fall into poverty as a result of increased costs. There is information to suggest that the real term cost is pushing many into serious financial difficulties <sup>1</sup> and some even risk homelessness. <sup>2</sup> Economists are predicting that incomes will be impacted at levels greater than that seen during the financial crash of 2008. A recent poll revealed that one third of those surveyed fear they will be unable to pay their energy bills this year. <sup>3</sup>
1.04	<p>Based on the plethora of issues that cumulatively create the “cost of living crisis”, some of the key issues can be distilled into a number of distinct but inter-related categories:</p>  <pre> graph TD     CLC((Cost of Living Crisis))     DFC[Debt/ Financial concerns]     SE[Sustainable employment]     FP[Food poverty]     HT[Housing tenure]     UE[Unaffordable Energy]     MHE[Mental health/ emotional wellbeing]      CLC &lt;--&gt; DFC     CLC &lt;--&gt; SE     CLC &lt;--&gt; FP     CLC &lt;--&gt; HT     CLC &lt;--&gt; UE     CLC &lt;--&gt; MHE   </pre>

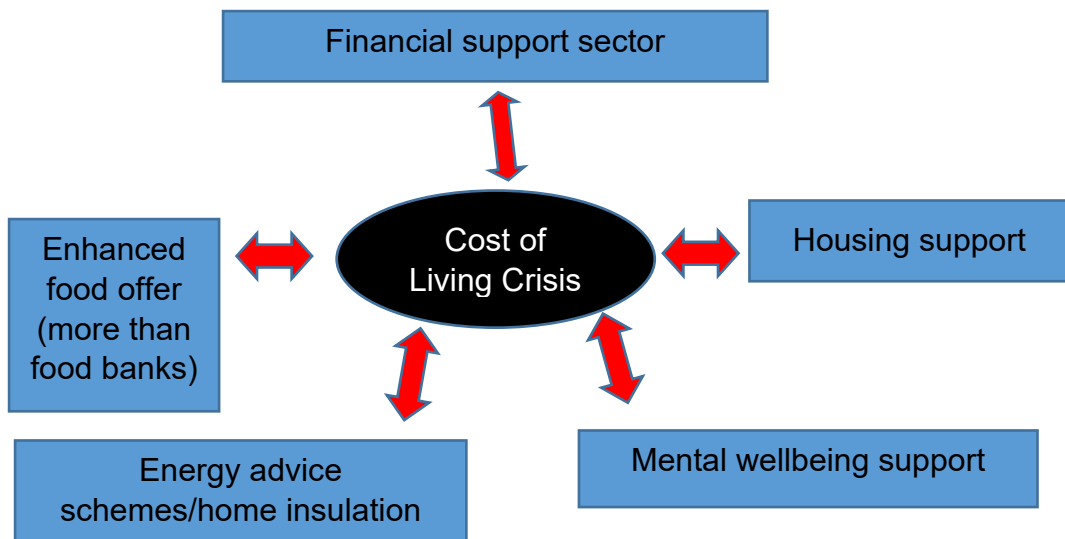
<sup>1</sup> Office for National Statistics, What's in the basket of goods? 70 years of shopping history, 21 July 2016, [www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/whatsinthebasketofgoods70yearsofshoppinghistory/2016-07-21](http://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices/articles/whatsinthebasketofgoods70yearsofshoppinghistory/2016-07-21)

<sup>2</sup> Office for National Statistics, Inflation and price indices, [www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices](http://www.ons.gov.uk/economy/inflationandpriceindices)

<sup>3</sup> Explained: What Is The Cost Of Living Crisis? | HuffPost UK Politics ([huffingtonpost.co.uk](http://huffingtonpost.co.uk))

1.05

In order to address the wide scope of the issues it will be necessary to coordinate the activities of the council and its partners to ensure that the response and support offered within our communities is as wide ranging as possible. The diagram below shows a comprehensive view of the range of support that is/will be necessary:



1.06

**Our Response so far:**

Over the last year or so, the council has been supporting residents in many ways, as part of objectives in the Council Plan; the recovery programme for Covid, has now morphed and transformed into a response to the emerging cost of living crisis and has included:

- The Well-fed Mobile shop visiting towns and rural areas
- Set up the Well-Fed Meals on Wheels service, delivering fresh meals to residents homes
- Free fruit for all students in nine high schools, extended until October 2022
- Carried out five slow cooker pilots, school parents, sheltered accommodation residents, socially isolated families after lockdown, assisting with the promotion of Meals on Wheels Service
- Wellness Mondays in the Community Support Hub, Shotton/Social prescribing
- Opened Nanny Biscuit Pantry in a supported accommodation setting
- Set up the Hospital to home food safety box service for residents returning home from hospital to help them to continue to eat well
- School uniform exchange
- Administered 8,672 applications for Winter Fuel Payment Support Scheme from December to March, awarding 6,682 eligible customers with £200 towards their fuel bills for winter 2021/22.
- Administration and delivery of the Welsh Government Cost of Living Scheme, both, which has meant that we have made a range of direct payments via the council tax system and secured funding for a meals programme for the county over the next two years.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Administering claims on behalf of Welsh Government for £500 Unpaid Carers Scheme.</li> <li>• Continue to administer Welsh Government’s £500 Unpaid Carers Payment Scheme and ensure all payments are issued by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.</li> <li>• Continue to administer Welsh Government’s £150 Cost of Living Scheme (main phase) and ensure all payments are issued by 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.</li> </ul>
1.07	<p><b>Next Steps:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Open a further two Community Support hubs to support residents with the cost of living</li> <li>• Open a Well-Fed shop in Shotton, selling affordable and healthy ‘grab and go’ food, ready meals and slow cooker bags</li> <li>• Carry out five slow cooker pilots,</li> <li>• Development and promotion of Meals on Wheels service</li> <li>• Increase the locations of the Well-Fed mobile shop in rural areas</li> <li>• Continue to address food poverty reducing the use of food banks</li> <li>• Support Well-Fed food store currently delivering to 40 residents per week</li> <li>• Install Wi-Fi in all 16 HRA community centers to help support digital inclusion for our residents – Carrying out an initial trial on two centres</li> <li>• Tablet courses for our residents, loaning tablets</li> <li>• Work in collaboration with the 3<sup>rd</sup> sector and volunteers to increase capacity and reach</li> <li>• Continue with free fruit in the nine high schools</li> <li>• Ensuring that take-up to benefit entitlements is maximised in a timely way by processing claims efficiently</li> <li>• Continue to promote applications for Free School Meals and Uniform Grants whilst ensuring the application process encourages future take up and making the process as easy as possible</li> <li>• Promote and administer Winter Fuel Scheme 2022/23 effectively to ensure high levels of take-up.</li> <li>• Administer Welsh Government’s Discretionary phase of the Cost of Living Scheme and ensure all payments are issued by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2023.</li> <li>• Improve Communication with residents to ensure expectations are set and met in relation to the delivery of new schemes.</li> <li>• Restart targeted take up campaigns to ensure we are encouraging new customers to claim what they are entitled to claim.</li> </ul>
	<b>Winter Fuel Payment Scheme 2022/23</b>
1.08	<p>The <a href="#">Welsh Government Fuel Support Scheme</a> is part of a £90m fuel support package to address immediate pressures on living costs. Eligible households can claim a one-off £200 payment from their local authority to provide support towards paying their fuel costs. This payment is in addition to the Energy Bill rebate being offered by the UK Government and the Winter Fuel Payment normally paid to pensioners. The payment will be available to all <b>eligible households</b> (one payment per household) regardless of how they pay for their fuel, whether that is, for example, on a</p>

	pre-payment meter, by direct debit or by paying a bill quarterly and can be claimed regardless of whether they are using on or off-grid fuel.
1.09	<p><b>What are the qualifying benefits?</b></p> <p>The scheme will be open to households where an applicant, or their partner is in receipt of one of the qualifying benefits at any time between 1 September 2022 and 31 January 2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Council Tax Reduction Scheme (CTRS)</li> <li>• Income Support</li> <li>• Income Based Job Seekers Allowance</li> <li>• Income Related Employment and Support Allowance</li> <li>• Universal Credit</li> <li>• Working Tax Credits</li> <li>• Child Tax Credits</li> <li>• Pension Credit</li> <li>• Personal Independence Payment (PIP)</li> <li>• Disability Living Allowance (DLA)</li> <li>• Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• Carers Allowance – <i>this includes those people who are being paid Carers Allowance and people who have claimed Carers Allowance but due to the overlapping benefit rules do not receive it as a cash benefit, i.e. they have an underlying entitlement to Carers Allowance.</i></li> <li>• Contributory Based/New Style Jobseekers Allowance</li> <li>• Contributory Based/New Style Employment and Support Allowance</li> <li>• Armed Forces Independence Payment</li> <li>• Constant Attendance Allowance</li> <li>• War Pension Mobility Supplement</li> </ul>
1.10	<p>If a householder (or their partner) who is liable for the fuel costs does not receive any of the qualifying benefits, the householder should be determined/considered as eligible for a payment if they have a qualifying person living with them during the qualifying period.</p> <p>A person meets the definition of a qualifying person if they:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Occupy the householder's home as their primary residence; and</li> <li>• Are a dependent child or another adult living with the householder (or their partner); and,</li> <li>• They receive one of the following benefits between 1 September 2022 and 31 January 2023: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Attendance Allowance</li> <li>○ Disability Living Allowance</li> <li>○ Personal Independence Payment</li> <li>○ Armed Forces Independence Payment</li> <li>○ Constant Attendance Allowance</li> <li>○ War Pension Mobility Supplement</li> </ul> </li> </ul>
1.11	This is in reflection of the higher energy costs typically faced by a household where a disabled person resides, and a common-sense approach that recognises that Disability Living Allowance is primarily

	awarded to a disabled child aged under 16 (who cannot be a householder). The payment should be made to the householder liable for council tax or the fuel costs.
1.12	<p><b>What is the Fuel Liability Condition?</b></p> <p>An applicant meets this condition if they (or their partner) are liable for Council Tax as their liability for Council Tax is considered synonymous with fuel liability.</p> <p>Applicants that are not responsible for paying Council Tax can demonstrate they meet this condition by providing evidence they are responsible for paying the fuel costs for their property. This is the case regardless of whether fuel is paid for through a pre-payment meter, by direct debit or quarterly bill and whether the fuel is received on or off grid.</p> <p>Applicants can only claim for fuel costs at a property in Wales <b>and</b> where this property is considered their primary residence.</p>
1.13	The scheme will open for registration at 9am on 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022. All applications must be received by 5pm on 28 February 2023.
1.14	<p>There are a few key differences between the scheme that operated in 2021/2022 and the scheme for 2022/2023:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Pension Age included this year</li> <li>○ Off Grid fuel included this year</li> <li>○ Income list has increased and includes most DWP benefits not just means tested benefits</li> <li>○ The facility to auto-pay similar to the approach with the Cost of Living Support scheme that ran earlier this year</li> </ul>
1.15	We have a plan to ensure that as many eligible residents receive the payment and try to make as many auto payments as possible using the information we already have.
	<b>Proposal for Warm Hubs which will provide additional support:</b>
1.16	<p><b>Background</b></p> <p>There are 22 community centres within our own sheltered accommodation schemes across Flintshire.</p> <p>Since the easing of lockdown restrictions, we are pleased to say we have been able to reopen a number of these centres for our residents to attend classes and coffee mornings to help alleviate loneliness and isolation.</p>
1.17	<p><b>Warm Hubs Proposal</b></p> <p>The recent increase in the cost of living at a time when a combination of factors are impacting on communities, driving them further into poverty and creating social needs that have now become more of an issue post pandemic. Residents fear they will not be able to afford buy food and pay their energy bills this year.</p>

1.18	<p>One in four older people are known to struggle with rising fuel prices, food poverty and isolation. To help ease the pressure of those affected we propose to open the community centres/rooms within the sheltered accommodation schemes November 2022 to March 2023 for Local Authority tenants in those schemes.</p> <p>This will initially be targeted to the residents within the schemes and we will look expand this to the wider community by working with other organisations and centres to ensure as wide a coverage as possible</p>
1.19	We will also support our residents to eat well by providing each centre with a fridge, microwave and Well-Fed meals giving the residents the opportunity to eat together or take their meal home with them.
1.20	We have liaised with a number residents and identified their interest to help direct us with the arrangements.
1.21	The accommodation support team will assist with the opening/closing of the centre and be there to support the residents as well as encouraging those who may still be apprehensive about leaving their home.
1.22	In addition to the centres, we will also be supporting the community hubs in Shotton and Holywell as well as the community centre in the Holway to become warm hubs.
	<b>The Future</b>
1.23	The Well-being of Future Generations Act Wales 2015 enables us to reflect on the long-term impact of our activity to work with residents, communities and each other, and to work on solutions that will assist and reduce persistent problems such as poverty, health inequalities and climate change.
1.24	For the sustainability and longevity of this model, we will endeavor to support our working in collaboration with partners and the voluntary sector allowing the centres and community hubs to remain open as a safe, welcoming place throughout the year.

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	The winter fuel payment scheme is funded by Welsh Government
2.02	The proposal for the warm hubs will be resourced by existing staff within the sheltered schemes and existing funding for the community hubs

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	Integrated Impact Assessment is currently being completed and will be considered as part of the final design process for the service.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	None.

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

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Council Plan 2021 – 23 – Theme: Poverty Wellbeing Objective: Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs. <a href="https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Council-Democracy/Council-Plan-2021-23-Final.pdf">https://www.flintshire.gov.uk/en/PDFFiles/Council-Democracy/Council-Plan-2021-23-Final.pdf</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Jen Griffiths, Service Manager, Housing, Welfare and Communities  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 702929 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk">jen.griffiths@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Cost of Living Crisis</b> – A perfect storm of inflation, increased energy costs, and the impact of interest rate and tax increases





## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Recycling Bring Sites
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Deputy Leader of the Council & Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Regional Transport Strategy
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Streetscene & Transportation)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A recycling bring site is a localised collection point where recycling containers (banks/igloos) are placed in places such as car parks and on streets so that residents have convenient access to facilities for the disposal of recyclable materials. Such facilities have been in place for many years and, at one time, they were the only option for residents to recycle in addition to the household recycling centres (HRCs).

The introduction of the kerbside sorting service has made recycling much more convenient for residents and is available to all households in Flintshire. Having banks at the bring sites for recyclable materials such as glass is now unnecessary, as an alternative kerbside collection service is available, in addition to the HRCs.

With the provision of weekly kerbside collections for recycling glass and the availability of textile banks at all five HRCs, there is an opportunity to review the provision of the bring sites in Flintshire and consider their ongoing suitability.

The purpose of this report is to seek Cabinet approval for the removal of the recycling bring sites across the county.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet approves the recommended removal of the textile recycling bring sites across the county.
2	That Cabinet notes that the current glass contractor will be removing all glass igloos from bring sites across the county.

## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	Explaining the Background to the Recycling Bring Sites
1.01	<p>The recycling bring sites are the igloos and containers located on pub and local car parks for textiles and glass collections. Historically, the use of bring banks pre-dated kerbside collections and were an essential part of the Council's waste strategy to increase recycling at that time.</p> <p>Currently, there are 26 bring bank sites in place across the county for the collection of textiles and glass recycling only (see <b>Appendix 1 for locations</b>). The banks that are in place are predominantly located in pub car parks, supermarket car parks and local car parks. Many local authorities experience problems at their bring sites including fly-tipping, vandalism, illegal deposit of trade waste and the presence of unauthorised or 'rogue' banks.</p>
1.02	<p>Flintshire is not unique in this respect and the locations of the bring sites can cause issues with some people exploiting the opportunity to illegally dispose of waste. The sites often become a central point for localised fly tipping, with people leaving non-recyclable waste alongside the containers, which then incurs additional costs for collection and clean-up, as well as increased complaints. Removal of the bring bank sites could help to reduce fly-tipping and littering and encourage take-up of the kerbside recycling service.</p> <p>Additionally, sometimes the sites can be misused by businesses, which can be identified by the large quantities of the same brand/batch of materials deposited in the containers, such as glass bottles from a particular brewery. Bring sites are for household recycling only. Any business should have its own commercial arrangements in place for the removal of any waste or recycling. Other issues experienced with the bring sites include people placing the wrong materials in the containers, which leads to contaminated loads that can be rejected, meaning that it can't then be sent for recycling.</p>
1.03	<p>Over the years, kerbside recycling collections have developed and become more sophisticated, we now offer a comprehensive doorstep weekly recycling collection service to the majority of Flintshire residents. The HRCs have also undergone significant investment and development, which has enabled the collection of over 30 different recyclable materials. As a result of these improvements, the reliance on bring sites to provide recycling facilities for our residents has decreased steadily over the years.</p>
1.04	<p>The quality of the recycling collected via bring sites is much lower than that collected at the kerbside and at the HRCs. This is due to the fact that there is no supervision when recycling is being deposited into the containers. This results in the cost of the collection of glass increasing year on year, as non-conforming wastes are more costly for the disposal company to manage.</p>
1.05	<p>The volume of recycling collected via the bring sites is detailed in table 1 below, which accounts for approximately 0.08% of our overall recycling performance. The data shows that glass tonnage has been slightly decreasing over the past five years. 2020/21 did see a larger decrease than average which was due to the COVID pandemic and the restriction on non-essential travel. Textile tonnage has fluctuated and has increased in 2021/22. This will be in part to the promotion of reuse and upcycling rather than a throw away culture.</p>

Should the banks be removed the majority of this tonnage would be transferred to the kerbside collection service, the HRCs, or local charitable collections. There will also be a proportion of glass recycling disposed of via approved waste contractors from businesses that have used the igloos illegally in the past.

**Table 1 – bring site tonnage data**

Year	Glass	Textiles	Total
2021/22	198.967	53.614	252.581
2020/21	176.27	37.9255	214.195
2019/20	204.42	39.687	244.107
2018/19	213.75	33.514	247.264
2017/18	215.50	43.285	258.785

As mentioned, putting the wrong material in a bring bank causes the waste in the bank to become contaminated, meaning that it can't then be sent for recycling. By removing the banks and encouraging people to recycle from the kerbside or at the HRCs, it is anticipated that the quality of recyclable materials will improve.

1.06 In recent times, the costs for servicing the glass igloos has been increasing, which has changed the way that we are charged and has resulted in an increase in cost from £11.53 per tonne (£200/month) to £700 per collection (one per month). This equates to an increase in cost of £500 per month. The increasing costs to service the bring sites was one of the catalysts that prompted a review of the provision this service and it was identified that the removal of the sites would have brought an annual saving of approx. £8,400 for the approved revenue budget.

1.07 In July 2022, a report was presented to the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee detailing the issues and challenges faced with the continued provision of bring sites within the County, along with increasing operating costs. Support for the proposal to remove the igloos and containers was sought and gained from the Committee.

1.08 However, in the intervening time, the glass collection contractor has notified us that they will no longer be providing a glass collection service for bring sites in Wales and will be removing all banks and igloos over the coming months. Resource shortages within the industry have been cited as a key contributing factor in making their decision.

It is important to note that this change does not affect glass collections made at the kerbside or at the HRCs, as different arrangements are in place with other contractors for glass collected in this way.

1.09 It is proposed that, once the recycling banks or igloos are removed, no alternative bring site service will be provided. A programme for removal has been requested for the sites from the contractor so that liaison with local residents and businesses can be undertaken to allow time for them to make their own arrangements and ensure advanced communication before their

	<p>removal. A communications plan will be drawn up and signage will also be placed on site in advance of the changes.</p> <p>It is proposed that the textile containers are removed in January 2023 to allow time for further communication to take place with residents, businesses and charities on alternative recycling options. Again, a communications plan will be drafted to ensure that advanced communication takes place before the changes take effect.</p>
1.10	<p>In response to the removal of the bring sites, it is proposed that residents will be encouraged to utilise the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Weekly kerbside recycling service for the collection of glass, paper, card, plastic bottles, tubs, trays and pots, cartons, cans and tins;</li> <li>• One of five household recycling centres (HRCs) offering alternative recycling collection points for glass and textiles;</li> <li>• Textile collections offered via numerous charity bags collected at the kerbside, along with reuse opportunities through charity shops and online selling (such as vinted, ebay, marketplace, freecycle).</li> </ul> <p>A funding bid has also been submitted to Welsh Government to pilot a doorstep collection service for textiles; however, we are still awaiting the outcome of the bid.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There will be a saving of approx. £8,400 per annum for the approved revenue budget if the bring sites are removed.
2.02	The disposal of glass does offer a rebate per tonne of £15, which equates to an average income of £3,000 per year. It is anticipated that the removal of the bring sites would not impact the income levels, as residents would use alternative collection services instead, such as the weekly kerbside collections or HRC sites, and the income would transfer to these services.
2.03	Fly tipping and litter removal will be reduced allowing for the street cleansing team to focus on scheduled cleaning areas within the authority.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	With the removal of the bring banks there is the potential loss of approx. 200 tonnes of recycling (which equates to 0.08% of our recycling rate). However, it is anticipated that alternative disposal methods (kerbside, HRCs, charities) would be used by residents, which in effect would mean that recycling performance would not be affected.
3.02	Removal of the bring sites would improve street and environmental cleanliness, as the current sites can be a focal point for small scale, regular fly tipping, which in turn would improve the local environmental quality (LEQ) of the area.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	With the Deputy Leader & Cabinet Member for Streetscene & Regional Transport Strategy
4.02	With the Environment and Economy Overview and Scrutiny Committee
4.03	A communications plan is being drawn up and will involve consultation with the businesses which currently store the bring site banks/igloos on their private land.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Recycling bring site locations

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	N/A

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Ruth Tulley (Regulatory Services Manager) <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704796 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk">ruth.tulley@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
	<p><b>HRCs</b> - Household Recycling Centres, located at Buckley, Greenfield, Mold (Nercwys), Oakenholt (Rockcliffe) and Sandycroft.</p> <p><b>Recycling Bring Site</b> - A recycling bring site is a localised collection point where recycling containers (banks/igloos) are placed in places such as car parks and on streets so that residents have convenient access to facilities for the disposal of recyclable materials.</p>

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Appendix 1 - Bring Site Locations

<b>Bring Site Locations</b>	
<b>Glass</b>	<b>Textiles</b>
Bagillt The Stag	Bagillt The Stag
Broughton Village	Broughton Village
Broughton Tesco	Broughton Tesco
Buckley WMC	Flint Pavilion
St David's Park Hotel	Hawarden CP Tinkersdale
COOP C/Quay	Holywell Library
Soughton Hall	King St, Leeswood
Halkyn The Bluebell Inn	Love Lane, Mold
Holywell Abbots Arms	RBL Flint
Hawarden CP Tinkersdale	Mold Co-op
H. Kinnerton Royal Oak	
H. Kinnerton The Swan	
Holywell Tesco	
Mold Ex service men's club	
Leeswood Railway Inn	
RBL Flint	
Mold Co-op	
Mold Tesco	
Mold Antelope Inn	
New Brighton Beaufort Park	
Q'ferry Hotel	
Saltney social club	
Shotton Charmleys Lane	
Theatre Clwyd	
Saltney Morrisons	
Northop Hall Cricket & Hockey Club	

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## CABINET

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Development of a Local Visitor Levy
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Governance)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Welsh Government recently announced, as part of the co-operation agreement with Plaid Cymru, a programme for Government between 2021-2026 which includes a commitment to consulting on and introducing tax raising powers for local authorities to raise a levy on overnight visitor's accommodation in Wales.

This is commonly referred to as a Local Visitor or Tourism Levy and is seen as a levy of overnight accommodation stays in commercially let accommodation.

The policy aims for a visitor levy is to enable local authorities to raise additional revenue to re-invest in the conditions that make tourism a success.

The purpose of this report is to provide cabinet with early, basic information on the development of the levy and work led by Welsh Government.

Questions regarding the operation, benefits and impacts of introducing a levy will be for the WG public consultation in the autumn and will provide an opportunity for all stakeholders to contribute.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	That Cabinet notes the latest developments for the development of a local Visitor Levy ahead of the formal Welsh Government consultation in the autumn 2022.
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## REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE LOCAL TOURISM LEVY
1.01	As part of the Programme for Government 2021-2026, Welsh Government has made a commitment to introduce legislation permitting local authorities to raise a levy on tourism/visitors. A consultation to explore the impacts and operational considerations of a levy is planned to launch in autumn 2022.
1.02	The policy aims for a local visitor levy is to enable local authorities to raise additional revenue to re-invest in the conditions that make tourism a success.
1.03	To support the potential policy and operational design for a visitor/tourism levy, a fortnightly operational officer working group has been established by Welsh Government and the Revenues Manager represents the Council.
1.04	The policy design workshops commenced in early 2022 to identify and explore some of the key design questions in relation to a visitor levy. These will directly inform policy development and questions for consideration as part of the planned consultation in autumn 2022.
1.05	Powers under consideration would be discretionary for a local authority to choose whether to apply the visitor levy or not. Fundamentally, all taxes feature the same set of building blocks. Self-assessed taxes require individuals (businesses or their agents) to submit tax returns on a regular basis. If the proposals are adopted, there will be a requirement to implement new processes and potentially new digital systems to support with the collection and administration of a visitor/tourism levy.
1.06	There is a preference for consistency in the design and application of this levy across local authorities. Local authorities have been collecting local taxes for decades and have built up significant expertise and skill in doing so. However, it is also recognised there is an opportunity for a different approach where there is merit in doing so for a new local tax. In principle, as this is a new local tax, and the first that would be self-assessed, there is preference for simplicity and consistency in application across local authorities. This would be the case for both the design and operation of the tax.
1.07	There may be a range of operating models, including delivery of this tax through having singular central processes and digital systems in place to support the administration of the tax. New digital systems and processes are always easier to design and implement once rather than having multiple variants in place.
1.08	Welsh Government also believe there is also an opportunity for economies of scale and a role to play for a centralised function in the administration of

	the levy, collecting the levy from commercial operators and then re-distributing to local authorities the income from the levy. This could potentially take the form of a hybrid model which combines local authority expertise and insight with national IT systems, infrastructure, and support.
1.09	<p>As part of the Working Group, early discussion work has so far identified areas that will be subject to many complex operational considerations for the development of a Tourism/Visitor levy. These include, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Establishing tax liability</li> <li>• Calculation and payment of liability</li> <li>• Records management</li> <li>• Enforcement and compliance</li> <li>• Appeals and arbitration</li> </ul>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
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2.01	The purpose of this levy is to raise revenue for local authorities, to enable investment in public services and infrastructure which make tourism a success.
2.02	At this early stage it is impossible to assess the timescales or income projections for a levy. It is envisaged to be around 4-5 years before the levy can be introduced by local authorities.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
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3.01	None.
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<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
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4.01	Welsh Government are expected to undertake a formal consultation in autumn 2022 on draft legislative proposals for a tourism/visitor levy. As a key stakeholder, the Council will have the opportunity to contribute to the consultation. A further report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration once the consultation is published.
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<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
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5.01	None
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<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	Welsh Government – Cabinet Statement: Development of a Local Tourism Levy <a href="https://gov.wales/written-statement-development-local-tourism-levy">https://gov.wales/written-statement-development-local-tourism-levy</a>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> David Barnes, Revenues Manager  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 703652  <b>E-mail:</b> david.barnes@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Co-operation agreement</b> - outlines how the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru will work together over the next three years on policies where there is a common interest.</p> <p><b>Programme for government</b> - sets out the political commitments Welsh Government are committed to deliver over the next 5 years (2021-2026) to tackle the challenges faced by the Welsh public and to improve the lives of people across Wales.</p>



## CABINET COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Monday, 26 <sup>th</sup> September 2022
<b>Report Subject</b>	Self-Evaluation Report Education Services 2021-22
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Education and Youth Portfolio undertakes a rigorous annual self-evaluation of its performance and services to provide assurance to the Council on the quality of education services in Flintshire. The report identifies strengths and areas for further improvement and those areas for improvement are then reflected in the Council Improvement Plan and the Portfolio's own Business Plan.

For the previous two years during the COVID-19 pandemic, with the suspension of inspection activity by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training, Estyn, the portfolio's previous two evaluation reports have not followed the Local Government Education Services (LGES) Inspection framework but provided a detailed overview of the portfolio's range of services and how they have responded to supporting learners and schools during the pandemic.

However, with the resumption of all inspection activity by Estyn from April 2022 onwards, including the inspection of Local Government Education Services, the Portfolio's evaluation report this year has reverted back to the Estyn framework. The report is structured to provide assurance to the Council across the three inspection areas of:

- Outcomes
- Quality of Education Services (including Youth Services)
- Leadership and Management

Each inspection area is evaluated in detail for the period 2021-2022 and concludes with a summary of further areas identified for improvement to ensure the continued provision of quality education services to the residents of Flintshire.

The overall conclusion of the self-evaluation report is that education services in Flintshire are strong, effectively support children and young people and provide good value for money.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1	To review the outcome of the Education Portfolio's annual self-evaluation report on the quality of education services for the period 2021-2022.
2	To provide any observations to the Portfolio Team on the report.

## REPORT DETAILS

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE SELF EVALUATION OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT EDUCATION SERVICES</b>
1.01	<p>The prime purpose of self-evaluation is to lead service improvements within the Education and Youth Portfolio to secure the best possible outcomes for children and young people. Only by robustly evaluating the strengths of the current provision and identifying areas for further improvement can the portfolio continue to refine the manner in which it delivers services to secure better outcomes.</p> <p>At the heart of self-evaluation are three questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• How well are we doing and what impact are our services having?</li><li>• How do we know?</li><li>• How can we improve things further?</li></ul>
1.02	<p>The new Estyn framework for the inspection of Local Authority Education Services was introduced in 2018 and recently refreshed following national changes to the use of education performance data and the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic. It focuses on three inspection areas:</p> <p><b>1. Outcomes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>1.1 Standards and progress overall</li><li>1.2 Standards and progress of specific groups</li><li>1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning</li></ul> <p><b>2. Quality of Education Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>2.1 Support for School Improvement</li><li>2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners</li><li>2.3 Other education support services</li></ul> <p><b>3. Leadership &amp; Management</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers</li><li>3.2 Self-evaluation and improvement planning</li><li>3.3 Professional learning</li><li>3.4 Safeguarding arrangements</li><li>3.5 Use of resources</li></ul> <p>The portfolio's self-evaluation report is structured in this way.</p>

1.03	<p>The inspection programme of Local Authority Education Services began in 2018 with the intention that all local authorities would be inspected over a four year cycle. Due to COVID-19 this has been severely disrupted and so Estyn will now inspect between four and six local authorities per year to complete the cycle by the summer of 2024.</p>
1.04	<p>Education services in Flintshire were inspected under this framework in June 2019. The report was positive and there was no requirement for any Estyn follow up. The report identified four recommendations for improvement which the service has continued to focus on since 2019, despite the interruptions caused by the pandemic, and these are embedded in the Council Plan and Portfolio Business Plan.</p> <p>The recommendations were:</p> <p>R1 Improve outcomes for learners in key stage 4</p> <p>R2 Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools</p> <p>R3 Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work</p> <p>R4 Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively</p>
1.05	<p>The suspension of learner assessments, public examinations as well as other data collections by Welsh Government during the pandemic and its decision not to collect and report on pupil assessment data below the national level has resulted in many of the key performance indicators by which the portfolio traditionally measured its progress and referenced in its annual self-evaluation report now not being available.</p> <p>The focus is now on schools using their own performance data to drive improvements for all their learners at an individual level. The role of the local authority's education service and the regional school improvement service is to rigorously challenge schools and provide targeted support where needed to ensure that schools are using their own evaluation processes effectively to continuously improve and by doing so, secure pupil progress and improved outcomes for all.</p>
1.06	<p>Section 1 of this self-evaluation report describes the portfolio's current view of 'outcomes' within this context. It uses evidence from Estyn reports on its schools over the last five years where it is available. It is also based on first hand evidence of working closely with school leaders and reviewing every individual school in Flintshire with the school improvement advisers from the regional school improvement service, GwE.</p> <p>Section 2 provides a detailed overview of the range of education services within Flintshire and how they contribute to securing positive pupil outcomes.</p> <p>Section 3 provides an evaluation of the quality of the leadership and management of education services at a whole council level as well as specifically within the Education and Youth portfolio.</p>

1.07	The full self-evaluation report is included at Appendix 1.
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<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no revenue or capital resource implications as a result of this report.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	The Education Portfolio has a detailed risk assessment document which outlines the key risks related to the delivery of education services. It is regularly reviewed by the Portfolio's Senior Management Team and is regularly reported to the appropriate Council committee.

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	N/A for this report.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Self Evaluation Report Education Services 2021-22

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	<p>Estyn Report Flintshire Education Services 2019  <a href="https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Inspection%20report%20Flintshire%20County%20Council%202019.pdf">https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Inspection%20report%20Flintshire%20County%20Council%202019.pdf</a></p> <p>Estyn Framework for the Inspection of Local Government Education Services 2021  <a href="https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-11/What%20we%20inspect%20-%20Local%20government%20education%20services%20for%20inspections%20from%202021.pdf">https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-11/What%20we%20inspect%20-%20Local%20government%20education%20services%20for%20inspections%20from%202021.pdf</a></p>

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<p><b>Contact Officer:</b> Claire Homard, Chief Officer Education &amp; Youth  <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704190  <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk">claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</a></p>



<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<p><b>Estyn</b> – the Education and Training Inspectorate for Wales.</p> <p><b>GwE</b> – Regional School Improvement Services for the 6 Education Authorities of the North Wales region.</p> <p><b>SEREN</b> – Welsh Government programme for the most able students to improve access to Oxford, Cambridge and Russell Group universities.</p>

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# Education & Youth Portfolio

## Self-Evaluation Report of Education Services

April 2021- March 2022



## Introduction & Local Context – Flintshire County Council

Formed in 1996 following local government reorganisation, Flintshire is a well governed and high performing unitary local authority in the north east corner of Wales bordering Cheshire, Wrexham and Denbighshire. Flintshire has a strong track record of being a direct provider of local services from Education, Social Care, Streetscene and Housing. Whilst direct provision is at the core of its model, Flintshire is also a creative and flexible council and operates both as a provider and a commissioner of services. It has been instrumental in developing collaborative arrangements such as a regional school improvement service, an employee-owned mutual in leisure, libraries and cultural services, catering and cleaning services and a local social housing trading company. Continuing to develop sustainable models of delivery and maintaining high quality services continues to be a priority for the Council, particularly in challenging financial times, in order to secure the best outcomes for its residents and value for money for the public purse.

Flintshire provides local public services for 156,847 people (2020) who live in 66,973 households.<sup>1</sup> It has the largest population of the North Wales authorities and is the sixth largest in Wales. The population is expected to rise by 2.1% by 2028 but this reflects more of an increase in the number of people over the age of 65 as the numbers of children, young people and the working population are predicted to decrease. This will obviously impact on future demands for services in different ways.

With 6,072 staff, the Council is one of the two largest employers in the county, alongside Airbus, and provides direct services including, education, housing, planning, refuse collection, environmental health, recycling, roads, social services, trading standards, transport and tourism. It provides leisure, library and catering/cleaning services via 'arms' length' trading companies. Flintshire has seven libraries, ten sports and leisure centres, two country parks and maintains 733 miles of roads. Flintshire has 78 schools (64 Primary, 11 Secondary, 2 Specialist & 1 PRU) providing education for 23,347 pupils, including those educated other than at school. Approximately 13.28% of the total population are of school age.

Manufacturing, retail trade and human health and social work are the sectors which currently employ the most people in Flintshire. The availability of employment is rising and unemployment in Flintshire at October 2021 stood at 3.9%. The COVID-19 pandemic and Brexit will, however, have implications for the local economy and the population in the short, medium and long term. The North Wales Economic Framework, supported by UK, Welsh Government and Local Government funding streams provides a clear strategy for future economic growth and clearly articulates the skills and knowledge that will be needed within the local and regional population to deliver on emerging economic, social, digital, and wellbeing priorities.

The County has a mix of affluent and deprived areas. Due to the interconnections of factors there are particular communities that are more vulnerable than others in Flintshire. The Welsh Index of Multiple Deprivation (WIMD) 2019 highlights that coastal communities in Flintshire experience high levels of deprivation (3.3% of Lower Super Output Areas (LSOA) in 10% most deprived; 10.9% in 20% most deprived in Wales), particularly when it comes to the employment, income, education, and community safety dimensions.

The number of school aged pupils entitled to Free School Meals (e-FSM) has increased from 13.47% in 2019 (Wales 2019 average 15.96%) to 20.41% in 2022. This figure is now much closer to the current Welsh average of 20.52%.

Based on the 2021 Annual Population Survey, the Welsh language is spoken by 23.9% of the population in Flintshire compared to 29.5% across Wales. This is a significant increase on the data

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<sup>1</sup> StatsWales

from the 2011 national census which reported 13.2% of the county's population having some Welsh language skills. The county has 5 Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Welsh medium secondary school. There are no dual stream or bilingual schools in Flintshire. Currently 6.23% of children in Flintshire are educated through the medium of Welsh. There are ambitious targets in the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan to more than double this number over the next ten years.

The county also has a mixed provision of faith based education with 7 Church in Wales Voluntary Aided primary schools, 5 Roman Catholic primary schools and 1 Roman Catholic secondary school. 11.02% of children in Flintshire currently receive their education in a faith based setting.

Flintshire has a strong tradition of supporting a local infrastructure of non-maintained early years' provision through both English and Welsh, which supports the Council in its delivery of childcare and early years' education. Flintshire was an early adopter of the Welsh Government's flagship childcare policy of 30 hours free provision for working parents and there is a strong network of childminders, playgroups and private day nurseries delivering this combination of childcare and early education prior to children transitioning into schools. Flintshire Council also supports neighbouring local authorities with the administration of their Childcare Offer.

Overall, 13.77% of school aged pupils in Flintshire are designated as having a Special Educational Need in 2022. Of this number 3.14% have Statement of Special Educational Need, higher than the Welsh average of 1.73%. 7.02% of pupils are designated as School Action which is lower than the Welsh average of 11.22% and 3.6% are at School Action Plus, lower than the Welsh average of 7.87%.

The current Chief Executive, Neal Cockerton, was appointed in November 2021 and was previously a member of the Council's Chief Officer Team. The Chief Officer for Education and Youth, Claire Homard, was appointed in June 2017, initially as Interim Chief Officer and then permanently in 2018. She is also fulfils the role as Statutory Director of Education for the Council. The Leader of the Council, Cllr Ian Roberts, is also the Cabinet Member for Education. Following the Council elections of May 2022, the newly appointed Chair of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee is Cllr Teresa Carberry.

The Council's Education Services were last inspected by Estyn in June 2019 under the Local Government Education Services Framework. The outcome was a positive report and no requirement for any kind of follow up. The recommendations from the report were as follows and are embedded in business plans for the Council and the Education & Youth Portfolio:

R1 Improve outcomes for learners in key stage 4

R2 Reduce exclusions and increase attendance in both primary and secondary schools

R3 Improve the ongoing monitoring and evaluation of the few front line education services identified in the report in order to provide more accurate information about the impact of the local authority's work

R4 Manage the reduction in school budget deficits more effectively

### **Structure of the Council**

Flintshire County Council has 67 Councillors that are normally democratically elected every 4 years. After the elections of May 2022 there is a minority Labour administration with informal support from the Liberal Democrats. The political make up of Flintshire County Council elected members from May 22 is as follows:

Labour: 31 Independents: 22 Flintshire Independents: 4 Liberal Democrats: 4 Eagle Group: 3  
Conservative: 2 Non-Aligned: 1

The Council has a Cabinet and a Scrutiny function. Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to hold the Cabinet to account and to assist in the improvement and development of the Council's policies and services. Flintshire has 5 Overview and Scrutiny Committees covering:

- Education, Youth & Culture
- Corporate Management & Governance
- Community, Housing & Assets
- Environment & Economy
- Social and Health Care



Leader of the Council  
Cllr Ian Roberts



Chief Executive  
Neal Cockerton



Chief Officer Education & Youth  
Claire Homard

### **Working in Partnership**

Flintshire County Council has a longstanding and proud track record of partnership working. The communities it serves rightly expect statutory and third sector partners to work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration. The Flintshire Public Services Board (PSB) is at the heart of promoting a positive culture of working together and concentrates energy, effort and resources on providing efficient and effective services to local communities. It works within the requirements of the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and its sustainable development principles.

In addition, Flintshire also has joint Public Service Board with Wrexham County Borough Council as it was acknowledged that by joining together, knowledge and resources could be shared and joint solutions found to tackle common challenges, specifically those around community resilience and COVID-19 recovery. This Joint PSB was formed in June 2020. Those priorities marked with \* are the priorities of the Joint PSB. The priorities of the Public Service Board are:

- Community Safety
- Healthy and Independent Living
- Community Resilience : Children and Young People\*
- Community Resilience : Environment and Carbon Reduction\*
- Community Resilience : Mental Health and Well-being\*
- Community Resilience : Poverty and Inequality\*

Public Services Board partners include: Wrexham County Borough Council, Welsh Government, Natural Resources Wales, Public Health Wales, North Wales Police, North Wales Fire and Rescue Service, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, HM Prison and Probation Service in Wales,

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, Association of Voluntary Organisations in Wrexham, Coleg Cambria, Wrexham Glyndwr University, Do Well Ltd, NE Wales MIND and the Department for Work & Pensions.

**Flintshire’s Corporate Plan 2021-22**

The Council Improvement Plan is reviewed and refreshed each year and approved by full Council. In the period 2021-2022 the following core improvement themes drove the business plans of each portfolio and were reported on via quarterly monitoring reports, culminating in an Annual Performance Report.

<b>Theme / Wellbeing Objective</b>	<b>In-year Priority</b>
<b>Poverty</b>  Protecting people from poverty by supporting them to meet their basic needs	Income Poverty
	Child Poverty
	Food Poverty
	Fuel Poverty
	Digital Poverty
<b>Affordable and Accessible Housing</b>  Housing in Flintshire meeting the needs of our residents and supporting safer communities	Housing support and homeless prevention
	Housing Needs and Housing Options
	Social Housing
	Private Rented Sector
	Empty Properties
<b>Green Society and Environment</b>  Limiting the impact of the Council’s services on the natural environment and supporting the wider communities of Flintshire to reduce their own carbon footprint.	Carbon Neutrality
	Fleet Strategy
	Green Environment
	Renewable Energy
	Active and Sustainable Travel Options
	Circular Economy
<b>Economy</b>  Enabling a sustainable economic recovery	Town Centre Regeneration
	Business
	Transport and digital infrastructure
	Local Development Plan (LDP) Targets
	Spending money for the benefit of Flintshire
	Reducing worklessness
<b>Personal and Community Well-being</b>  Supporting people in need to live as well as they can	Independent Living
	Safeguarding
	Direct Provision to support people closer to home
	Local Dementia Strategy
	A well-connected, safe and clean local environment.
<b>Education &amp; Skills</b>  Enabling and Supporting Learning Communities	Educational Engagement and Achievement
	Digital Learning Opportunities
	Learning Environments
	Learning Community Networks
	Specialist Educational Provision

The themes for the Education & Youth Portfolio were incorporated into the E&Y Business Plan 2021-22 and progress was regularly reported to Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

# Self-Evaluation of Education Services

## **INSPECTION AREA 1: OUTCOMES**

### **1:1 Standards and progress overall**

Estyn suspended inspections of all education providers maintained by local authorities in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and no further inspections were carried out in 2019- 2020 or 2020-2021. Inspections in the non- maintained settings began again in spring term 2022 as well as pilot inspections for schools. Inspections in the school sector began again in summer term 2022 and two Flintshire primary schools were inspected under the revised inspection framework.

Inspection performance across the school sectors is strong. There are no schools in Estyn follow up or statutory category at the current time. There is a strong record of close correlation between the Council's pre-inspection reports and Estyn findings. The Council has a very good track record in effectively supporting schools being removed from categories. Powers of intervention are used effectively where schools cause concern, to ensure challenge and support is timely and effective. Interim Executive Boards have provided successful challenge and intervention to schools in serious categories of concern. This has helped to increase the pace of change and ensure robust accountability for standards and progress.

The primary school inspection profile for Flintshire has been continuously strong. Between September 2017 and March 2020, 24 primary schools in Flintshire were inspected. 96% of the schools inspected were at least Good for standard of care, support and guidance for pupils, with 29% judged to be Excellent. Nearly all primary schools inspected also effectively promote pupil wellbeing and positive attitudes to learning (92% judged to be Excellent or Good). Standards of Teaching and Learning were judged to be Excellent or Good in 88% of these schools. One primary school was placed in Special Measures in December 2019. Following a comprehensive package of support provided by the LA and GwE, the school was removed from follow up in spring 2022. Two primary schools placed in Estyn review in autumn term 2018 have both been removed from follow up. During the summer term 2022, two Flintshire primary schools were inspected under the new inspection arrangements. Judgements are no longer given by Estyn for the 5 inspection areas. Both schools have no follow up requirements by Estyn as a result of their inspection and one school has been invited to prepare a case study on its work in relation to ensuring rapid progress for pupils following the disruption caused by the pandemic.

Overall, the inspection profile for Flintshire secondary schools is strong. No secondary schools are in any Estyn follow up category. The two schools that were in Estyn Review were successfully removed from follow up in 2022. All secondary schools have bespoke support plans in place to ensure continued improvement. Schools causing concern are subject to robust monitoring. There are 360° action plans in place when needed and highly focused support provided by both the Regional School Improvement Service, GwE and the Local Authority.

### **1.2 Standards and Progress of Specific Groups**

#### **Early Education Funded Provision for 3 year olds (Early Entitlement)**

Over the last three years Flintshire has averaged 485 three year olds per month accessing early education, known locally as Early Entitlement (EE) through a mixed provision of mostly playgroups and



private day nurseries. During the 2020/21 financial year significantly less children accessed provision due to the pandemic. Some schools offer early education as part of their nursery/reception class if there is a lack of non-maintained provision in the area. Pupil level data on standards achieved by three year olds is not collected by the Local Authority. Quality of provision in the non-maintained sector is monitored regularly by the Early Entitlement Advisory Team (EET) and a number of partner schools and is quality assured by Estyn and Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). The Local Authority uses Estyn inspections as the main source of data on standards and progress in funded non-maintained settings alongside professional observations from the Early Entitlement Advisory Team.

Early Entitlement provision has been significantly impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic over the last two years. In summer 2020, in line with Welsh Government (WG) legislation, the EE scheme was suspended and all EE registered playgroups and a third of private day nurseries closed. No summer eligible EE children were registered with the scheme. Spring funded EE children had their places withdrawn. Some non-maintained settings did reopen but only for the provision of childcare for essential workers and for vulnerable children as directed by Welsh Government.

In response to the closure of settings and the focus on 'home learning', the Early Entitlement Team (EET) created a new Facebook page and used it to bilingually share a learning activity suitable for 3 year olds each day. Parents of spring funded EE children were invited to view the EET's activity ideas directly or through 'Home Learning' sites set up by the child's setting. The response to the Facebook page was very positive with setting staff and parents signing up in good numbers.

Between September and December 2020 registered EE providers were open but were operating under challenging and restrictive conditions and worked hard to remain open despite staff absences. No 'in person' visits were made by the EET to settings during this time because settings have no funded EE children during the autumn term and many settings' risk assessments didn't include EET members as 'essential visitors' at that time.

Overall, the inspection profile for Flintshire non maintained settings is strong. Over recent years there have been mostly positive outcomes from Estyn inspections of non-maintained settings funded to deliver Foundation Phase education to eligible 3 year-olds. The turnover of staff in the non-maintained sector can make securing consistency of standards and provision challenging and the Early Entitlement Team often find themselves having to train staff with no prior knowledge about how to meet the additional demands of educational provision rather than childcare.

A very small number of settings have been placed in Estyn Review or Focused Improvement over the last five years and the LA has a positive track record in supporting these settings to be removed quickly.

Estyn suspended inspections of all education providers maintained by local authorities in March 2020 due to COVID-19 and no further inspections were carried out in 2019-2020 or 2020-2021. Inspections in the non-maintained settings began again in spring term 2022. One setting was placed in Focused Improvement in spring 2022. One setting was removed from Progress review in summer term 2022. There are no other settings in any level of follow up.

The Advisory Teachers' reports clearly identify a setting's strengths as well as areas for development. Teachers have undertaken this task with integrity and objectivity and the correlation between their judgement in the reports and the final inspection outcomes match closely. No concerns have been raised by the Inspectors undertaking an individual visit or through the Local Area Inspection visits to the local authority that these reports are not accurately reflecting the standards and quality of provision in the non-maintained settings

### **1.3 Wellbeing and attitudes to learning**

Of the 24 primary schools inspected between September 2017 and March 2020, 92% of the schools inspected were at least Good for wellbeing and attitudes to learning, with 25% judged to be Excellent. The secondary special school was also judged to be Good. The primary special school was judged to be Excellent for Care support and guidance in its last inspection. Two of the three secondary schools inspected under wellbeing and attitudes to learning were judged to be good and the third school judged to be excellent.

#### **Attendance**

The impact of the pandemic makes it difficult to draw conclusions on pupil attendance and the impact of the training which has been offered to support emotional health and wellbeing. (See Inspection Area 2). The data below indicates a dip in the attendance across both sectors, but noticeably in the secondary sector with 64% of secondary schools dipping below 90% compared with none in the two years prior to the pandemic. The impact of COVID-19 was more evident across the secondary sector and appeared to be the result of community transmission.

In line with Welsh Government directives, the Council suspended the use of tools such as Fixed Penalty Notices in favour of wellbeing visits/contact from the Education Welfare Service (EWS). There is no national data available to see how Flintshire compares with other LAs at this point in time. Targeted attendance reviews by the EWS are underway and these form part of the revised monitoring system that is being implemented. Illness remains the main reason for absence. Levels of unauthorised absence remain low prior to 2020 but have seen a rise, particularly in the secondary sector.

*Table 1: Flintshire Schools' Attendance in comparison with Welsh Averages*

	Attendance (%)				Unauthorised absence (%)			
	2020/21 *	2019/20 *	2018/19	2017/18	2020/21 *	2019/20 *	2018/19	2017/18
<b>FCC Primary Schools</b>	<b>92.7</b>	-	<b>94.6</b>	<b>94.6</b>	<b>0.9</b>	-	<b>0.5</b>	<b>0.5</b>
<b>Wales Average</b>	-	-	95.4	95.2	-	-	0.3	0.3
<b>Best in Wales</b>	-	-	94.6	94.5	-	-	1.4	1.3
<b>FCC Secondary Schools</b>	<b>88.8</b>	-	<b>93.3</b>	<b>93.7</b>	<b>2.6</b>	-	<b>1.2</b>	<b>0.9</b>
<b>Wales Average</b>	-	-	94.8	94.4	-	-	0.7	0.6
<b>Best in Wales</b>	-	-	95.0	94.8	-	-	1.7	1.6

\* not published data

*Table 2: Spread of attendance figures*

Attendance (%)	<90	90.0-90.9	91.0-91.9	92.0-92.9	93.0-93.9	94.0-94.9	95.0-95.9	96.0-96.9	97.0-97.9	98.0-98.9	99.0-100
Primary 2020/21	7	5	6	7	11	15	6	7	0	0	0
Primary 2019/20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*

Primary 2018/19	1	0	1	4	9	20	21	7	1	0	0
Primary 2017/18	1	0	0	6	7	21	23	5	1	0	0
<b>Attendance (%)</b>	<b>&lt;90</b>	<b>90.0-90.9</b>	<b>91.0-91.9</b>	<b>92.0-92.9</b>	<b>93.0-93.9</b>	<b>94.0-94.9</b>	<b>95.0-95.9</b>	<b>96.0-96.9</b>	<b>97.0-97.9</b>	<b>98.0-98.9</b>	<b>99.0-100</b>
Secondary 2020/21	7	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary 2019/20	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*	*
Secondary 2018/19	0	0	2	3	2	4	0	0	0	0	0
Secondary 2017/18	0	0	2	1	2	5	1	0	0	0	0

### Exclusions – Permanent and Fixed Term

A reduction in the level of permanent exclusion remains a priority for the Council as it is a recommendation from the LGES Inspection of 2019. Significant work has been undertaken internally with regard to central services to review practice and particularly the use of data to support effective tracking and intervention. The Senior Learning Adviser – Engagement has worked directly with schools and other services in relation to permanent exclusion to identify appropriate support and intervention to help prevent this. The data below does suggest a downward trend over the last three years however, the potential impact of the pandemic on the educational offer makes direct comparisons with previous years problematic.

Table 3: Number of Permanent Exclusions from Flintshire Schools

	2020-21	2019-20	2018-19
<b>Flintshire</b>	9*	19	26
<b>Wales</b>	*	234	249

\* not published data

The level of fixed-term exclusion also suggests a decreasing trend but still remains notably above the Welsh average for incidents of 5 days or less, whilst the rates of 5 days or more has remained below the Welsh average for the published data. Levels of exclusion remain significantly higher in the secondary sector with disruptive behaviour, assault/violence to a pupil and verbal abuse towards an adult being the predominant reasons for exclusion. Schools have reported an impact of the pandemic on their school communities with regards to behaviour, with the availability of wider pastoral provision being reduced as a result of the physical restrictions and staff absence due to COVID-19. A half-termly monitoring process has been introduced to further target individuals/schools for support.

Table 4: Fixed-Term Exclusions

Year	Exclusion Type	Number of Exclusions	Rate of Exclusion (per 1000 pupils)
2020/21*	<b>5 Days or Less</b>	<b>991</b>	<b>42.78</b>
	Wales		

	<b>Over 5 days</b>	<b>34</b>	<b>1.4</b>
	Wales		
<b>2019/20</b>	<b>5 Days or Less</b>	<b>1069</b>	<b>45.7</b>
	Wales	13,496	28.7
	<b>Over 5 days</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>0.9</b>
	Wales	562	1.2
<b>2018/19</b>	<b>5 Days or Less</b>	<b>1347</b>	<b>61.2</b>
	Wales	19,252	41.0
	<b>Over 5 days</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>1.4</b>
	Wales	799	1.7

\*Not published data

The number of managed moves across Flintshire remains small with the majority being within the secondary sector. Approximately 35% of these prove to be successful, with the others either resulting in a return to the original school or a move to more specialist provision.

Table 5: Number of managed moves

Year	Primary	Secondary
2021/22	3	12
2020/21	1	6
2019/20	2	10

## Outcome 1: Standards and Progress Summary

### Areas for ongoing improvement & sustainability

- Maintain support for primary schools and early years settings with the implementation of the revised curriculum from September 2022
- Ensure all secondary schools are ready for the implementation of the revised curriculum in September 2023
- Improve attendance rates and reduce the number of fixed and permanent exclusions through targeted interventions and bespoke educational packages
- Maintain positive inspection outcomes across all sectors - early years, primary, secondary and specialist provision
- Continue to Improve the skills and confidence of staff and learners to raise standards in the use of the Welsh language

## **INSPECTION AREA 2 : QUALITY OF EDUCATION SERVICES**

### **2.1 Support for School Improvement**

#### **School Improvement Processes**

The Council knows its schools very well. There are clear strategies, policies and processes that are understood by those involved and give a clear shape and direction to the Education Service.

The relationship and collaboration between Flintshire and the Regional School Improvement Service (GwE) is very good and similarly, relationships between GwE and schools in Flintshire are very positive. Through this relationship, the Council has quality information about its schools and provides them with robust and appropriate challenge but also support and intervention. As a result, schools benefit from a diverse regional professional learning offer and bespoke support at individual school and cluster level. This can be evidenced by the improvement dialogue with schools and the strong inspection profile.

Improving performance in Key Stage 4 continues to be a priority following the last inspection. As a result, each secondary school has an agreed programme of support that helps deliver the identified priorities within a school's improvement plan. The school support plan clearly defines how school improvement resources ensure targeted improvements in key priority areas. Where required, schools are also supported by a 360° support plan which identifies enhanced support needs through the LA and GwE. These plans are monitored through the Council's Quality Board.

The Council, in partnership with GwE, has effective procedures to support schools in their self-evaluation and improvement planning. Schools are robustly challenged on the quality of their self-evaluation processes. The impact of this can be seen in the positive profile of Estyn inspections.

Schools make effective use of the milestones provided by GwE for the reform of the Curriculum for Wales and Additional Learning Needs. This allows schools to reflect on their current position with regards to the reform journey and provides clear next steps for their consideration. Cluster work is enhanced through collaborative work and the sharing of priorities and dialogue helps capture the level of support required by schools and collaborations of schools.

Senior leaders within the service use a range of data and intelligence effectively to ensure areas of improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. Data and information is scrutinised more robustly to monitor progress against agreed actions. As a result, the Council is effective in challenging schools where needed and allocating specific support for those schools.

There is a comprehensive professional learning offer for all schools in Flintshire and this is enhanced by what is being offered at local level by schools and between schools. The professional learning offer supports school leadership at all levels across the county and has been strengthened by a range of strategies including access to regional and national development programmes. The local authority has supported the development of leadership in Flintshire schools on a number of levels. Subscription to the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and Aspiring Heads course is strong while existing and recently appointed headteachers are very well supported through the New and Acting headteacher programme. The impact of this has been demonstrated in the good recruitment levels at senior leadership level across Flintshire schools.

There has been a clear focus on improving teaching in Flintshire schools. Many schools have been part of teaching and learning professional learning opportunities such as the regional Shirley Clarke Assessment for Learning project. The impact of this focus can be evidenced in the evaluation of practice at school and regional level and through the continued improvement in Inspection Area 3 of the Flintshire Estyn profile (Teaching). All schools have been involved in the ongoing professional development and support programme for the implementation of the new curriculum.

Primary and Secondary networks and peer-to-peer work has strengthened collaboration and led to a stronger shared understanding of effective practice. The Secondary Alliance model is developing well and leading to improved levels of collaboration between schools in sharing practice at senior and middle leadership level and in standards of teaching and learning. The Middle Leadership professional development programmes have been successful in improving the quality of leaders in core subjects, literacy and numeracy and Foundation Phase through development of skills and knowledge. Bespoke approaches have been tailored to meet the requirements of individual schools; coaching programmes for groups and individuals have been delivered in a number of schools and had a clear impact on the work of leaders. Shortages in key personnel have also been supported through the deployment of expertise from neighbouring schools.

Collaborative practice amongst leaders is reinforced through strategic forums, at both headteacher and deputy level. The Council supports strong and effective communication and a mutual sense of common responsibility for the development of responses and actions to local and national challenges. Good practice is shared and local expertise nurtured.

Schools in Flintshire are generally well prepared for the National Reform Journey. The regional reform strategy gives clear direction on how GwE works with schools to ensure a clear and systematic approach to providing support and also opportunities to assist schools to reflect on their engagement with all aspects of the reform journey. As a result, primary schools in Flintshire are well prepared for implementing the new curriculum from September 2022. All secondary schools in Flintshire have opted to defer implementation until September 2023. Each school cluster has two designated leads to facilitate the change management process and required planning to develop the new curriculum and implement new professional standards. Flintshire schools are positively engaged with developing themselves as Schools as Learning Organisations.

Flintshire schools have made effective use of the Small and Rural Schools grant. The Council facilitated a group of small schools to work collaboratively on shared priorities. This facilitation included reviewing and evaluating the impact of their strategies on standards in these schools. The impact was positive and the schools involved valued the opportunity to reflect on their own practice and share successful practice with others. This funding ended in March 2022. However, the network continues to work together on agreed areas of focus and is well supported by the Primary Learning Adviser.

## **Post-16 Education**

There are six high schools in Flintshire with sixth forms and one FE college with a dedicated A level centre. Two high schools merged their sixth forms to create Flint 6<sup>th</sup>. In 2021, there were 662 learners in Year 13 and 589 in year 12. 65 post-16 learners are learning through the medium of Welsh at Ysgol Maes Garmon. All school sixth forms offer the Welsh BaccaLaureate, however, the number completing the full qualification differs between schools and years.

The Council continues to work closely with its six post-16 providers and in partnership with Coleg Cambria to shape post-16 provision for students and to ensure clear pathways to professional and

technical routes to employment, alongside robust academic routes. The appointment of a Post-16 Learning Adviser has added additional capacity to the portfolio's work. Regular meetings are held of the Post-16 network of schools to agree and review curriculum planning and local delivery. Annual plans are submitted to Welsh Government for scrutiny. The portfolio engages with the Economic Recovery Board who are keen to work with schools, particularly around developing apprenticeships.

The Minister for Education cancelled the 2021 summer examinations series due to the pandemic. No performance measures, including the consistent measures for achievement and value added, are available.

Welsh Government did not collect the data for SEREN for 2020 due to the pandemic. It may be therefore that some students achieved places at Russell Group Universities but didn't register for SEREN. In 2021, based on destination data available to the network, 60% of students gained a place at a Russell Group University. Nearly all other students took up a place at other universities or on specialist courses. A very few opted to defer their places until 2022.

### **Welsh Language Advisory Service**

The Welsh Advisory Team (WAT) consists of 3 staff; 2.8 full time equivalent teachers working in English and Welsh medium primary schools and 1 Admin Support Officer for 20hrs per week. This includes the Service Manager/Team Leader. There are 59 English-Medium primary schools and 5 Welsh-Medium primary schools. According to Welsh Government's language categorisation policy, all 59 English-Medium schools are defined as Category 5 schools and all 5 Welsh schools are defined as Category 1 Welsh-Medium primary schools.

The Team's main objectives are to contribute to Flintshire's Welsh in Education Strategy by improving standards in Welsh (first and second language) by improving the quality of teaching and developing the language skills of the education workforce in primary schools. The Team works in partnership with all primary schools within the local authority to raise standards of Welsh. This is carried out via a range of strategies and a targeted approach to achieve the best outcomes for learners and includes the direct training of teachers and teaching assistants through intensive language and methodology course as well as working collaboratively with other key partners e.g. GwE, Canolfan Bedwyr (providers of the Sabbatical courses), Urdd and Coleg Cambria. Members of the team represent the Council on local, regional and national panels, ensuring that Flintshire schools receive up to date information regarding broader priorities pertaining to the development of Welsh in schools.

The informal use of Welsh in all schools is very much a strategic priority. It is delivered by an appointed coordinator for Siarter Iaith (Welsh Language Charter) and PCAI (Prosiect Cefnogi Arferion Iaith / Supporting Welsh language use project) in Welsh medium primary and secondary schools and a designated person leading and co-ordinating Cymraeg Campus in English medium primary schools. All 5 Welsh medium primary schools in Flintshire have achieved their Gold award. All English medium primary schools in Flintshire have embarked on their journey with Cymraeg Campus, with 4 schools achieving the Silver Award, one of whom has now gone on to achieve the Gold Award. They are the first school in North Wales to achieve this.

Flintshire schools have consistently sought opportunities to further their language training through the WG funded sabbatical courses. Numbers attending from Flintshire have been consistently high on nearly all courses across the North Wales region. Between 2019 and 2022, 15 teachers have accessed the sabbatical programme. They continue to receive post course support from the Welsh in Education team in embedding their practice within their school. For September 2022, a further 7 Flintshire teachers have been allocated places and 2 for the spring term intermediate sabbatical course. The

Welsh Advisory Service work closely with the course providers, deliver methodology sessions during the courses and provide focused support to staff on their return to school, with a particular aim of supporting embedding of practice across the whole school.

One member of the team is designated to work with Welsh medium primary schools should any latecomers arrive at KS2. A programme of intervention is prepared by the Advisory Service and delivered by the school when the need arises. A member of the team also works closely with the Welsh secondary school supporting the 'Trochi' programme for Year 6 learners who transfer from English medium primary school into Welsh medium secondary. The service has made effective use of the first year of the additional funding stream (spring 2022) for Latecomers to Welsh medium education. This included projects for Foundation Phase, KS2 and KS3.

The Team continually evaluates its work to ensure schools receive a high quality service, refining its methods accordingly, e.g. results from the Welsh language skills section of the School Workforce Annual Census (SWAC) are used to identify support for language development, to create working parties of teachers refining curriculum planning for schools and for identifying schools to share good practice.

### **Welsh in Education Strategic Plan and Forum**

The Flintshire Welsh in Education Strategic Plan (WESP) for 2017-2020 was accepted by the Welsh Government in April 2018 and an Implementation Plan adopted by the Forum. The draft 10 year plan for 2022-2032 has recently been approved by Welsh Government following a period of public consultation and endorsement by the Council's Cabinet and Scrutiny process. The implementation of the WESP is driven and monitored by the Flintshire Welsh Strategic Forum made up of officers, elected members, school representatives and other organisations linked to the development of the Welsh language and Welsh medium education. A representative from Welsh Government regularly attends meetings of the Forum. The Forum is currently chaired by the Leader of Flintshire County Council who is also the Cabinet Member for Education & Youth.

The Forum works very effectively as a multi-agency platform for delivering and monitoring the WESP. All members bring high levels of knowledge and expertise to the Forum which are freely shared to achieve the common vision of promoting Welsh-medium education and the Welsh language. Most members of the Forum sit on one or more of the three sub-committees – Provision, Standards and Workforce. These meet at least once a term to work on their specific targets and then feed back their progress in the following termly Forum meeting. These sub-groups have each produced a highly focused action plan to support the overall WESP.

The Forum is very robust in holding the Council to account in its delivery of the Plan and achieving the targets contained within it. The Forum membership is regularly reviewed. Reports on the progress of the WESP are routinely presented to the Education, Youth and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Flintshire remains committed to build additional capacity in the Welsh Medium school network to support the WESP. Significant capital investment has been made through the Council's capital programme and through the Sustainable Learning Communities funding to improve facilities and increase the number of Welsh medium places available. Advanced planning is underway to review further opportunities for growth in Welsh medium schools including a new build for an existing Welsh medium school in Flint and a new start up Welsh medium school in the Buckley/Mynydd Isa area. This would deliver on the Council's key objective of having Welsh medium early years and primary school provision in every major town across the county.



## School Governance

The governor support role within the Education Portfolio (0.2fte) sits with the Senior Manager for Business Support. The part time provision and support provided to governing bodies is enhanced by access to the dedicated subscription resource and help line provided by the Governors Cymru web service. Exemplars of good practice from governing bodies in Flintshire are posted to the site.

The key functions of the service relate to supporting governing bodies in the following areas - Schools Causing Concern procedures; School Federations; Accelerated Improvement Boards; Interim Executive Boards; training and development, either through commissioning or direct delivery; administration of the Flintshire Governors Association; appointment of Local Authority governors to governing bodies, and securing governor nominations to the Schools Budget Forum and Education, Youth & Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

The ability to offer face to face governor training remained curtailed during 2021/22 as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the Council continued to remain compliant with the statutory duty to offer the regulatory school governor training programme as the Welsh Government statutory governor training modules are available online. The online training portal registered 40 new log-ons during the year suggesting a good level of engagement with statutory training. Governing Bodies are able to monitor virtual attendance of their governors through the portal and are responsible for monitoring the impact of training on the discharge of their duties.

Non-statutory training modules continue to be developed in partnership between the six North Wales councils adding to the online training programme, with a module on the role of governors in 'pupil voice' becoming available during 2021/22. This year there has also been commissioning of virtual training from external partners on the role of governors in safeguarding and in data protection.

The network of North Wales Governor Support Officers continue to meet virtually each term with the GWE lead for Governor Support. The network continues to share approaches and resources to support governor development. GwE offers support to individual governing bodies, when requested, through their professional learning offer for 2021/22, including the roll-out of the new Curriculum for Wales. Similarly, there continues to be representation at the ADEW National network of Governor Support Officers who meet termly with representatives of Welsh Government. The Governor Development Manager for the Council is currently Vice Chair of the national network and contributor to a WG working group on review of schools complaints procedures.

Administration of the Flintshire Governors Association continues to be provided by the Council. The Forum is an effective, regular consultative platform and a timely vehicle for providing updates on key national and local issues. During the year a regular newsletter was issued updating governors on national/local developments. Meetings of the Schools Budget Forum, Education and Culture Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Welsh in Education Strategic Form are held virtually and there remains consistent representation by governors.

Although there are approximately 1250 governor positions within the Authority, the Council only has responsibility for administering the nomination of Local Authority governors to school governing bodies, approximately 400 nominations. Vacancies on governing bodies remain at a consistent level and no major concerns relating to 'resignations' arising have been reported by schools during the year in support of government recruitment. However, the Council has recently engaged with Governors for Schools, to 'skills-match' an applicant governor to a long standing vacancy within a special school. The Council does not capture data on governor ethnicity.

## **2.2 Support for Vulnerable Learners**

Flintshire provides a suitable range of services to promote social inclusion and support for learners with ALN through a combination of internal and externally commissioned services and provision. The Council meets its statutory duties well as demonstrated by the low levels of appeal to the SEN Tribunal and the low levels of young people becoming NEET.

Funding to support children with Special Educational Needs/Additional Learning Needs has been delegated to schools for a number of years now. Delegation of this funding has enabled schools to respond proactively to the needs of their school community and has resulted in a range of internal and external interventions being deployed. These include the use of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs), FRIENDS group sessions, targeted therapeutic interventions and the development of sensory spaces.

The model for delegation to primary schools has been remodeled this year in response to the changes brought into place by the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET). This places greater autonomy on schools to develop provision at a universal level but also on a more targeted basis, as additional learning provision (ALP) for pupils identified as having ALN.

The Council has made a significant investment to support vulnerable learners in the form of a purpose built facility for its pupil referral unit, Plas Derwen. The new building opened to pupils in September 2021 and provides a specialist learning environment to support the academic and social emotional needs of the pupils. The move saw the coming together of four different centres and staff have worked hard to support a positive transition for the whole Plas Derwen community. Multi-agency intervention is an important aspect of the provision and the additional of weekly sessions from an Assistant Education Psychologist has been beneficial for the pupils and staff to aid the settling in process.

In terms of percentage expenditure, the services and provision to support children with a range of behavioural, emotional and social difficulties is comparatively higher than other areas of service under the learning inclusion umbrella. This is in direct response to Council priorities and presenting need. Where possible, services provide individual intervention to pupils however, the delivery model does focus on providing advice, guidance and training to build capacity and effect change within schools.

The focus on nurture and trauma-informed practice has been expanded and a range of training opportunities offered to schools and central services to support the development of this. The Behaviour Support Service has been rebranded as Nurture Outreach and operates as an outreach service from Plas Derwen.

### **Additional Learning Needs (ALN)**

Additional capacity has been allocated to the ALN team in response to the implementation of the Additional Learning Needs and Education Tribunal (Wales) Act 2018 (ALNET). The team now comprises of a six Learning Advisers, including the Early Years ALN Lead Officer (ALNLO) and a dedicated ALN officer for looked after children. The Senior Learning Adviser for ALN manages the team and leads on the implementation of ALNET.

The Learning Advisors have continued to work to meet the statutory obligations in respect of children and young people with additional learning needs. Each of the officers has a cluster groups of schools and follow the pupils from entry into primary school, transition to secondary and on into post-16 provision. The department works within clear protocols and decision making processes to assess and make decisions regarding placement and provision for learners with ALN.

During the COVID-19 pandemic the ALN team continued to work from home, in line with national and

local guidance. Local Authority ALN/SEN Decision Making Panels continued to be held, with the use of online platforms to facilitate this process. All members of the team have the necessary equipment to enable them to continue to fulfil their roles. The use of online platforms has resulted in leaner working practices, with much reduced travel. This has resulted in financial and time savings.

During the pandemic the vast majority of annual reviews have taken place using alternative means. This has included telephone and online platform reviews. The officers provided support to schools and the PRU to ensure that the reviews for the academic year were completed. Thorough risk assessments was undertaken where it was necessary for an officer to attend an annual review in person. All annual review documentation is scrutinised by the Learning Adviser to ensure the provision remains appropriate and pupils are making suitable progress.

Family engagement remains a high priority and officers have worked hard to maintain build and maintain relationships remotely. There has been an individual approach to working with families, recognising that not all families have appropriate devices for online platforms. This approach has maintained the very low levels of appeal to tribunal against the Council. In 2021 there were only 2 appeals which were overturned in favour of the Council.

The Council responded proactively to the Welsh Government amendments to the implementation of ALNET in September 2021. Processes and systems were developed to allow the parallel working of the SEN and ALN statutory duties. Training and awareness raising sessions with schools and officers continued to ensure that schools and the Council were in a confident position to respond to the new requirements. The creation and development of the new IT ALN system, Eclipse, to support schools and the Council with the new ALN process has been a vast undertaking. This comprehensive system has been designed to ensure compliance with statutory duties in the absence of a national system. This has been a joint undertaking by four authorities across North Wales which has supported a collaborative approach to implementation.

Considerable time has been allocated to the identification of ALN through the development of a shared understanding of what constitutes Additional Learning Provision (ALP). Schools have worked in clusters, supported by ALN officers to develop this. A toolkit has been developed to offer further support to schools. This has had input from specialist services across the Portfolio to ensure a shared corporate approach and understanding. Multi-agency working has been important with regards to early years' identification of ALN, in particular with Health. Processes have been reviewed and revised to ensure that children are identified appropriately. A positive relationship has been developed with the Designated Education Clinical Lead Officer (DECLO) in Health which has supported a collaborative approach and a confidence that the correct children are being identified as having ALN.

The pandemic has had an impact on the Council's compliance with SEN Code of Practice timescales. A total of 124 Statements were issued in the academic year 2020/21, 52% of which were issued within the 26 week timescale. A further 41% were issued late but with permissible exceptions and the remainder were as a result of late advice, particularly from Health colleagues. Despite the delays, pupil needs were identified and provision was allocated pending the outcome of the statutory assessment process so as not to disadvantage any individual.

Officers have completed a number of school monitoring/support visits. ALNCos have provided positive feedback, indicating that they have appreciated the time to discuss matters on an individual basis. The importance of these visits has become paramount following the further delegation of funds to primary school budgets from April 2022 and will be a priority going forward.

Transition between primary and secondary phases was an issue for pupils again for the start of the

2021 academic year given the restrictions placed on schools around the mixing of pupils. Schools responded positively and proactively to provide meaningful transition experiences but this has been challenging for a number of pupils. The wider impact of COVID-19 on the educational experiences of pupils also led to an increased number of parents requesting more specialist provision for their children placing pressure on Resource base places. Despite this, the number of education day placements commissioned in specialist/independent not maintained by Flintshire has seen a downward trend, from 87 in 2018/19, 53 in 2019/20 to 46 in 2021/21, which is indicative of the positive engagement of the ALN team with families.

Destination data for pupils within Flintshire's specialist school indicate that of the 17 learners, 14 left with a qualification and went on to access the local further education institute and 1 went on to access a specialist college placement.

### **Education Welfare Service (EWS)**

The EWS has undergone a review following the Estyn recommendations in 2019. The service now comprises of a Team leader, 6 Education Welfare Officers and 2 Education Support Officers. This change has afforded greater service flexibility to offer support regarding attendance and exclusion in a targeted way. System reviews have been undertaken in a number of schools to ensure that a clear and graduated response to attendance is in place. The increased use of attendance data across the service has facilitated the appropriate targeting of this intervention. There is also a clearer delineation of roles, with officers having identified responsibilities for Elective Home Education, Children Missing Education and the link to the Youth Justice Service.

The ongoing impact of the pandemic has, however, resulted in two years of variable attendance data due to periods of closure and absence, and a result, it has not been possible to see the real impact of the service changes at this point. The use of statutory tools such as Fixed Penalty Notices in response to non-attendance was also suspended by Welsh Government. The EWS has played a pivotal role in pupil safety during the pandemic, making home visits where concerns were expressed by schools.

### **Elective Home Education (EHE)**

In line with other councils, Flintshire has seen an increase in the numbers of children becoming EHE with 172 children registered in April 2022 compared with 91 in 2018. The Local Authority lead officer for EHE is actively engaging in the national meetings and is working in collaboration with other regional leads to develop a co-ordinated approach across North Wales. The additional funding received from Welsh Government has enabled the appointment of a designated officer for EHE who provides information and advice and engages proactively with parents who wish their child to be educated at home. An information pack is circulated and annual visits are undertaken as part of the monitoring process. Officers work closely with colleagues across Social Services as required where safeguarding is deemed to be a concern and work proactively to secure a return to school where this is considered to be in the child's best interests.

### **Young Person's Counselling Service**

The Young Person's Counselling Service is an integral part of the Council's support mechanism to prevent young people from becoming vulnerable. All secondary schools, including the specialist school Ysgol Maes Hyfryd and Plas Derwen (PRU) are allocated designated counsellor time with referrals also being taken for Year 6 pupils. Group work sessions for younger children in primary schools has also been piloted in 6 schools this year with positive outcomes reported from the children, staff and parents. In addition, the service has also responded to requests for young people accessing college or in some cases who are NEET.

Levels of self-referral to the service are low with the majority of referrals coming from school-based staff or through the multi-agency Youth Engagement Progression Framework (YEPF) meetings. A triage system is now being implemented to ensure that a referral has been made to the correct service to support access to a timely and suitable intervention. Schools are also investing increasingly in a range of interventions to address mental health issues which provides further support in targeting counselling for those most in need of this. It is interesting to note a change in the nature of the presenting issues on referral which reflects the impact of the pandemic.

Table 6: Number of clients and presenting issues

	2020/21	2019/20
<b>Number of Clients</b>	308	226
<b>Number of sessions attended</b>	1351	933
<b>Presenting issues on referral (3 most common in rank order high to low)</b>	Anxiety Family Bereavement	Family Anxiety Behaviour related

All young people engaging with the Counselling service undertake an initial assessment (YP-Core) and this is repeated at the end of the intervention to measure impact. The information below shows that on average, the young people note a positive outcome following engagement with the sessions.

Table 7: Impact of the Young Person's Counselling Service

	2020/21	2019/20
Changes in the average result of the Young People's Core Score - Start of Episode	18.57	17.28
Changes in the average result of the Young People's Core Score - End of Episode	9.57	8.86

## TRAC

TRAC is a European funded project focused on supporting children between 11 and 16 to engage in education, training or employment. A total of 563 individuals were referred for TRAC intervention between April 2021 and March 2022. The pupils received support with regards to their attendance and wellbeing through a range of activities and interventions. Of these 137 have achieved additional qualifications and 242 have been identified as being at a reduced risk of becoming NEET. The project will cease after August 2022 as the funding comes to an end.

## Progression Team

The Engagement Progression Coordinator (EPC) works in partnership to co-ordinate support for pupils between the ages of 11 and 25 who are potentially at risk of disengagement or are currently not in education, employment or training (NEET). The EPC manages the Progression Team who support the potential NEETS. The team receive referrals for pupils who are starting to, or have disengaged from education from Education Welfare Officers or teachers. The EPC ensured links with other relevant services such as TRAC, Youth Justice, Sorted Drug and Alcohol Team and the Young Person's Counselling Service.

Home visits are made by the Progression Team to build rapport and explore the pupils' interests and needs. This engagement work supports pupils to participate in a range of alternative education activities. Support for transition between school and post-16 provision was a priority during the summer months of 2021. The Team supported 147 individuals across the year, 110 of which were Year 9 to

Year 11 and 37 who were post-16. A total of 12 pupils were supported into further education, 2 into an apprenticeship and 3 into employment. A further 13 individuals were supported to transition into Communities for Work or to gain further targeted support for mental health difficulties through services such as the Resilience team.

A further 612 pupils were supported through activities organised by the EPC funded through the Winter of Wellbeing Welsh Government funding. The pupils achieved a range of qualifications, vocational skills and experience along with positive improvement in self-esteem and wellbeing.

The level of year 11 NEET has remained low over the past 4 years as a result of the targeted multi-agency work across the authority, underpinned by the work of the EPC and the Progression Team.

Table 8: Year 11 Leavers (%) from schools in Wales known to be not in education, employment or training (NEET)

	2021	2020	2019	2018
<b>Flintshire</b>	1.4 (23)	1.2 (19)	1.9 (28)	1.2 (18)
<b>Wales</b>	1.6 (507)	1.7 (527)	1.8 (537)	1.6 (476)

Source: Careers Wales

Table 9: Year 12 and 13 Leavers (%) in Flintshire known not to be in education, employment or training (NEET)

	2021	2020	2019	2018
<b>Flintshire Year 12</b>	0.3 (2)	1.1 (6)	0	0
<b>Wales Yr 12</b>	0.4 (55)	0.6 (76)	0.8 (99)	0.7 (90)
<b>Flintshire Year 13</b>	3.4 (19)	3.7 (20)	2.9 (16)	2.5 (15)
<b>Wales Yr 13</b>	2.3 (251)	3.5 (355)	2.5 (269)	2.5 (279)

## Education Psychology Service (EPS)

Recruitment of Educational Psychologists (EPs) remains challenging and has resulted in the appointment of 3 Assistant Educational Psychologists to offer additional support to the team. The ratio of EPs to pupils in Flintshire remains the most challenging in Wales sitting at 1:7089 pupils compared with the Welsh average of 1:5154 (range 1:1750 - 1:7089). The issue of recruitment has been raised with Welsh Government, with the challenge being accentuated in the North given the location of the doctorate training course being based in South Wales. The Principal Education Psychologist has also become a member of the interview panel and management committee of the Cardiff training course in an attempt to effect change.

The EPS completed 134 statutory assessments in the last year under the SEN Code which is 93.2% completed within the allocated timescale or with permissible exceptions. Despite the high level of requests for statutory assessment, the team continued to offer group consultation sessions covering a range of topics including:

- Emotionally-Based School avoidance
- Autism
- Social and emotional wellbeing
- Person centred planning tools
- Attention and concentration

During the Summer Term 2021, the Group Consultation model was subject to evaluation by a trainee on placement with the team. The research found “The questionnaire data reveals that although ALNCo experiences vary, the majority of ALNCo participants reported positive experiences and strongly agreed that GC was a good use of time and helpful for gaining strategies for individual pupils

as well as the whole school”.

EPs are a standing member of the 2 new ALN panels under ALNET.

### **Communication & Language Advisory Support Service**

The pandemic has had a notable impact on the speech, language and communication skills of pupils, with teachers identifying a particular impact on children in the Foundation Phase. The Learning Adviser for Speech, Language & Communication has worked closely with Health and family support services to develop an appropriate training package for schools and early years' settings.

Flintshire is the first authority to roll out the Talkboost training offer to all primary schools. To date, 40 schools have engaged with the training, resulting in 288 trained staff. Data collection is at an early stage with regards to the intervention however, the initial reports from 13 schools shows a positive impact when considering pre and post intervention assessment. All pupils were seen to have a positive improvement in their skills, with 75% moving from having language skills at a below age expected level to achieving age expected levels. The area highlighted as having the biggest overall impact following training was social interaction which ties in with the concerns over isolation due to the pandemic.

### **Support for English as an Additional Language (EAL) and Gypsy Travellers**

The number of pupils identified as having EAL has increased by 84 pupils to 1491 this year, with 53 languages being spoken across Flintshire schools in addition to English and Welsh. All pupils are assessed with regards to their language capabilities and appropriate support allocated either on an individual or group work basis. In the region of 50 pupils have accessed support in the Foundation Phase through the Language Development project and feedback from schools regarding the project impact remains positive. No pupils with EAL have needed access to additional support to engage with their education.

As well as supporting pupils and schools in relation to EAL, the service has supported a number of refugees including 40 Afghan children, 23 children under the Syrian Vulnerable Person Resettlement Programme and 1 child under the Ukrainian sponsorship scheme during this reporting period. All pupils and families have had access to EAL intervention and wrap-around support services. The response from schools to supporting children and families has been excellent with pupils settling well into their new schools and communities.

The number of Traveller children attending school saw a notable dip at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, particularly in the primary sector where attendance is usually stronger. Numbers have been increasing gradually since December as staff have been able to physically re-engage with families and numbers are back to figures similar to those prior to the pandemic. Engagement with the secondary sector remains challenging despite the offer of alternative curriculum projects and significant outreach work with families. Transience also remains a challenge with Flintshire continuing to have a high transient Traveller population.

Additional Welsh Government funding was received this year to support the increase in numbers across minority ethnic groups. In response, an Additional Curriculum Advisory teacher and coordinator were appointed from September 2021 to deliver a range of alternative activities to pupils with EAL, Travellers and other vulnerable children such as those who are Looked After by the Council in its role as corporate parent. The focus of the interventions was to support the development of self-esteem and confidence as well as developing a sense of identity, belonging and community participation. The development of friendships and relationships were also key to support individual wellbeing. To date, 70 pupils from KS2/3 have engaged with the project, 35 pupils with EAL and 10 from the Traveller community and 25 who were Looked After. Schools report an improvement in the following areas:

- Increased engagement in lessons/wider school community
- Increased engagement with other pupils
- Willingness to ask for help
- Improved self-esteem, confidence and positive mood
- Ability to regulate emotions with a reduction in the frequency of emotional outbursts

The funding was also used to create additional capacity within the Nurture Outreach service specifically for targeted vulnerable groups. There has been a positive response from schools following the input noting improvements such as a greater ability to play with others, improved engagement and lower levels of anxiety being displayed.

### **Support for raising the educational achievement of Looked After Children**

The levels of children who are 'looked after' have remained fairly stable over the past 3 years, 255 in 2019, 259 in 2020 and 258 in 2021. The number of those of school age varies year on year, with there being 178 in 2021. Specific funding to support improved outcomes for 'looked after' children comes in the form of the Pupil Development Grant which is overseen by GwE at a regional level. Schools are required to operate in clusters and bid for funding, with the bids being overseen by local officers. This year, the funding has been targeted at a range of training and interventions, including the following:

- Nurture training and intervention
- developing trauma informed practice
- Training on Emotion Coaching, Emotional Literacy and Friends Resilience programmes
- Therapeutic type interventions, e.g. Lego therapy, Unearthing boxes, Positive Power of Play, sensory room

The Council is looking to pilot the use of a screening tool with children who are 'looked after' to measure the impact of interventions with a higher level of consistency. Similar to other pupils, the pandemic has impacted on levels of engagement across this specific cohort, with the average attendance sitting at 88% for 2021. The destination data for Year 11 pupils who are 'looked after' indicated that 69% of the cohort went on to access a post 16 placement in a school, college or with the armed forces.

### **Sensory Service**

During this reporting year the service has continued to support schools to meet the educational and emotional needs of sensory impaired pupils - 75 pupils with a visual impairment (VI) and 115 with hearing impairments (HI). Support for families of pre-school children remained a key priority for the service during the year but this was more of a challenge due to the nature of this provision. Garden visit support and remote support was offered wherever possible. There were 9 preschool children with HI and 7 with VI. The service continued to use national eligibility criteria to determine the level of involvement although due to the pandemic, visits were not always possible and were replaced by remote support via emails/phone calls/video conferencing as appropriate.

The continued aim of the service is to build capacity within schools/placements in supporting children and young people with sensory impairment. Bespoke packages were offered at both a county and school level and 12 schools/settings were offered virtual training via Microsoft TEAMS in Flintshire with excellent feedback received. Professional development opportunities, both formal and informal was felt to be of extreme value in helping staff understand the needs of the learner as well as improve their own communication with parents. Provision of specialist equipment was also highlighted as having improvements on behaviour and independence. Parents have also appreciated the efforts of the team in being flexible and working remotely/outside to provide the service safely in times of pandemic



restrictions.

## Emotional Health and Wellbeing

Flintshire has an established multi-agency forum to oversee and guide its response to emotional health and wellbeing. The forum has identified training needs and prioritised the allocation of the WG Wellbeing grant. The Council is developing a relational approach to practice and intervention across its services and schools. Nurture intervention and trauma informed practice were identified as key areas for investment and training for this remains a priority given the impact of the pandemic.

The feedback from the training has been positive with a high percentage of participants indicating that the courses offered would lead to a positive impact on their work with children. The Education Psychology Service is leading on the supervision/follow up support with the aim of developing and embedding practice.

Table 10: Training offered to support Emotional Health & Wellbeing

Training/support	Number of staff trained
ELSA initial training	69
ELSA Supervision	37
Emotion Coaching	290
Emotionally Based School Avoidance	110
Meditation for staff wellbeing with option to train to use with staff	53
Trauma informed schools awareness raising	141
Therapeutic Story writing pilot	4
Story Links pilot	4
National Nurture Schools Programme/ Whole School Nurture Approach for Learning	25 schools

The Education Portfolio has also reviewed its Serious Incident Policy with regards to process and support in response to the sad rise in the number of tragic events involving children and young people. The Education Psychology Service has offered support and guidance to school leaders when responding to serious incidents such as the death of member of the school community. The Young Person's Counselling Service has also offered immediate support to the pupils in response to such incidents. The feedback from schools in relation to this support has been positive.

In September 2021 the 'Challenging Bullying online reporting system' was introduced for Flintshire schools which was developed by Flintshire IT and hosted on the 'Flintshire Workspace' platform. This enables schools to report incidents of bullying, including racist incidents, on an online form and maintain these in one place and update as required. 'Challenging Bullying' sits alongside health and safety incident reporting on the platform and staff illness absence. Designated officers have access to this data which enables the LA to maintain an overview of recorded bullying incidents in order to identify emerging trends or groups being discriminated against, monitor exclusion rates. Long term, as the system embeds, the aim is that the data would show progress towards the Council's equality objectives.

## **Early Help Hub (EHH)**

In early 2017 the Flintshire Public Service Board (PSB) commissioned the establishment of an Early Help Hub to support the delivery of more timely and appropriate early intervention and support for families with greater needs. There were multiple drivers for this including the introduction of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act 2014, the CSSIW inspection report recommendations about prioritising early intervention, intervening earlier at lower cost and for better outcomes and the extent to which so many cases being referred and re-referred to Children's Services did not meet thresholds for a statutory intervention, notwithstanding that the families often presented with persistent challenges.

Since inception in 2017 Flintshire's Early Help hub model has continued to develop and adapt to the ever changing circumstances and landscape of support needed across the county. The Early Help Hub is now a well-established provision prioritizing early intervention for families, receiving approximately 10,995 referrals since inception, of which 83% are for school aged children and above. There are a total of 16 agencies including health, education, police, housing and third sector representatives participating in hub discussions and actioning support to ensure families receive services at the point struggles start to emerge in their family journey.

All services participating utilise the Paris system to record information allowing quick escalation if a concern comes to light as part of hub information gathering and an efficient step down process for families where child protection is not the most appropriate route. This has dramatically decreased the number of 'No Further Action' decisions (NFA's) and all families receive an offer of support. Recent work through Vanguard has united and streamlined the 'front door' processes for Children's Services and Early Intervention and work is currently being undertaken to ensure a what matters conversation is held with families at the point of referral, ensuring the families voice is at the heart of any decision making process.

The Hub development has been supported strategically by the Chief Officer for Education and Youth and led on behalf of the portfolio by the Senior Manager for Integrated Youth Provision who has responsibility for commissioning Families First, The Hub has also been actively supported by the Senior Manager for Inclusion and Progression. The IYP Families First commissioning has been a key driver in the development of the EHH throughout and continues to commission and fund a significant element of the delivery. Families First has a consortia approach to three elements with a variety of services and partners commissioned to provide a range of support to families. The lead agencies commissioned into the Hub are:

- **Y Teulu Cyfan (Families First-Parenting)** leading on direct interventions with families the consortia provide needs led approaches to supporting families at early stages of problems preventing issues escalating further. The model utilizes trauma informed approaches to support families, recognizing signs and responding appropriately with needs led, flexible, effective provision including 1:1 home based provision, volunteer support, counselling for parents, family therapy and coordinated family plans.

- **Action for Children (Families First – Young People)** leading on targeted 1-1 working and group work with young people and families and the engagement of young people up to the age of 25 in education, employment, volunteering and work experience through the Resilience Project. They will also draw upon their effective partnerships with the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council and Aura, the local provider of leisure services.

**- Action for Children (Families First) – Disability** leading on the provision of support and services for families with disabled children/young people to ensure better engagement in social, leisure, play and sporting opportunities to improve physical and mental health and transition into adulthood.

Nominated staff from the Education and Youth portfolio have remained a consistent and integral part of the offer, evolving from one education representative to the current inclusion of the Education Welfare Team. This has facilitated a wider dissemination of the knowledge shared as part of the process to schools and their wider partners and enabled comprehensive sharing of information regarding children and families. During the last quarter 28% of referrals to hub came from education and 11% of actions allocated to the education representatives. The team disseminate valuable information about families and their needs enabling an appropriate and effective support package to be identified, as well as providing a valuable conduit to support often linking families and encouraging engagement with the identified services. All referrals receive an action, whether that be a single service provision, multiple service or voluntary sector information support. This is an innovative and highly effective model of support that is having a tangible impact on children and families.

### **2.3 Other Education Support Services**

#### **Funded Part Time Early Years Provision – Early Entitlement**

Flintshire has a long tradition of supporting early years' education and during 2021-22 had 74 settings registered to deliver part time, early education for three year olds – 22 playgroups, 20 day nurseries and 32 schools supporting 710 children. Provision is for 10 hours of funded education per week.

Despite the removal of the grant conditions by Welsh Government to provide '10%' teacher time for funded settings and reducing central resources, the Council continues to maintain appropriate levels of support to settings registered for early education delivery to ensure high quality standards of provision, which in turn leads to better outcomes for learners. A central team of 4.2 fte teachers and 1 specialist learning assistant work across the settings to provide targeted role modelling of teaching, to develop quality learning environments and support setting staff to produce robust self-evaluation reports and improvement action plans as required by the Estyn framework.

The core team is also supported in this delivery by a number of early years' teachers in schools, funded by the Council, where the local playgroup is the main feeder into the school nursery class. Initially developed as a strategy to maintain delivery in the face of reducing budgets and recruitment restrictions, there have been other intended benefits of this approach such as improved transition arrangements for pupils and sharing of best practice. However, the school based teachers have acknowledged their reliance on the Council's core EE team who are real experts in provision for 3 year olds. All support teachers produce pre-inspection reports on settings and assist with post-inspection action plans. Where settings require follow up after an inspection, particularly in the more significant categories, then the level of support is increased.

The Council still has sufficient capacity to deliver the number of early education places required. As an early implementer of the Welsh Government's 30 hour Free Childcare Offer, many settings have registered as joint providers so this additional funding provides some mitigation in the sector. The Welsh Government acknowledged the pressure on settings to maintain a combined delivery of early years' education and childcare with a difference in funding rates. This resulted in WG using Flintshire as a pilot authority for the provision of additional funding to equalise the rates of payment. WG then monitored the impact on protecting educational provision within the 30 hour offer. This pilot began in January 2019 and because of its positive impact in the sector, WG has confirmed that they will continue to provide this additional funding to the Council.

Flintshire continues to work closely with Mudiad Meithrin, the Welsh-medium early years' organisation, to develop new Welsh language provision in key geographical locations in the county as part of its Welsh in Education Strategy (WESP). There is currently sufficient capacity to deliver Welsh medium early years' education but the aim is to increase this as a stepping stone to more children accessing their full time education in a Welsh medium school and support the WG target of 1 million Welsh speakers by 2050. A new Cylch developed by Mudiad Meithrin opened in May 2019 in Buckley and this is part of a longer term strategy through the WESP and WG capital funding schemes to create a new Welsh medium primary school provision in the Buckley/Mynydd Isa area.

The Early Years Pupil Development Grant (EYPDG) has been used by the Early Entitlement Team (EET) since 2015 for the professional development of the non-maintained workforce with a focus on strengthening staff impact on the engagement, well-being and performance of disadvantaged learners. For the 2020-21 financial year, the majority of the grant was used to enable the EET to assess the influence of EYPDG funded training and support to date and to then act upon the information gained to improve future support of vulnerable learners. A proportion was used to provide each non-maintained EE setting with funding to be used specifically to support the engagement, well-being and performance of disadvantaged learners. Non-maintained EE setting staff were asked to consider disadvantaged learners in their own settings, to identify appropriate resources to develop the specific skills of those learners and to inform the EET of those resources and skills. The EET approved/ did not approve each resource request and in doing so were able to gain further insight into settings which showed understanding of the challenges faced by disadvantaged learners and the methods of addressing these challenges.

The support provided for an EE child with developmental delays or difficulties traditionally takes place within the setting. The EET offer advice to setting staff on strategies that they can use with the child. As many EE settings closed for large parts of the last financial year as a result of the pandemic, the EET had to adapt the format of this support which resulted in more direct contact by the Team with parents rather than through the setting staff. The EET's Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator (ALNCo) checked on the wellbeing of EE registered children during lockdown periods and offered parents strategies for supporting the children's development if required. Parents expressed their gratitude for this contact and for the ALNCo's input. The ALNCo's direct involvement with parents has highlighted the valuable insight this interaction can provide and the more rounded picture the EE service has gained of individual children.

The EE Service has increased the ALNCo's level of involvement with setting staff and the impact has been that there are now more structured approaches to offering strategies for supporting individual EE children identified as having particular needs. Feedback on this increased specialised input indicates that staff feel the strategies are having a positive impact on the child/children's engagement in learning. Support for children with developmental delays or difficulties is an area which the EET is focusing on in partnership with Childcare Services and the Inclusion Service in order to create a more integrated process for requesting and receiving support under the new ALNET Act (Wales).

Partnership working on a local, regional and national level has always been a strength of the EE Service but this expanded further during the pandemic. There was an increased volume of meetings between local services/ stakeholders which highlighted the need for clear, open and consistent communications. During the Summer Term 2020 the EE Team leader worked collaboratively with other services (Flying Start and Childcare Development) to create documents clarifying the COVID-19 response in the Early Years and to appropriately place vulnerable children under the Coronavirus Childcare Assistance Scheme (CCAS).

The EET works in partnership with Flying Start, the Childcare Development Team and the Inclusion

Service to agree an ALN training programme for the non-maintained sector. EET helped the Inclusion Service to create a document which would form the basis of future ALN training for the early years non-maintained sector. Other services then provided further input (Flying Start, Childcare Development Team, Speech and Language Service, Educational Psychology Service) to create a document with agreed content. EET work cooperatively with Social Services teams to identify a range of resources suitable for supporting children's speech, language and physical skills. This work was to make effective use of a Welsh Government grant given to support children's development due to the impact of COVID-19. EET worked in partnership with the Early Years Pathfinder Project to identify opportunities for extending good practice in Flying Start settings into EE settings which resulted in the piloting of 'Wellcomm' - a speech and language screening tool.

Regionally the EET continues to work in partnership with other North Wales EE Teams and the EE Team Leader attends local and regional meetings supporting ALN transformation work. On a national level EET members continue to support the work of Estyn through their stakeholder meetings and also support Welsh Government's working parties on the development of the new curriculum.

### **Integrated Youth Provision – Youth and Play Services including Play Sufficiency**

Play services have been embedded into Flintshire's Integrated Youth Provision (IYP) since 2017. The Council has a strong tradition of providing safe spaces and quality play opportunities for young children during summer holidays. This also includes Welsh language provision. The service has an excellent track record in partnership working with over 30 Town and Community Councils to deliver these quality play schemes. The schemes also offer employment for the young Flintshire workforce (Majority aged 18 – 25) and supports the workforce development target for the Council.

Flintshire County Council upholds Section 11 of the Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 which places a statutory duty on all local authorities to assess and secure sufficient play opportunities for children, and to consider the many aspects of community life that affect play opportunities e.g. use of the environment; traffic and transport; play and leisure provision, and parental and community involvement with play. Flintshire is effective in adhering to the statutory guidance, 'Wales – A Play Friendly Country'.

The Education Portfolio has maximised the impact of the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant from Welsh Government. A key success has been the *Playful Futures* schools project, which has improved opportunities for play across a range of school settings. It has made a major difference to the school day by creating more playful environments, supporting pupil voice and training midday supervisors and there is clear evidence that the projects have impacted positively on the quality of children's play as well as their health and wellbeing.

Lack of capacity within some service areas to deliver some activity agreed in the Play Sufficiency Action Plan was identified as a concern during the most recent audit process. As a result, Flintshire County Council is prioritising a strategic approach to drive forward local annual action plans and is being supported in this by Play Wales.

The play development delivery staff continue to engage a range of statutory and non-statutory partners and this has enhanced the inclusive range of opportunities, such as working specifically on traveller sites to provide and enhance play opportunities as well as continuing successful programmes such as Kicks for Kids Football, Shed Project Play, Forest Schools and a drama project with Theatr Clwyd Cymru.

To improve monitoring and performance, the registration and general administration for the summer programme has been switched online, thus allowing for efficient reporting against key indicators as well

as swift communication with key partners such as Corporate Health and Safety and Town and Community Councils.

The Integrated Youth Provision Team deliver a diverse range of targeted and open access activities across Flintshire, both directly, and through working in collaboration with a range of statutory, non-statutory and voluntary organisations. Core council funding for the service is supplemented by Welsh Government grant funding streams e.g. Youth Support Grant and Families First Grant.

The service delivers traditional club based activity as well as detached youth work, school immersion work, Welsh language provision, homelessness prevention, a Forest School, Duke of Edinburgh Scheme, a Resilience Programme, LGBTQ+ Youth Club and the Youth Council. During Covid, much of this provision was placed online, but young people overwhelmingly indicated that they want to move back to a face to face provision so the service has moved back to this over the year as restrictions have been removed. The provision of digital services will continue to be developed to enhance the service.

Provision for youth services is planned in conjunction with partners, such as Aura Leisure and Libraries, NEWCIS Young Carers, the Urdd and Theatre Clwyd. The service has been innovative in supporting Aura staff to upskill and achieve Level 2 and 3 youth work qualifications as part of the doorstep sport provision and to potentially grow its own future workforce. The service has also provided grants to partners to support delivery across Flintshire and/or, for the benefit of Flintshire residents e.g. to Newcis Young Carers. The service also supports the Inspire Project in partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council to provide bespoke youth support services those young people who self-harm or are at risk of suicide ideation. The service has a longstanding partnership with Theatr Clwyd which has resulted in powerful interactive drama opportunities for young people to explore key issues such as consent. During the pandemic the service commissioned Theatr Clwyd to work with young people to develop a platform to share their stories of lock down and create supportive networks for young people which has received widespread recognition for its success, including support from the Children's Commissioner for Wales.

Internally, regular meetings occur with the Youth Justice Service and Sorted (Drug and Alcohol Team), to share insights and maximise resources, as well as with other partnerships e.g. groups commissioned via the Families First funding. IYP is also a key member of the Flintshire VARM/ASB partnership, a multi-agency group tasked with identifying and reducing ASB and police demand through a collaborative approach. This enables the service to effectively target its intervention work through its detached work team in particular communities as needs arise.

In the past 12 months the IYP service has supported refugees from both Afghanistan and the Ukraine, most notably within the Forest School provision, in a range of activities and created networking and social opportunities for young people and also their parents/carers.

Work is ongoing with Glyndwr University in order to place a number of students as well as providing Continuing Professional Development for all staff, and a young leaders course which is a result of requests from young people themselves currently volunteering within clubs. Agored Cymru qualifications are available to participants across all programmes. Recruitment of fully qualified youth workers remains very challenging so initiatives such as these are designed to grow the workforce from within the service.

Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) participants from Flintshire County Council dedicated 1183 hours to volunteering between April 2021 and March 2022, with a social value of £5465.46. In total 469 learners were registered in the past 12 months and are working towards completing their awards. 10 of the 11 Secondary schools in Flintshire registered learners for the scheme.

Further partnerships have been created with Airbus, who have been providing staff hours and material donations for the Forest School and Buckley Town Football Club, who have been supported by qualified JNC Youth Workers within the IYP service to start their own youth club and will be mentored through their journey in order to develop sector leading practice.

A cross border partnership between the Flintshire and Wrexham Youth Services was formed to develop a joint consultation process to support and inform both Public Service Boards and other partner organisations on the effects of COVID-19 on young people's mental Health. The results of the 20/21 consultation was presented to the PSB's and distributed to partner organisation to inform delivery.

Young people's voices are continuously canvassed and the service has amended its provision where appropriate to reflect their opinions. The service has been as flexible and reactive in provision wherever possible to ensure it could respond quickly to changing need/priorities, particularly through the pandemic. Examples of how IYP have responded include:

"What Just Happened Project" - a filmed drama presentation that gave voice to the words of young people e.g. NEWCIS young carers, youth groups, schools groups etc. This film was premiered on January 27<sup>th</sup> 2022 to an invited audience including WG officers and Elected Members.

A Young Persons bi-lingual leaflet and online professional resource that responded to the key issues expressed by young people – mental health, suicide ideology, domestic violence etc. This leaflet is distributed across the Council's youth service provision and will be updated to reflect the results of the 2022 consultation.

Provision was developed by sourcing funding from the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing grants to the Council, to reflect young people's feelings of frustration, poor mental health and isolation e.g. Wepre Park Project, (bi-lingual) music and arts mental health and wellbeing projects "Can Y Lles and Lles Y Gaef, LGBTQ group and Looked After Children's wellbeing packs.

Evidence across all IYP projects and supported by the joint Flintshire Wrexham consultation clearly identified that LGBTQ+ YP had struggled throughout Covid so a number of provisions were developed as a response. e.g. Inspire Pride through which young people were supported virtually. Numbers attending increased during COVID-19. The Inspire Pride group continues to run and any young person working with Inspire from Flintshire can attend the group which has now transitioned to face to face delivery. A partnership between Integrated Youth Provision and Theatre Clwyd was established and a LGBTQ+ group was created after a consultation event with young people in April 2022. The group runs fortnightly on alternative Tuesdays to Inspire sessions so LGBTQ+ young people have access to a range of groups.

In addition to the core youth provision of clubs and detached work in communities, the service has also established School and Community Immersion Youth Workers in five secondary schools including Welsh medium, which provide specialist youth service interventions in the areas of Mental Health, Sexual Health, Relationships, Child Sexual Exploitation and Modern Slavery. The support ranges from group sessions and 1 to 1 sessions, and also focuses on mental health and wellbeing, anger management, anti-bullying and respecting others, building confidence and self -esteem, relationships and stress and anxiety support and resilience along with lunch time drop in sessions and signposting to other services. The team also provide community work, supporting young people in their school and community settings and any crossover issues are managed i.e. community cohesion, anti-social behavior, bullying (often involving social media etc.). This community work has also included a parent drop in sessions for parents to voice their opinions, issues and concerns to the youth work team and source advice. At one Flintshire high school, the School and Community Immersion Worker supports a project working in partnership with the Portfolio's Inclusion Team and school staff to work positively

with students on improving behaviour and attendance in order to improve engagement and pupil outcomes.

The IYP team developed a comprehensive Transition Support resource for students in years 6, 7 and 8 students in response to evidence that these learners were struggling the most, having missed out on face to face transition activities for the move from primary to secondary education during the pandemic. A targeted youth club provision was established in one area of the county for year 6, 7 and 8 students to build resilience in mental health, wellbeing and confidence and self-esteem as a result of concerns expressed by the local high school.

In the county's only Welsh medium high school young people received support directly from the service through its Welsh Language Immersion Worker in response to feelings of isolation and poor mental health being expressed by students. These sessions encouraged students to express other concerns about sexuality and homophobia and the service responded proactively by commissioning other specialist organisations to provide information and other support mechanisms to young people.

This level of activity clearly demonstrates the responsive and wide ranging services provided to Flintshire's young people over the last twelve months and how interventions have been tailored to meet specific needs alongside universal provision.

### **Youth Justice Services & Flintshire Sorted**

The Youth Justice Service (YJS) has a rolling cohort figure of around 60-70 young people that they are working with at any one time. Around 29% of these young people are on Statutory Orders from Court or the Police but the majority are working with the service on a pre-court order or on a voluntary, prevention basis. The latest age 10-17 population figure for Flintshire (2011) was 14,711 so the YJS is working with on average 0.54% of the population of children and young people age 10-17 in Flintshire.

Whilst the YJS does not have a statutory obligation to provide Education, Training, and Employment (ETE), the service facilitates access to education through assessment and signposting/referral, and will provide cohort information to Education colleagues to ensure a cross-portfolio approach.

All young people involved within the YJS undergo a comprehensive holistic assessment which assesses their likelihood of re-offending, risk of serious harm to others in addition to their safety and wellbeing needs. This also includes issues and concerns relating to education, training and employment, physical health and emotional and mental health.

All children and young people entering the YJS are assessed by a dedicated Education Support Worker who will assess and highlight any attendance or additional support needs and will inform the relevant YJS and Education colleagues to ensure that appropriate support plans are in place. Attendance is also monitored at monthly YJS ETE Panels and information is shared with colleagues within Education, local colleges and Careers Wales in order to support and address attendance and access to education, training and employment.

The YJS is also a standing member on the Education Other Than at School (EOTAS) panel which provides opportunities for the service to raise the needs of children and young people open to them who are experiencing difficulties in school attendance and engagement.

The three year Youth Justice Plan is committed to the following priorities:

- Increasing the number of young people in Education, Training and Employment (ETE)
- Increasing the range of ETE opportunities for children and young people
- Equipping the workforce with trauma informed approaches and restorative justice solutions.



The YJS reports ETE performance to the Youth Justice Board and local performance frameworks on a quarterly basis. These key performance indicators are a measure of the education provision a young person is offered and engages in through the lifetime of the Court Order. If a young person is not being offered appropriate provision, the Education Support Worker within the YJS will liaise with the Education Service, Careers Wales or local colleges to improve provision, and then the YJS Case Manager will support the young person to ensure that their engagement is maintained.

The YJB National Performance indicator only looks at those young people whose Statutory Court Orders have closed in the reporting period and therefore is a much smaller cohort than that reported upon locally. Due to the low numbers, the Youth Justice Board is reconsidering its criteria and is planning to include young people on prevention programmes for future reporting to give a timelier overview of the work being undertaken.

The YJS has committed to undertaking work with Public Health Wales, the Youth Justice Board and Wrexham Glyndwr University to become a recognised trauma informed service building on its previous success of implementing an Enhanced Case Management (ECM) approach utilising the Trauma Recovery Model. Whilst access to ECM during the pandemic was paused due to capacity within the Forensic Adolescent Child Treatment Service (FACTS), the YJS has been working to improve access to this support. Whilst not all children and young people will access this formal intervention, the YJS service has continued to train staff including 'trauma champions' through the Youth Justice Effective Practice Award to ensure all YJS staff have the ability to respond to the needs of children and young people who may have experienced trauma or adverse childhood experiences.

Flintshire Sorted (Young People's Drug and Alcohol Team) aims to prevent substance use and to minimise the impact of substance use on children and young people, families and the community. It provides a universal, targeted and specialist service to children and young people up to the age of 20 years.

Despite the restrictions imposed during the pandemic, Flintshire Sorted has continued to offer this service within secondary schools across the county. The targeted content aims to promote healthy choices, challenge attitudes to drugs, anti-social behaviour and other risky behaviours, and strengthen protective factors. Flintshire Sorted provide universal delivery via awareness raising of the risk of using substances through the PSE (Personal, Social, Education) curriculum in schools and via outreach delivery within the community. Flintshire Sorted offer a referral based service for more intensive work with young people whose substance misuse is having a negative impact on their lives. A range of therapeutic interventions is offered to meet the individual needs of young people and help them to make changes and lead healthier lifestyles. The service also provides a consultation service for parents and professionals who may have questions about suspected substance use in their children.

Between April 2021 and March 2022:

- 182 sessions were held in 10 secondary schools and colleges, with the team re-establishing themselves in schools once they reopened following COVID-19 related closures. 503 young people were engaged in these sessions
- Community Outreach sessions in 10 communities engaging 99 people
- Drug and Alcohol Community Support Sessions took place with trained staff attending identified hotspots for anti-social behaviour where substances were an issue. The staff offered support and advice to young people at risk of offending, and provided targeted support session to individuals and groups. They were also able to direct young people to specialist services.
- 78 young people received a targeted intervention.

- 81% of young people reported that they had met their goals i.e. had gained more knowledge of substances, understood the long term effects of drugs, and/or had quit alcohol or smoking.

## **Healthy Schools & Healthy Pre-Schools**

The Healthy Schools Scheme was suspended for a period of time during the pandemic but has now been reinstated. During that time members of the team were redirected to support the initial roll out of the Track, Trace and Protect service within the Council.

In Flintshire four staff are funded by Public Health Wales to support schools and pre-school settings to actively participate in both the healthy schools and pre-schools programme. The Flintshire Healthy Schools Scheme works to ensure that health education and promotion becomes an integrated part of the school curriculum as well as part of the ethos of the school and community. The Scheme was established in Flintshire in 2002 and works in partnership with local and national organisations to ensure a coordinated and multi-faceted approach to health within schools. The Healthy and Sustainable Pre School Scheme (HSPSS) was launched nationally in 2011 and was developed as an extension of the Welsh Network of Healthy Schools Scheme (WNHSS). The criteria for the HSPSS have clear parallels with the WNHSS National Quality Award to ensure a consistent whole-school / setting approach to health and wellbeing.

Of the 46 pre-school settings 37 have completed the nutrition and oral health theme and 37 have completed the physical activity and active play theme. This is an increase in the number of Early Years Settings achieving the Physical Activity/Play and Nutrition and Oral Health benchmarks overall within the Flintshire HSPSS.

The Flintshire team has worked proactively with the Implementation Lead in order to develop a regional model in North Wales for the Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing developed by Welsh Government. 4 schools were identified in Flintshire to participate in a pilot for the self-assessment tool. The Implementation Lead held 'drop-in' sessions across the region during autumn 2021 which were supported by Healthy Schools' colleagues and schools were supported to complete the tool. The team are now providing ongoing support to enable schools to complete and deliver action plans to improve emotional health and wellbeing.

Relationship and Sexuality Education (RSE) Training has been co-ordinated during the Spring Term 2022 to support Flintshire schools. Flintshire Teams were established for Primary and Secondary colleagues to access all the required resources for RSE - including an RSE Audit and curriculum exemplars. This work has prompted the restart of the secondary schools' Healthy Schools and PSE county forum meeting which was suspended during the pandemic.

## **School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP)**

The School Holiday Enrichment Programme (SHEP) is a school-based scheme that provides healthy meals, food and nutrition education, physical activity and enrichment sessions to children during the summer holidays. '*Food and Fun*' is the brand identity used at local level to promote the scheme to children and families' which is part funded by the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). The aim is to prevent children going hungry in the summer holidays, to improve children's health and promote learning through a programme of enrichment activities.

The Healthy Schools Team have overseen SHEP Food & Fun in Flintshire since it began in 2018 initially with 2 schools. The Team manage all planning and coordination including the steering group, the funding and provide direct support for schools. 2021 was the third year that the programme has been delivered in Flintshire and is the most successful to date, reinforcing the positive impact strong partnership working can have within communities. In 2021, over 160 children and young people aged

5-12 years benefited from SHEP in 6 schools, with over 2000 meals served during the 12 day programme. 9 cohorts have been recruited for the summer programme for 2022.

## **Pupil Voice**

The Council is committed to ensuring that the voices of children and young people are reflected in its work and actively seeks their engagement.

Following the introduction of the Framework on Embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional and Mental Health and Wellbeing, schools are required to complete an assessment tool and develop an implementation plan based on the outcomes. This includes specific indicators where schools need to demonstrate how the whole school community is engaged and involved in day to day life of the school in influencing decision making and reviewing progress.

As part of the statutory processes in the identification of additional learning needs, children and young people are actively supported to contribute as appropriate to their age or stage of development. Youth Justice assessments and plans clearly reference the views and needs of the young person themselves and the Integrated Youth Provision regularly consults with its users and refines its services as a result. A Youth Council is in place and meets regularly. It has the opportunity to also meet formally with the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council and Chief Officer for Education & Youth.

Any proposals for school organisation change include a young person's version of key documentation and council staff facilitate consultations sessions with learners as part of the statutory process and report on their feedback in reports to decision makers.

The Healthy Schools Scheme requires schools to demonstrate their commitment to pupil participation in core areas of school life which directly affect the health and well-being of children and young people including teaching and learning; environment and pastoral care. Schools can evidence how they meet the requirements of the Welsh Government Guidance for Governing Bodies on the Establishment and Operation of School Councils Circular No: 42/2006 23 October 2006. Schools use a variety of forums to ensure young peoples' views are listened to and that they receive feedback about what has happened to their views.

The Healthy Schools team have led on the Portfolio's contribution to the corporate Climate Change Strategy. Young people's engagement activities have been developed in order to establish the views of young people as part of the Council's strategy.

As part of the Period Dignity Grant the Portfolio launched a home subscription service for products to be delivered to home addresses of children and young people directly with a suitable provider. Training has been provided for schools and this has been linked to the work for RSE. A survey of users of this service was very positive with 96% agreeing the products were delivered in discreet packaging; 92% of responders saying they would recommend the providers' sanitary products to others and 91% of responders would consider using the provider again.

Engagement with schools and promotion of the School Health Research Network (SHRN) Survey was conducted during the autumn term 2021. In total, 7537 young people from Flintshire took part which is an increase from the previous surveys - 6585 in 2017 and 6773 in 2019. The biggest increase this year has been across years 10 and 11. The Healthy Schools Team work with schools to ensure that the data from this survey, which clearly reflects young people's voices, is used to create school action plans to ensure positive change is achieved.

Sport Wales has coordinated the School Sport Survey for learners in Years 3 to 11 for over twenty years. All schools which collect the required number of survey responses from their learners receive unweighted results in a school report and providing enough schools have participated, the local

authority also qualify for a report. The numbers of learners that have completed the survey has steadily increased from 5090 in 2015, 5208 in 2017, and 5212 responses in 2022. This year 3052 secondary aged learners from 8 secondary schools completed the survey alongside 2160 primary aged learners from 25 primary schools. Schools, supported by the Portfolio, will be expected to share their reports with their School Councils and use the information to secure further improvements in sports and physical activities within their schools.

### **School Place Planning & Provision including provision for Welsh medium & admissions processes**

Flintshire County Council has a strong track record in strategically managing its school estate through both its own resources and through the effective use of grant funding schemes e.g. Sustainable Learning Communities Programme in order to manage effective and efficient delivery of school places. It has demonstrated a willingness to take difficult decisions to modernise the school network to improve the quality of the learning environment to underpin teaching and learning and address issues related to condition and suitability within its school estate.

Under its School Modernisation Strategy the Council has undertaken a major programme of school organisational change proposals which have included the closure of one nursery school, three primary schools, one secondary school, the development of four federal arrangements across the primary and secondary sector, the amalgamation of all infant and junior schools, the rationalisation of post-16 provision in the north of the County resulting in a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria, the extension of primary Welsh medium provision, the building of two new primary schools and an award winning 3-16 learning campus and other major remodelling projects. The Sustainable Learning Communities Band A Programme has now been fully completed (on time and within budget) bringing the total investment envelope to £64.2m for this phase of investment.

The Council's Strategic Outline Plan (SOP) for Band B is equally ambitious at £85m and has approval from Welsh Government and the Council's Cabinet. The Council is constantly evaluating its programme priorities and how to use the differing forms of funding available e.g. Capital and Revenue based funding under the Mutual Investment Model (MIM).

The proposed programme provides efficient and effective educational infrastructure to meet current and future demand. The programme has potential to remove up to 10 educational buildings from the service portfolio and ensure suitable investment in new facilities. All projects within the programme will be designed to promote, where applicable, early years' provision and community access to school and sports facilities.

The backlog maintenance for projects within the programme is £7,732,996 for secondary and £1,692,356 for primary. For new school projects the Council would expect to achieve 100% reduction in backlog maintenance, for large remodelling projects an 80% reduction and smaller scale projects the aim would be for 50% as a benchmark. The Council has clearly defined arrangements for repairs and maintenance of schools and responds appropriately to emergencies.

The SOP is linked to the Council's Welsh in Education Strategic Plan. The Band B programme is focused on 3 of the 6 schools within the Welsh Medium (WM) sector, linking in with the Council's desire to ensure that WM is given priority and linking into the National Welsh Language Strategy. Further funding opportunities have been identified and secured to build a new start up Welsh Medium Primary school in an area of known Welsh medium demand.

Voluntary Aided schools are maintained jointly by the County Council and either the Church in Wales or the Roman Catholic Church. Aided schools also have access to separate capital funding streams

directly through the Welsh Government. The Council continues to work successfully in partnership with the Diocesan Authorities to ensure that Aided schools are appropriately located and fit for purpose.

In September 2021 the Pupil Level Annual School Census showed the 64 primary schools had a total capacity of 14059 full time places and had 11,807 total numbers on roll (NOR), which is a surplus of 16.02% . 11 Schools in the secondary sector had a total capacity of 10,718 with 9658 NOR and 9.89% surplus places. When combined, these figures equate to 13.4% average surplus places across the school network, which is higher than the maximum national target of 10%.

Unfilled places at September 2021 were 3,312, this is an improvement on statistics produced in January 2013, when there were some 4,000 (15.4 per cent) unfilled places in Flintshire schools distributed across primary and secondary schools. The proposals contained within the SOP for the Band B 21<sup>st</sup> Century schools investment programme should they be implemented, will reduce unfilled places in schools to near the national target.

Pupil number projections methodology are aligned with other authorities across the region and are completed twice per year, these are linked to school data returns, namely, January PLASC and September PLASC returns. The capacity assessments are conducted using the Welsh Government's Measuring the capacity of schools in Wales methodology and are audited once per year.

The Council has an up-to-date Asset Management system and data from the system is used to influence decision making on capital investment in the school network. Priorities for investment for the schools capital programme are clear, linked to the School Modernisation Strategy and are funded and based upon up-to-date information.

In 2016/17 suitability surveys were commissioned and conducted across the schools' portfolio based on national guidance. Despite the significant investment through 21st Century Schools programme and the Council's own capital programme, it is estimated that an investment in excess of £130m is still required to address suitability issues across the schools network.

*Table 11: Suitability of Primary and Secondary School Buildings*

Suitability Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	11	14.66%
B	24	30.66%
C	37	50.66%
D	3	4%

School condition surveys are re-assessed in line with national asset management guidance on a five year cycle, with the repair & maintenance (R&M) backlog estimated in excess of £12m, a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 SOP.

*Table 12: Condition of Primary and Secondary School Buildings*

Condition Grade	No of Schools	Percentage %
A	4	5.34%
B	62	82.66%
C	9	12%
D	0	0.00%

Flintshire County Council has no schools in condition 'D' as this would mean that the school building life would have expired or be at risk of imminent failure.

The Council consults with children and young people, parents, school governors and staff and other relevant stakeholders prior to making proposals for any school modernisation change. The consultation process involves the completion and presentation of impact assessments around community, transport, buildings, equalities and language and includes a financial appraisal.

The responses from each formal consultation process is presented to the Council's Cabinet, along with the impact assessment, options appraisal and officer recommendations. Cabinet then decide on how to progress. For all construction projects the Head Teacher or nominated person from School forms part of the "operational team".

Flintshire consults other admission authorities and coordinates admission arrangements with neighbouring authorities, including common dates of return and common offer dates. Flintshire participates in the regional North Wales Admissions Group to coordinate admissions arrangements and develop/deliver joint training. The Council is represented at the ADEW School Admissions Officers' Group and is aware of national and Welsh Government initiatives in the service.

The composite prospectus, "Guide to Education Services" is reviewed and published annually and is made available on line to all parents on 1<sup>st</sup> September each year, as part of the annual admissions round. Feedback from Welsh Government on the composite prospectus has been incorporated in to the Guide.

The vast majority of parental preferences continue to be met (96%). All appeals are held before the end of the academic year and any appeals outside the timetabled admissions process are heard well within 30 school days in accordance with the School Appeals Code. Panel members are trained in accordance with the Appeals Code, and advertising, recruitment and training of panel members takes place every 3 years jointly with other admission authorities. This is a cost effective way of managing recruitment and training and ensures consistency across the region.

Applications for mid-term transfers are made online and every effort is made to process the application to admit pupils within 10 school days. Flintshire's Managed Moves Protocol has been revised recently and agreed with all head teachers.

### **Music Services for Schools**

Music services for Flintshire schools are now delivered by Theatr Clwyd Music which was established in 2020 when Theatr Clwyd adopted the Flintshire Music Service to ensure this discretionary service was protected in the face of significant financial challenges for the Council. Flintshire pupils continue to have access to high quality individual, group and whole class music tuition. Learners have the opportunity to undertake music examinations and progress to county ensembles and national music groups. The Council works in partnership with the Theatr Clwyd Music Trust to maximise the impact of new national funding for music services provided by Welsh Government via the Welsh Local Government Association.

## **2. Quality of Education Services Areas Summary**

<b>Areas for ongoing improvement &amp; sustainability</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Further develop, strengthen and embed peer working between schools to share best practice and raise standards for all</li><li>• Continue to support schools with the implementation of ALNET</li><li>• Continue to support schools and services to increase their digital offer for children and young people</li><li>• Increase access to education, employment and training for young people in the YJS</li></ul>

- Consolidate the outreach support and training for schools provided by Plas Derwen (PRU)
- Continue to strengthen links between the Portfolio and its secondary schools with the North Wales Economic Ambition Board to maximise learner access to apprenticeships and employment opportunities through the 14-19 strategy
- Continue to improve the school estate through the school modernisation and capital investment strategy
- Expand the Adult Learning Offer and develop systems for monitoring and evaluating progression
- Implement the Year 1 action plan from the Welsh in Education Strategic Plan
- Roll out the National Framework for embedding a Whole School Approach to Emotional Health and Wellbeing
- Improve provision for children with Autism
- Refresh and embed the strategy for Youth Service provision
- Continue to work collectively across schools and council services to mitigate the impacts of poverty and reduce inequality.
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## **INSPECTION AREA 3: LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT**

### **3.1 Quality and effectiveness of leaders and managers**

The Council benefits from strong leadership with an effective working relationship between professional officers and elected members, led by the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. This is demonstrated through the portfolio structure within the Council where Cabinet Lead Members and Chief Officers work closely together to successfully achieve corporate priorities. This is exemplified in key documents such as the Council Plan and Well-Being Plan which are focused on improving outcomes for Flintshire communities and their residents, including children and young people.

Programme Boards are in place for each portfolio and are attended by the Chief Executive, Leader of the Council, designated Cabinet Members, Chief Officer and senior managers. The Education and Youth Programme Board provides a purposeful platform for developing the strategic direction of the portfolio, informs policy development and ensures performance oversight. A robust and transparent scrutiny process ensures that there is continuous challenge of performance and evaluation of impact. Cabinet reports, Overview & Scrutiny reports, performance monitoring reports and risk registers are jointly owned by members and officers.

The leadership structure and hierarchy of accountability within the Council, both from an elected member and an officer perspective, is clearly articulated and understood. Roles and responsibilities are clearly documented and there is a constructive working relationship between officers and members that delivers an appropriate level of challenge to the work of the portfolio to ensure the best outcomes for learners but also ensures that positive impacts and successes are celebrated.

Professional and political leadership is used effectively to manage the Council's core business of providing quality and responsive public services in the face of long-term austerity, the impacts of the Covid pandemic and challenging budget settlements year on year. This has been clearly demonstrated by the collective problem solving by senior officers and elected members in managing the Council's financial strategy and achieving legally balanced budgets whilst protecting and sustaining services. Financial planning processes are robust with high levels of scrutiny and assurance. Officer and elected members have a track record of working together constructively and with clear purpose on difficult issues. This has been reflected in decisions taken e.g. the management of the school estate and the additional financial support provided for services supporting pupils with Additional Learning Needs and deficit budgets in secondary schools.

The Council's management of services and the support provided to its residents, its strategic partners and to its schools during the COVID -19 pandemic, especially in the emergency phase of the response, was exemplary. The emergency command structure, led by the Chief Executive and ably support by Chief Officers and senior managers across the Council ensured that appropriate decisions were made quickly to protect the public and reshape services. This included the delivery of an effective network of childcare hubs when statutory education was suspended, followed by the reintroduction of education services when schools were able to reopen. Alongside this the Council supported the rapid development of digital learning platforms in schools to ensure continuity of learning with effective distribution of digital and Wi-Fi devices to those in need. The provision of free school meals via its catering partner, NEWydd, subsequently replaced by a system of direct payments, ensured that vulnerable families received their entitlement. Senior officers provided schools and settings with clear guidance and support to develop robust COVID-19 risk assessments and COVID-19 safe working



practices to enable the safe, ongoing delivery of education throughout the pandemic. Officers and school leaders responded to regular changes in Welsh Government legislation and Public Health Wales advice and worked closely alongside the Test, Trace and Protect Service.

The Council's approach to strategic leadership is underpinned by public service values. Within the context of delivery of services to children and young people there is a moral commitment to delivery in an inclusive, nurturing and worthwhile way which enables them to successfully embrace adult life and become responsible, independent, economically active and resilient citizens. This is clearly reflected in the structure and priorities of the Council Plan which reflect the Welsh Government's Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles and the Well-being Goals of the Future Generations (Wales) Act and focus on six core areas :

- Poverty
- Affordable and Accessible Housing
- Green Society and Environment
- Economy
- Personal and Community Wellbeing
- Education and Skills

The Council has a good track record of communicating with residents, service users, its workforce and wider stakeholders through external and internal processes. There is a strong culture of engagement and inclusivity when agreeing priorities. An example of this is the Council's post-Covid recovery plan and Wellbeing Assessment and Action plan and in its work through the Public Service Board. What matters to communities is integral to priority setting and resource allocation. From an educational perspective this can be seen in its engagement work around the budget settlement for schools, in its consultations around school organisational change, in the School Health Research Network surveys and action plans and in other key areas e.g. youth service provision, play and childcare sufficiency.

The Council is proactive in making difficult decisions and where needed, the professional and political leadership intervene effectively to overcome obstacles. Systems leadership and the delegation of resources support the efforts to place the learner first and protect the quality of education and support services. This has been exemplified in the work by all officers and elected members to set legally balanced budgets in the face of significant financial challenge. Despite these financial challenges, delegation rates to schools to protect front line services are above the Welsh average and additional funding to protect schools' budgets are channeled in wherever possible. The Council has made considerable progress in reducing the number of schools in a deficit position, a recommendation from the inspection of its education services in 2019, by targeting additional financial resources for secondary schools despite the overall challenging financial context.

Across all education services commissioned by the Council over the value of £25k, social value is considered and included as a key priority. Social value is separately weighted during the procurement process, and supply chain partners are expected to monitor and report against the generation of localised social, economic, environmental and cultural well-being outcomes, in order to evidence value for money and social return on investment. A significant amount of social value is generated through education services including; the creation of local employment and training opportunities, retention of local people in employment, employee upskilling, growth of the local economy through a commitment to local spend, investment in local community needs projects, increased engagement with local schools through investment and volunteer time to assist in the delivery of the Curriculum for Wales, and waste reduction through implementing circular economy solutions to reduce, reuse and recycle waste. Two

recent school capital projects at Ysgol Brynford and Ysgol Castell Alun achieved £968k in social value outcomes.

There is strong corporate and political support for Education and Youth Services across the Council. Political and officer leadership of Education is innovative and pragmatic. Education priorities are exemplified in corporate and portfolio level plans and are regularly scrutinised through the quarterly monitoring reports presented to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees. The annual performance report for the period 2021 – 2022 identified no performance indicators (PIs) showing a red RAG status for current performance against target and no measures off track, with 86% of outcomes on track (Green RAG) and only 14% of outcomes requiring monitoring (Amber RAG). The positive impact of this approach has been that the needs and priorities of pupils have been consistently supported both by officers and elected members. Overall this has delivered consistently good outcomes for children and young people and this is reflected that at the end of the performance monitoring cycle for 2021-22, no Flintshire school was in any category of follow up by Her Majesty's Inspectorate for Education and Training in Wales, Estyn.

Elected members effectively undertake their statutory duties and make a worthwhile contribution to the development and progress of statutory plans. They also show real commitment to safeguarding the welfare of vulnerable learners. There is strong member engagement in the following areas relevant to children and young people:

- The Welsh in Education Forum
- The Corporate Parenting Forum
- The Corporate Safeguarding Panel
- The Schools Standards Quality Board
- The Youth Justice Executive Board
- The Education Consultative Committee
- SACRE
- School Budget Forum
- Regional School Improvement (GwE) Joint Committee

Senior leaders and managers communicate high expectations for securing improvement and challenge schools to good effect through a range of forums. For school improvement these include regular meetings with the head teacher community, working through nominated representatives on the primary and secondary Head Teacher Federations, School Performance Monitoring Group and other specific groups e.g. Additional Learning Needs Co-ordinator Forum, County Curriculum Steering Group and Emotional Health and Well-Being Strategy Group, Digital Advisory Group and Welsh in Education Strategic Forum. There is also effective monitoring and challenge for other areas of provision through the Youth Justice Executive Board, Children's Services Forum and the Corporate Safeguarding Panel. The key objectives of the Public Service Board are clearly aligned with the Council's and Portfolio's strategic improvement plans.

The Council and its partners have a clear commitment to learners and to developing a learning culture in the county, from early years to adulthood. They understand the impact of national and regional priorities and how this impacts on decision making locally for services e.g. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act, Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act, Education in Wales - Our National Mission, Cymraeg 2050 – Welsh Language Strategy and the North Wales Economic Growth Deal.

Whilst a lean team in terms of personnel, senior leaders in the Education Portfolio work in a collegiate way with a range of strategic partners across public services to set high level priorities together for the young people of Flintshire. They are well respected by elected members, external partners, regional colleagues and school leaders. There are effective performance management arrangements which bring about improvements. Managers ensure that objectives for individual officers link well to operational and strategic priorities.

The Council works effectively with GwE (Regional School Improvement Service). Since the inception of the service in 2013, there has been a good track record of engagement with the service to support its development and robust scrutiny of the service in holding it accountable for the scope of its delivery on behalf of Flintshire. GwE officers participate fully in Flintshire business and understand and contribute to the vision, aims and objectives of the Council. This is evidenced by the way in which GwE Business Plans support the Portfolio's Business Plan and the Council Plan. Roles and responsibilities of GwE officers in contributing to the delivery of the service within Flintshire are clearly articulated. This mutually supportive, yet challenging culture fostered between GwE and Flintshire officers, helps the Council maintain its focus on outcomes for learners across all phases. The Chief Officer for Education in Flintshire is currently the Lead Director on the GwE Management Board.

The six North Wales local authorities and GwE worked very effectively through the COVID-19 pandemic to support schools and this is reflected in the positive reports authored by Estyn to both the Council and to GwE during the period when statutory inspections were suspended as a result of national lockdowns.

All schools have chosen to access the Human Resources, Employment Services and Occupational Health SLA provision which provides for a range of services to assist them in complying with their 'people related' statutory responsibilities and operational/ business obligations. Customer led solutions manifest themselves in a wide range of service delivery including: model policy and information provision, confidential telephone and face to face support, Heads Federation and cluster group briefings, conference sessions, case conferences and discrete advisory sessions. The take up rates, activity levels and repeat business support consistent 'buy back' levels and evidence that these services are valued and contribute significantly to school performance. Relationships between school leaders and central service providers are very good and the ethos is to support school leaders in their management functions.

Relationships between senior Council officers and trade union representatives are good and there is a high degree of engagement on key issues through the Education Consultative Committee and other statutory groups e.g. School Budget Forum. There is also a good level of informal interaction between the Portfolio's HR officers and local union representatives in individual school processes e.g. redundancy, absence management etc.

### **3.2 Self Evaluation processes and improvement planning**

The Council has a well-established process of evaluation, review and challenge. Leaders, managers and elected members have an accurate understanding of the Council's strengths and weaknesses. They routinely make good use of a range of rigorous monitoring activities.

The Education Portfolio undertakes a wide range of self-evaluation activities, first at a service level analysing any available data and first-hand evidence to make accurate evaluations of the quality and impact of individual services. The arrangements also identify clearly the areas for improvement and help ensure that progress against strategic plans are reviewed effectively and timely interventions

made. This is then fed up into the Portfolio's overall evaluation of its annual Business Plan and into the Portfolio Annual Self Evaluation Report. This then links to the Council Plan which is regularly reviewed by Chief Officers and senior managers and reported on regularly to Cabinet and Scrutiny Committees.

Through its joint working with GwE there are clearly defined plans for primary and secondary schools which are agreed between the Chief Education Officer and Senior Manager for School Improvement and GwE Core Lead Officers. Agreed priorities in the business plans are based firmly on the findings of self-evaluation processes within schools. The plans accurately identify key issues and include bespoke improvement plans to address the specific challenges, drawing on the resources of both GwE and the Council's own services. Plans are regularly updated to reflect the outcomes of whole school reviews and support visits commissioned by the Education Portfolio. Progress towards achieving the agreed outcomes are regularly reviewed by the Senior Manager for School Improvement and the GwE Core Leads. This then feeds into termly Quality Board meetings with the Cabinet Member for Education, Chair of Education, Youth and Culture Scrutiny Committee, the Chief Executive and the Chief Officer for Education and Youth. This ensures that strategic leaders are fully informed on school performance in Flintshire.

The Portfolio works swiftly and effectively with GwE Officers to address 'Schools Causing Concern' and 360° support plans are put in place. Where rapid progress in some schools has been required, Accelerated Improvement Boards (AIB) have been used successfully to oversee progress. When deployed, these Boards meet regularly and include key officers of the Portfolio, GwE and school leaders, including governors. Where required, the Chief Officer has used statutory powers of intervention and established Interim Executive Boards (IEB) to replace traditional governance models. This has been successful in improving the pace of improvement in identified schools. GwE senior officers support the IEB alongside senior LA managers. At the current time there are no schools in Flintshire which have either an Accelerated Improvement Board or an Interim Executive Board.

Where it is available, education officers use data effectively to ensure areas for improvement are identified quickly and addressed robustly through detailed business planning. As a result, the quality of information shared within Flintshire is of a high standard, enabling members to scrutinise and challenge progress effectively. With the Welsh Government decision to remove a range of data sets that were traditionally used for accountability purposes, officers of the Local Authority, Elected Members and GwE Officers are in the process of developing other ways to effectively monitor performance and measure progress.

Education officers within the Council focus well on joint planning and resourcing as well as building capacity for continuous improvement. The Portfolio has strong links with the community, has good liaison and communication with schools, engages positively with parents and carers and works effectively with other Council portfolios and external agencies enabling officers to deliver joined-up programmes that improve outcomes and wellbeing for learners. Good examples of this include the statutory processes around provision for children with Additional Learning Needs, the Emotional Health and Wellbeing Steering Group, the Adult Learning Partnership with Wrexham County Borough Council and the Council's delivery of the Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing Programmes.

The Portfolio engages well with partners, service users and other stakeholders in its evaluation processes and in planning for improvement. For example, the Integrated Youth Strategy "Multiplying Impact" featured robust engagement of young people's representatives in its development. Any aspect of school organisational change includes consultation with the children and young people potentially impacted and school leaders are regularly consulted directly or through the Federations on major issues. The Council supports schools to make good use of surveys to improve provision and outcomes e.g. School Health Research Network and Sports Surveys.

The Council uses a corporate database for the recording of complaints, concerns and requests for services. A senior manager within the Portfolio is the link officer for complaints. Parental complaints about schools have to be re-directed back to the individual school to be dealt with via their own complaints procedures. Complainants are advised of the correct procedure and, as necessary, the Portfolio provides support to schools on ensuring its procedures are in line with the national guidance. On-line complaints training is available to all governing bodies. During the period April 2021 to March 2022, there were 8 formal complaints against the Portfolio received via the Council's Complaints process. These were in relation to school admissions, school closure during the pandemic and SEN support. Only one complaint was upheld. There were no complaints in relation to education services in Flintshire investigated by the Ombudsman in 2021-2022.

The Council is compliant with the requirement regarding partnership agreements with its schools.

### **3.3 Professional Learning**

Relationships between the Education Portfolio and schools are strong and productive. Regular head teacher meetings and the partnership groups in the consultative structure form an effective mechanism for raising issues and agreeing actions to tackle them. Flintshire benefits from well-established learning networks within and across schools, and more widely across the region, enabling schools to develop and share their professional knowledge. Working in clusters and alliances has developed well in Flintshire over the last few years with all schools engaging in this co-operative learning approach. Key areas such as Additional Learning Needs, Digital Learning and Welsh Language have all benefitted from a cluster training and support model.

Flintshire schools engage effectively with the range of professional development opportunities provided by GwE and the Council for school leaders, teachers and support staff at all levels. Flintshire staff have access to a comprehensive learning continuum provided by GwE which delivers appropriate training at all stages of professional development, from Newly Qualified Teacher to Executive Headteacher. Data shows that the take up of these opportunities from Flintshire schools is very positive. Staff within the Education Portfolio are able to access professional development opportunities within GwE where appropriate e.g. curriculum reform.

Partnership activities make a strong contribution to widening the range of choices for learners and this has benefits for their standards and wellbeing. The Council takes a leading role in developing joint working practices and promotes trust and good communication between partners. These include effective partnerships between the Council, North Wales Police, Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board, Youth Justice Board, Coleg Cambria, Wrexham Glyndwr University, Flintshire Local Voluntary Council and other local education authorities.

Partnership working between the Portfolio, further and higher education establishments, employers and secondary schools in developing the work of the 14-19 network is good. They successfully promote co-operation and enable school governors, Coleg Cambria, employers and the Council to plan, monitor and resource an effective 14-19 curriculum that meets the needs of learners.

The Welsh Advisory Team in the Portfolio actively encourages school staff at all levels, including head teachers, to engage in the WG sabbatical training programmes for practitioners who wish to teach through the medium of Welsh or wish to improve their Welsh-language skills. This is a key component of the Council's Welsh in Education Plan which has been approved by Welsh Ministers. Take up across

the different sabbatical options are good and Flintshire staff represent a sizeable proportion of each cohort. This is extending the number of employees with improved Welsh language skills, which is contributing to the improving quality of provision for learners in both English and Welsh medium schools. The manager of the Welsh Advisory Team is a key member of the Regional Welsh Language Board. During the COVID-19 pandemic the Welsh Advisory Team rapidly and successfully adapted their professional learning offer from face to face to digital delivery which was very welcomed by schools.

The professional learning offer supports current school leaders across Flintshire but also invests in developing leaders of the future. Subscription rates to the NPQH and Aspiring Heads courses from Flintshire staff are strong. Newly appointed headteachers are supported through development programmes and are also allocated mentors and leadership coaches.

Networking and peer-to-peer work is a positive feature in Flintshire schools. This collaborative work has led to a shared understanding of what constitutes good leadership. Collaborative practice amongst leaders is reinforced through strategic forums, at both headteacher and deputy level. These forums support strong effective communication and nurture a mutual sense of common responsibility for the development of responses and actions to local and national challenges.

The Council promotes professional learning for its core portfolio team through structured learning opportunities, most visible through the Flintshire Academi Infonet, which provides learning and e-learning modules on leadership and management, personal development, specific professional development, equality and diversity, Welsh language, health and safety and ICT. Education Portfolio staff also access training opportunities offered by GwE e.g. the development of the new curriculum.

The Council has a well-established and successful Trainee (Apprentice scheme). The Council recruit local people every year to undertake work based qualifications. The outcome of the scheme over the last 5 years is very positive with 95% of those undertaking an FCC Apprenticeship achieving good outcomes e.g.

- 75% gaining employment within the Authority after completing the programme
- 15% gaining employment externally
- 5% moving on to Higher Education or other professional training programmes.

All staff benefit from the annual appraisal scheme which ensures personal and professional objectives are linked to the annual corporate service and portfolio plans. Centrally employed teaching staff have statutory performance management. The process enables employees and managers to explore individual strengths and identify wider opportunities for these to be utilised effectively. These opportunities support succession planning at a time where central services remain under pressure from financial and recruitment/retention challenges, particularly post-pandemic and also focus strongly on staff wellbeing.

As part of its People Strategy, the Council takes a proactive approach to talent spotting and succession planning. Senior managers regularly identify officers who have potential and signpost them to learning opportunities to develop their skills. Many officers within the Portfolio have accessed professional development e.g. Institute of Leadership & Management qualifications and NVQs through a partnership arrangement with Coleg Cambria. Senior managers are identified for external learning opportunities through Academi Wales and SOLACE (Chief Executives' professional association).

Senior managers network and share good practice through quarterly Flintshire Academi sessions which not only provide key updates but also are the driver for developing cross-cutting policies and strategies e.g. the Council's People Strategy and Carbon Reduction Strategy. Specifically within the Portfolio, there are termly workshops for service managers to share updates, future plans and engage in consultation and professional development opportunities. There is a comprehensive online training programme available for all staff of the Council to access on corporate training priorities e.g. safeguarding, GDPR, leadership and management etc. Networking by senior managers through representation on various groups of the Association of Directors of Education in Wales ensures service planning is informed by current and best practice from across Wales.

However, in more recent times, and particularly since the pandemic, there have been increasing challenges in recruiting into key posts both in the Education Portfolio and in schools. Educational psychology, youth work, youth justice work and IT systems administration have all experienced difficulties recruiting appropriately qualified staff with adverts having to be go out multiple times and Head teachers are reporting challenges in recruiting skilled classroom support staff as well as key roles such as caretakers. The recruitment difficulties in relation to school cooks, catering staff and cleaners has also had an adverse impact on the Council's key partner, NEWydd, which has sometimes made their service delivery to schools challenging at times.

### **3.4 Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is a corporate priority set out in the annual Council Plan and the Council has robust arrangements in place across all areas. The Corporate Safeguarding Policy provides a framework for all council services to safeguard and protect children and adults, ensuring that all are fully aware of their responsibilities. This policy applies to Flintshire County Council employees, councillors, volunteers and organisations commissioned to provide services on behalf of the Council. Flintshire County Council is a member of the North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (NWSCB) and North Wales Safeguarding Adults' Board (NWSAB).

The Corporate Safeguarding Panel is well established and includes representation from all portfolios, including Education and Youth, to ensure that all services integrate safeguarding awareness into the way they work. This panel receives information regarding the working practices and procedures of every service in the Council, providing assurance that the services are meeting their duties in accordance with the Corporate Safeguarding Policy and Guidelines and reports to Cabinet on an annual basis.

The Chief Officer for Education and Youth ensures that all the statutory requirements in terms of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and adults receive due consideration and that effective safeguarding arrangements operate within the Education and Youth portfolio at the three levels of responsibility of strategic, support and operational.

In order to further sharpen the focus on safeguarding, the Education Portfolio has established its own Safeguarding Panel and this is attended by senior managers within Education and from Children's Services. It has clearly defined terms of reference, an action plan and ensures that communication up to, and down from, the Corporate Safeguarding Panel is effective.

The Senior Manager for School Improvement has the lead strategic responsibility for Safeguarding in the Portfolio and is the designated contact for officers and schools. The Learner Adviser for Health, Wellbeing and Safeguarding is the deputy designated contact who provides operational activity support, including attendance at national and regional safeguarding meeting. This officer also co-ordinates training for schools, governors and portfolio staff and provides model policies for schools. There is

effective communication between Education and Youth and other portfolios in the Council as well as with external partners.

The Portfolio has appropriate arrangements for the strategic planning for safeguarding within both the core education service and schools, which includes monitoring. Safeguarding and Child Protection model policies are updated regularly in line with revised national guidance e.g. Keeping Learners Safe and the All Wales Child Protection Procedures. A structured training programme is in place which includes training for Level 3 Designated Safeguarding Leads, Level 2 Safeguarding for Managers and Senior Leaders including lead Governor for Safeguarding and Train the Trainer for Level 1. Basic Safeguarding Awareness and responsibilities of individual staff including governors. Safeguarding basic awareness / updates are also incorporated into termly LA headteacher conferences and into planned LA training programmes for NQTs and new and acting headteachers. In addition, key safeguarding themes are addressed on a rolling programme e.g. Prevent and Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual violence (VAWDASV). There are strong relationships with key local partners including North Wales Police, Hafan Cymru and NSPCC. Between 2020 and 2022, 952 staff accessed safeguarding training across the Education Portfolio and schools despite the challenges of the pandemic. Feedback from Headteachers confirm the training and support for schools is welcomed and effective. Evaluation forms are completed at the end of each training delivery and the information is reviewed on an individual basis in addition to any immediate response that can be implemented. Feedback is also included in the annual report to the North Wales Regional Safeguarding Children's Board.

Support materials and model lessons for teachers at secondary level have been produced to support the delivery of key aspects of Personal & Social Education including Prevent, County Lines and materials for National Safeguarding Week each year. Excellent partnership working with Theatr Clwyd has resulted in a powerful drama workshop for Key Stage 3 pupils on the issue of consent, that has proved highly effective in enhancing pupils' knowledge and skills in keeping themselves safe and encouraged some young people to come forward to request individual support.

The Portfolio and schools operate safe recruitment procedures and make sure that all appropriate checks are carried out. All schools are routinely reminded of their responsibilities under Section 28 of the Children Act and as outlined in the Welsh Government guidance - Keeping Learners Safe. There is regular monitoring activity through audit procedures. Schools have been provided with a model annual monitoring report for school leaders to use to report to their governing bodies and the LA on safeguarding matters. The Strategic Lead for safeguarding works in partnership with managers from Social Services and the Human Resources team effectively in the event of allegations against members of staff from schools.

Online safety is an area regularly considered by the Education, Youth and Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee. The Council actively encourages all schools to use the 360° Safe Cymru Tool and the All Wales School Liaison Core Programme. The IT Service Level Agreement provides for web filtering in schools.

### **3.5 Use of resources**

Flintshire's response to funding reductions in recent years has been measured and appropriate. The Council has adopted a systematic approach to ensure that efficiencies are secured across all services and the organisation has embraced alternative models of delivery where appropriate. There are plenty of examples of good practice and innovation within the Council.

Education reform and investment has remained a priority for the Council despite the challenging financial climate. The high strategic priority given to the education service is reflected in the Council's



allocation of both revenue and capital resources. The schools' delegated budgets have been protected from efficiency reductions in recent years and elected members across the Council have directed additional funding streams to schools when they have become available. Risks related to the impact of poor funding on the quality of education services have been clearly set out and are understood by elected members and head teachers. The Council reviews the outcomes of its financial plans to make sure that funding is spent wisely and has a positive impact on standards.

The school funding formula is regularly reviewed in consultation with schools and reported to the School Budget Forum. Staffing, accommodation and financial resources are effectively managed and deployed to support learning and improvement. Partnership activity provides good value for money because it contributes to extensive opportunities and improved outcomes for learners in aspects which the Council and its schools alone could not provide.

The Council is committed to an ambitious school modernisation investment programme by maximising Welsh Government's Sustainable Learning Communities funding (previously 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) and its own capital funding. Flintshire is also a Pathfinder Council for the new Mutual Investment Model created by Welsh Government to deliver a new 3-16 learning campus in Mynydd Isa which will be the first net zero carbon school both in construction and in operation in Wales. The Council has also secured funding in recent times through Welsh Government's additional grant funding streams for Small and Rural Schools Infant Class Sizes, Welsh Medium, Childcare, Community Learning and Community Facilities. The Council has a positive reputation for delivering quality projects on time and within budget.

The Council currently has an estimated Repair & Maintenance (R&M) of approximately £12m, which is a substantial improvement from the £35m backlog reported in the 2010 Strategic Outline Programme and has been achieved through targeted capital investment. However, the level of R&M remains a risk and is strategically linked to the Band B of the Sustainable Communities for Learning Programme.

In response to a recommendation in its Estyn inspection of 2019, the Council has made significant progress in reducing the number of schools in deficit. It has refreshed its policy for the management and monitoring of schools deficits which is robustly applied. There are effective working relationships between senior council officers and school leaders to ensure an appropriate level of both challenge and support to control spending and reduce deficits in schools. The Council has been proactive in providing additional financial resources for secondary schools despite the ongoing challenges of setting a legally balanced budget and this has been targeted to ensure that those in greatest need receive the most support. Schools budgets have also benefitted from additional Welsh Government funding as a result of the pandemic and from periods of statutory closure. Where balances are above the recommended levels, schools are required to submit spending plans to clearly demonstrate how resources are being invested appropriately for the benefit of current learners. An annual report on school balances is presented to the Council's Cabinet and Audit & Governance Committee for member scrutiny.

Many grant funded initiatives track the progress of learners and service users and their families effectively, e.g. Families First, Flying Start, Community Focused Schools, Youth Justice Grant and Youth Support Grant. In the best examples, early bespoke interventions with families make measurable contributions to improved educational outcomes. However, late notification of grant funding and associated conditions can make it difficult for officers to plan. Nevertheless, there is clear evidence that grant funding is maximised to support strategic priorities and deliver quality services and drive positive change. The more recent move by Welsh Government to move to three year indicative budgets however, is helpful and will allow for more strategic planning across the Council.

There are detailed and rigorous financial management processes across the Council and regular reviews of portfolio budgets to ensure value for money and the identification of efficiencies. Cost pressures and other financial risks e.g. price volatility and inflation, are closely monitored. The Education and Youth Portfolio has delivered almost £2.5m of efficiencies through the business planning process over the last seven years which represents an average of 4% of the annual core portfolio budget each year during that period. These efficiencies have been achieved whilst ensuring high quality services continue to meet need. Through regular portfolio budget management processes, senior managers take responsibility for their services budgets, well supported by the corporate finance team.

With a significant proportion of its budget used to commission the regional school improvement service, it is important that the Council is reassured that GwE has effective financial management processes in place. Communication and consultation about financial arrangements are effective with both core funding and grant-expenditure kept under regular review by GwE, the host local authority and the Joint Committee. Detailed work has been undertaken to align grant allocations with priorities. Supporting Improvement Advisers challenge schools on their use of grant funding. This has closed the inconsistencies between schools around identifying the impact of the use of grant funding on pupil outcomes.

Overall, the Council's education services, including schools, continue to provide good value for money.

### **3. Leadership & Management Summary**

<b>Areas for ongoing improvement &amp; sustainability</b>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Maintain rigorous budgetary monitoring and management processes to protect the sustainability of Council funding in challenging financial times to ensure the delivery of quality education services.</li><li>• Maintain the effective monitoring and governance of the education service to ensure continuous school improvement and the best impact for learners.</li><li>• Continue to develop effective partnerships to deliver services in an integrated and cost efficient manner.</li><li>• Continue to improve the school estate through the School Modernisation Strategy and the maximisation of Welsh Government funding streams.</li><li>• Continue to support the professional development of staff in schools and in the Council to mitigate recruitment and retention challenges post pandemic.</li></ul>



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## EXERCISE OF DELEGATED POWERS - DECISIONS TAKEN REPORTED TO CABINET – 26.09.22

### Housing and Assets

- **Community Asset Transfer**  
This relates to the Community Asset Transfer of Ty Calon, Chester Road West, Deeside.
- **Community Asset Transfer**  
This relates to the Community Asset Transfer of Buckley Cricket Club, Lane End Ground, Chester Road, Buckley.

### Revenues

- **Council Housing Rents – Former Tenancy Arrears Write Offs**  
Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) stipulates that individual bad and irrecoverable debts in excess of £5,000 are considered for write off in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member. The decision to write off is in respect of 2 cases of unpaid rent. Following the steps taken, the former tenancy arrears in each case are considered to be irrecoverable and there is no prospect of securing payment. The total amount of unpaid rent associated with these two is £13,003.98.
- **Business Rates Write Offs**  
Financial Procedure Rules requires the Corporate Finance Manager and the Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Management to write off debts between £5k and £25k. There are two outstanding Business Rates debts totalling £15,133.81 that have been written off for debts between 2019/20 to 2021/22 which are deemed irrecoverable.
- **Council Tax Write Offs**  
Financial Procedure Rules requires the Corporate Finance Manager and the Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Management to write off debts between £5k and £25k. Three outstanding Council Tax debts totalling £26,224.98 which are deemed irrecoverable and a write off is considered necessary.
- **Council Housing Rents – Write Offs**  
Financial Procedure Rules requires the Corporate Finance Manager and the Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Management to write off debts between £5k and £25k. There are two outstanding Business Rates debts totalling £15,133.81 that have been written off for debts between 2019/20 to 2021/22 which are deemed irrecoverable.
- **Council Housing Rents – Write Offs**  
Financial Procedure Rules (section 5.2) stipulates that individual bad and irrecoverable debts in excess of £5,000 are considered for write off in conjunction with the relevant Cabinet Member. The decision to write off is in respect of two cases of unpaid rent where the tenants are subject to insolvency. The debts are considered to be irrecoverable and there is no prospect of securing payment. The total amount of unpaid rent associated with these two cases is £15,324.75.

## **Education and Youth**

- **Local Authority Appointed School Governors**  
Appointment of Local Authority Governor(s) representatives on school governing bodies in accordance with The Government of Maintained Schools (Wales) Regulations 2005.

## **Planning, Environment and Economy**

- **UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)**  
Cabinet at the meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July agreed, amongst other things, that delegated authority be given to the Chief Officer (Planning, Environment and Economy) and the Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy to develop and submit Flintshire's priorities for inclusion in the regional Investment Plan to enable the programme funding to be drawn down. It also authorised Gwynedd County Council to act as the lead body to submit the regional Investment Plan to UK Government on behalf of the six North Wales authorities.

## **Streetscene and Transportation**

- **The Flintshire County Council – B5441 Drome Road and Green Lane West, Deeside – Proposed Prohibition of Waiting At Any Time**  
To advise Members of the objections received following the advertisement of the proposed Prohibition of Waiting At Any Time on the B5441 Drome Road and Green Lane West, Deeside.

Copies of the Delegated Powers reports are retained by the Team Leader – Committee Services and available to view on request by Members.

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL FORWARD WORK PROGRAMME ITEMS  
COUNCIL, CABINET, AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE & SCRUTINY  
1 September 2022 TO 28 February 2023**

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
September					
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Forward Work Programme</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Business and Financial Planning Cycle</b>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 4) and Capital Programme 2022/23 (Month 4)</b></p> <p>The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 4) Report and the Capital Programme 2022/23 (Month 4) Report, and Significant Variances.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Asset Management Plan 2022 - 2027</b></p> <p>To present the Asset Management Plan 2022 - 2027 for review.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2023/24</b></p> <p>To update on the budget estimates and strategy for the setting of the 2023/24 budget.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Theatr Clwyd Project - Update</b></p> <p>That the Committee support the Council share of the projected increase in costs for the capital refurbishment of the Theatre provided Welsh Government also agrees to bear its share of the extra costs in line with the proportions previously agreed.</p>	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	23/09/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Council Plan 2022/23 Timeline Review</b></p> <p>To review timelines for Council Plan 22/23 following request from County Council in July.</p>	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Cabinet	26/09/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Medium Term Financial Strategy and Budget 2023/24</b></p> <p>To update on the budget estimates and strategy for the setting of the 2023/24 budget and to refer to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committees.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	26/09/22	Governance	<p><b>Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties</b> To set the Council Tax Premium scheme for 2023-24 following a recent public consultation.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Cabinet	26/09/22	Social Services	<p><b>North Wales Market Stability Report</b> To seek support and approval of the North Wales Market Stability Report.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Cabinet	26/09/22	Governance	<p><b>Development of a Local Visitor Levy</b> To provide information on the Local Visitor Levy in advance of the Welsh Government consultation.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	26/09/22	Education and Youth	<b>Education &amp; Youth Self Evaluation Report 2021 - 2022</b> To provide details of the portfolio's review and evaluation of services during 2021-22.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Cabinet	26/09/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22</b> To present the draft Annual Treasury Management Report for 2021/22 for recommendation to Council.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Cabinet	26/09/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 4)</b> To present the Month 4 Capital Programme information for 2022/23.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	26/09/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 4)</b>            This regular monthly report provides the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2022/23 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The position is based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 4, and projects forward to year-end.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Cabinet	26/09/22	Governance	<p><b>Welsh Government Consultation - Council Tax Reform</b>            To present information and responses for the Welsh Government consultation on reform of Council Tax.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Cabinet	20/09/22	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Cost of living crisis</b>            To update Cabinet on support schemes and seek approval for the development of warm hubs</p>	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	26/09/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Theatr Clwyd Project</b> That the Council approves its share of the projected increase in costs for the capital refurbishment of the Theatre provided Welsh Government also agrees to bear its share of the extra costs in line with the proportions previously agreed.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Cabinet	26/09/22	Social Services	<b>Children's services - Action for Children</b> To seek approval of a direct award of a contract for the continued delivery of Residential and Therapeutic services.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Cabinet	26/09/22	Streetscene and Transportation	<b>Recycling Bring Sites</b> To seek approval to remove the recycling Bring Sites from across the County.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/09/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/09/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP)</b> To provide an update on the Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP).	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/09/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Rapid Rehousing</b> To provide the Committee with information on the Rapid Rehousing approach.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/09/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Disabled Facilities Grant (DFGs)</b> To provide the Committee with an update on the Disabled Facilities Grant Policy.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/09/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Voids</b> To provide an update to the Committee on Void properties and the work undertaken to bring the properties back into use.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/09/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2022/23 Timeline Review</b> To review timelines for Council Plan 22/23 following request from County Council in July.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Flintshire County Council	27/09/22	Social Services	<b>North Wales Market Stability Report</b> For Members to support and approve the North Wales Market Stability Report.		
Flintshire County Council	27/09/22	Governance	<b>Climate Change Committee</b> To approve the Terms of Reference for the Climate Change Committee.		

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Flintshire County Council	27/09/22	Governance	<b>Co-opted Member of the Standards Committee</b> To consider whether to reappoint an Independent Member to the Standards Committee		Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Flintshire County Council	27/09/22	Governance	<b>Local Government and Elections (Wales) Act 2021</b> To share an update on progress with the Local Government Bill Working Group.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Governance and Audit Committee	28/09/22	Education and Youth	<b>School Reserve Balances year ending 31 March 2022</b> To provide the Committee with details of the closing balances held by Flintshire schools at the end of the financial year.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Governance and Audit Committee	28/09/22	Governance	<b>Internal Audit Progress Report</b> To present to the Committee an update on the progress of the Internal Audit Department.	All Report Types	



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	28/09/22	Governance	<p><b>Audit Wales Review of Commissioning Older People's Care Home Placements by North Wales Councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board</b></p> <p>To acknowledge the Audit Wales Report and note the recommendations in the Older People's Care Home Placements report.</p>	All Report Types	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Governance and Audit Committee	28/09/22	Governance	<p><b>External Public Sector Internal Audit Standards Assessment 2022</b></p> <p>To inform the Committee of the results of the external assessment of conformance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards (PSIAS).</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	28/09/22	Governance	<p><b>Governance and Audit Committee Action Tracking</b></p> <p>To inform the Committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Governance and Audit Committee meetings.</p>	All Report Types	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	28/09/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Internal Audit Department.	All Report Types	
October					
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/10/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>Universal Primary Free School Meals (UPFSM)</b> To provide an update on the local implementation of the universal primary free school meal initiative.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>Regional School Effectiveness and Improvement Service (GwE) Annual Report 2021-2022</b> To receive an update on the support provided by the regional school effectiveness and improvement service, GWE and its impact on schools.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee Page 579	10/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>Self-Evaluation of Education Services 2021-22</b> To update Members on overall service performance 21-22 and Learner Outcomes from 2021.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>School Reserves Year Ending 31 March 2022</b> To provide the Committee with details of the closing balances held by Flintshire schools at the end of the financial year.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2022/23 Timeline Review</b> To review timelines for Council Plan 22/23 following request from County Council in July.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Page 580	11/10/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Shared Prosperity Fund</b> To provide an update on the development of the programme and to recommend to Cabinet that approval is given for the framework of priorities and processes needed to effectively operate the programme.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Town centre regeneration</b> To update members on local responses being planned and delivered to regenerate town centres across Flintshire and tackle vacant properties through enforcement action. To recommend approval to Cabinet for the draft Enforcement Action Plan and the approach proposed to the development of Place Plans.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Levelling Up Fund</b> To provide the Scrutiny Committee with an update on the development of the programme and projects and to recommend approval by Cabinet of capital funding to meet the required match funding expected by UK Government.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Ash Dieback Update</b> To update members on how Flintshire County Council has confronted ash dieback in 2021/22 in line with the Ash Dieback Action Plan, it also reports on progress following an internal audit in July 2021	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee Page 582	11/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>An Introduction to the North Wales Economic Ambition Board &amp; Quarterly report</b> Introduction to the Economic Ambition Board and quarterly update.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Planning, Public Health and Public Protection
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Streetscene and Transportation	<b>Outcome of Statutory Training Audit</b> To inform Scrutiny of the outcome of the statutory training internal audit and provide an update on agreed actions.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan Development 2023/24</b> To contribute to the development of the Council Plan.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Flintshire Coastal Park</b> To inform members on the progress of the scoping work to establish a Coast Park and to agree the recommendations for implementation.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2022/23 Timeline Review</b> To review timelines for Council Plan 22/23 following request from County Council in July.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/10/22	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing &amp; Assets Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
<p>1899 1884</p> Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/10/22	Housing and Communities	<p><b>WHQS Capital Programme – Delivery review update</b> To provide an update on progress of the Welsh Housing Quality Standards (WHQS), that the Council is delivering through its Capital Investment Programme.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/10/22	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Renting Homes Wales Act</b> To outline changes proposed to the way all landlords in Wales rent their properties to be introduced from 1 December, 2022.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration



<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	12/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan Development 2023/24</b> To contribute to the development of the Council Plan.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/10/22	Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Employment and Workforce Quarterly Update</b> This report covers strategic updates in addition to the quarterly workforce statistics and their analysis.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/10/22	Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Forward Work Programme</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee.	Operational	

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Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/10/22	Governance	<b>Work of the Coroner's Office</b> To receive a presentation from John Gittins on the work of the Coroner's Office.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/10/22	Social Services	<b>Joint Funded Care Packages</b> To update Members on the current situation on the long term debt with the Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board since the last report was received.	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan Development 2023/24</b> To contribute to the development of the Council Plan.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Annual Performance Report 2021/22</b> To approve the Annual Performance Report 2021/22 prior to endorsement by County Council	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Cabinet	18/10/22	Governance	<b>Joint Procurement Service Annual Report 2021/22</b> To receive a performance update report on the Joint Procurement Service with Denbighshire County Council.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Cabinet	18/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Whole House Energy Efficiency Retrofit 2022</b> To update Cabinet on the procurement process for domestic energy retrofit works in Flintshire and to seek approval for the appointment of the successful contractor.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/10/22	Chief Executive's	<p><b>Revenue Budget Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 5)</b>            This regular monthly report provides the latest revenue budget monitoring position for 2022/23 for the Council Fund and Housing Revenue Account. The position is based on actual income and expenditure as at Month 5, and projects forward to year-end.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Cabinet	18/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Levelling Up Fund</b>            To provide Cabinet with an update on the development of the programme and projects and to request an allocation of capital funding to meet the required match funding expected by UK Government.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Cabinet	18/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Town Centre Regeneration</b>            To update members on local responses being planned and delivered to regenerate town centres across Flintshire and tackle vacant properties through enforcement action.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/10/22	Social Services	<b>Croes Atti 2</b> To provide Members with an update on progress at the new Croes Atti Residential Care Home, Flint	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Cabinet	18/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Shared Prosperity Fund</b> To provide an update on the development of the programme and to request approval for the framework of priorities and processes needed to effectively operate the programme.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Cabinet	18/10/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Flintshire Coastal Park</b> To inform members on the progress of the scoping work to establish a Coast Park and to agree the recommendations for implementation.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	18/10/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Strategic Housing and Regeneration Programme (SHARP), update report</b> To provide an update on progress of the Council's SHARP Housebuilding programme.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Cabinet	18/10/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Disabled Facilities Grant</b> To approve the revised Disabled Facility Grant Policy.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Flintshire County Council	18/10/22	Governance	<b>Recruitment of a Town and Community Council Representative to the Standards Committee</b> To appoint the favoured candidate to the Standards Committee		
Flintshire County Council	18/10/22	Governance	<b>Council Tax Premium Scheme for Second Homes and Long-term Empty Properties</b> For Cabinet to set the Council Tax Premium scheme for 2023-24 following a recent public consultation.		

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Flintshire County Council	18/10/22	Governance	<b>Amendments to Clwyd Pension Fund Constitution</b> To review and update the Delegation Scheme for the Clwyd Pension Fund		
Flintshire County Council	18/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Annual Performance Report 2021/22</b> To endorse the Annual Performance Report 2021/22 prior to publication		
Flintshire County Council	18/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Treasury Management Annual Report 2021/22</b> To present to Members the draft Annual Treasury Management Report 2021/22		
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	20/10/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	20/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>Flintshire Summer of Fun &amp; Summer Play Schemes</b> To provide feedback on the Flintshire Summer of Fun & Summer Play Schemes	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	20/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>School Performance Monitoring Group Update</b> To receive an update on progress and learning from the School Performance Monitoring Group	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	20/10/22	Education and Youth	<b>Estyn Report on Adult Community Learning Partnership</b> To present the Estyn Report on Adult Community Learning Partnership	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	20/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan Development 2023/24</b> To contribute to the development of the Council Plan.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/10/22	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b></p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Social &amp; Health Care Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/10/22	Social Services	<p><b>North Wales Market Stability Report</b></p> <p>To review the draft Market Stability Report for the region and the priorities within.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/10/22	Social Services	<p><b>Annual report on the Social Services Complaints and Compliments Procedure 2021-22</b></p> <p>That Members scrutinise the effectiveness of the complaints procedure with lessons being learnt to improve service provision.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing

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Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan 2022/23 Timeline Review</b> To review timelines for Council Plan 22/23 following request from County Council in July.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	27/10/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Council Plan Development 2023/24</b> To contribute to the development of the Council Plan.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
November					
Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Finance	<b>Statement of Accounts 2021/22</b> To present the final audited version of the Statement of Accounts 2021/22 for approval.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement

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Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Finance	<b>Treasury Management Mid-Year Review 2022/23 and Quarter 2 Update</b> To present the draft Treasury Management Mid-year Review 1 <sup>st</sup> April-30 <sup>th</sup> September 2022 for comments and recommendation for approval to Cabinet.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Climate Change Strategy</b> To report on progress with the Climate Change Strategy for 2022-2030.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Asset Disposal and Capital Receipts Generated 2021/22</b> To report on asset disposals and capital received generated during 2021/22.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Governance	<b>Governance &amp; Audit Committee Annual Report</b> To report on activities of the Committee during 2021/22.	All Report Types	

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Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Governance &amp; Audit Committee Self-Assessment</b> To present the results of the Committee's self-assessment which will feed into the preparation of the Annual Governance Statement. It will also form the basis for the provision of any further training required by the Committee.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Governance and Audit Committee Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of the actions resulting from points raised at previous Governance and Audit Committee meetings.</p>	All Report Types	
Governance and Audit Committee	14/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Internal Audit Department.</p>	All Report Types	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment &amp; Economy Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/11/22	Streetscene and Transportation	<p><b>Household Recycling Centre Vehicle Permit Policy</b> To review the current household recycling centre (HRC) operations and vehicle permit criteria.</p>	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Biodiversity Sect.6 Reporting</b> To update members on work to deliver the Environment Act Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan in order to report on action to Welsh Government.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

Page 597

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee  Page 598	15/11/22	Streetscene and Transportation	<b>Local Toilet Strategy</b> The advise Scrutiny that the next statutory formal review point for our Local Toilet Strategy is required to follow the local government elections that were held in May 2022, and we now have one year from the date of the elections to review, revise, consult upon and publish updated strategies for our local area. This report sets out the approach being taken and the timescales of the review. This revised Local Toilet Strategy will be presented in March 2023.	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Housing regeneration grants and loans policy</b> to ask the Scrutiny Committee to review the draft refreshed Housing Regeneration Grants and Loans Policy and to recommend approval to Cabinet.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Communities for Work</b> To update the Scrutiny Committee on the work of the employability programmes and on the closure of the Communities 4 Work programme and any implications for the Council arising.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee Page 5599	16/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing &amp; Assets Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/11/22	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Housing Revenue Account (HRA) 30 Year Financial Business Plan</b> To consider the proposed Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Budget for 2023/24 and the HRA Business Plan.</p>	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/11/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Dynamic Resource Scheduler (DRS) System Update</b> To provide an update following implementation of the DRS System.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	16/11/22	Housing and Communities	<b>Refugees Update</b> To provide an update on the settlement of Refugees across Flintshire.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/11/22	Overview and Scrutiny	<b>Action Tracking</b> To inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/11/22	Finance	<b>Capital Strategy Including Prudential Indicators 2023/24 to 2025/26</b> To present the Capital Strategy 2023/24 - 2025/26 for review.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/11/22	Finance	<b>Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2025/26</b> To present the Capital Programme 2023/24 - 2025/26 for review.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/11/22	Finance	<b>Capital Programme Monitoring 2022/23 (Month 6)</b> To present the Capital Programme Monitoring report (Month 6) for 2022/23.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	17/11/22	Governance	<b>Joint Procurement Service Annual Report 2021/22</b> To receive a performance update report on the Joint Procurement Service with Denbighshire County Council.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	22/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Council Tax Base for 2023/24</b> To approve the Council Tax Base for the financial year 2023/24 as part of the process of the revenue budget setting and Council Tax setting process for the new year.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Cabinet Page 602	22/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Communities for Work</b> To provide an update on the work of the employability programmes and on the closure of the Communities 4 Work programme and any implications for the Council arising.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Cabinet	22/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Housing regeneration grants and loans policy</b> To ask Cabinet to review and approve the draft refreshed Housing Regeneration Grants and Loans Policy.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	22/11/22	Chief Executive's	<b>Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2025/26</b> To present the Capital Programme 2023/24 – 2025/26 for recommendation to Council.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Finance, Inclusion, Resilient Communities including Social Value and Procurement
Cabinet	22/11/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Biodiversity Sect.6 Reporting</b> To update members on work to deliver the Environment Act Section 6 Biodiversity Duty Delivery Plan in order to report on action to Welsh Government.	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Cabinet	22/11/22	Governance	<p><b>Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021-22 and Complaints made against Flintshire County Council during the first half of 2022-23</b></p> <p>To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021-22. The report also provides an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between the period 1 April – 30 September 2022.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
December					
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1/12/22	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b></p> <p>To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Education, Youth &amp; Culture Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1/12/22	Education and Youth	<b>Elective Home Schooling</b> To provide the Committee with an update on the levels of pupils being Electively Home Educated and the Council's oversight of this group of learners.	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Education, Youth & Culture Overview & Scrutiny Committee	1/12/22	Education and Youth	<b>Integrated Youth Provision – Delivery Plan Update</b> To provide an update to the Committee on the Integrated Youth Provision Delivery Plan	Operational	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	8/12/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> 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.	Operational	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/12/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
Page 9 of 9 Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	13/12/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<b>Wepre Park Management plan and charging</b> To present and agree the new Wepre Park management plan, and to consider the introduction of car parking charging	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	14/12/22	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Corporate Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee	15/12/22	Governance	<p><b>Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021-22 and Complaints made against Flintshire County Council during the first half of 2022-23</b></p> <p>To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021-22. The report also provides an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between the period 1 April - 30 September 2022.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
Cabinet	20/12/22	Planning, Environment and Economy	<p><b>Wepre Park Management plan and charging</b></p> <p>To present and agree the new Wepre Park management plan, and to consider the introduction of car parking charging</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Climate Change and Economy
January					

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/01/23	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.	Operational	
P 10/01/23 Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/01/23	Streetscene and Transportation	<b>Waste Strategy</b> To review the Councils current Waste Strategy with the objective of achieving Welsh Government statutory recycling targets.	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/01/23	Streetscene and Transportation	<b>Grass Cutting Policy</b> To advise Scrutiny of the revised Grass Cutting Policy.	Strategic	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy



COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Environment & Economy Overview & Scrutiny Committee	10/01/23	Streetscene and Transportation	<p><b>Streetscene Standards</b> The Streetscene Standards have not been reviewed since 2019. This reports reviews the existing standards and recommend amendments to ensure that the service continues to delivers to the needs and expectations of the public.</p>	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Streetscene and the Regional Transport Strategy
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/01/23	Governance	<p><b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> To consider the Forward Work Programme of the Community Housing &amp; Assets Overview &amp; Scrutiny Committee and to inform the Committee of progress against actions from previous meetings.</p>	Operational	
Community, Housing & Assets Overview & Scrutiny Committee	11/01/23	Housing and Communities	<p><b>Temporary Accommodation Audit Update</b> To provide a progress report on the action plan for service improvement following the audit of the Temporary Accommodation.</p>	Operational	Cabinet Member for Housing and Regeneration

<b>COMMITTEE</b>	<b>MEETING DATE</b>	<b>CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM &amp; PURPOSE OF REPORT</b>	<b>REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)</b>
Cabinet	17/01/23	Social Services	<b>Maes Gwern</b> To provide Cabinet with an update on progress at the new Maes Gwern development in Mold	Operational	Deputy Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Wellbeing
Social & Health Care Overview & Scrutiny Committee	19/01/23	Governance	<b>Forward Work Programme and Action Tracking</b> 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.	Operational	
Governance and Audit Committee	25/01/23	Chief Executive's	<b>Risk Management Update</b> To be assured that the updated risk management framework is comprehensive and functional.	Strategic	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources

COMMITTEE	MEETING DATE	CHIEF OFFICER PORTFOLIO	AGENDA ITEM & PURPOSE OF REPORT	REPORT TYPE (Strategic or Operational) (Cabinet only)	PORTFOLIO (Cabinet only)
Governance and Audit Committee	25/01/23	Governance	<p><b>Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021-22 and Complaints made against Flintshire County Council during the first half of 2022-23</b></p> <p>To share the Public Services Ombudsman for Wales Annual Letter 2021-22. The report also provides an overview of complaints received by each portfolio of the Council between the period 1 April - 30 September 2022.</p>	All Report Types	Cabinet Member for Governance and Corporate Services including Health and Safety and Human Resources
February					

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