



Flintshire County Council
Presentation Report 2012 - 2013

Annual Performance Report 2012-13



Making next year **even better** with Flintshire County Council

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Annual Performance Report 2012-2013

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FLINTSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE

A follow up CSSIW inspection was undertaken with our Flintshire Fostering Service in February 2012. The service received a positive inspection report in April 2012 with no action requirements. To establish the extent to which the team is meeting those responsibilities in an effective and efficient manner in Autumn 2012 we embarked on a review of the team, looking at day to day operations including staff deployment, policy reviews etc. The review has resulted in six options for change. Each option will be considered in terms of quality and cost with a view to recommendations being presented to the Director in early 2013.

Last year we reported that our Stepping Stones Support group for children whose families foster with Flintshire is embarking on a new project with 'Film Blast', a community film project that gives community groups the opportunity to work with a resident professional film maker and a specialist arts practitioner. The Stepping Stones group alongside other groups produced a film which was featured at the Flintshire Filmfest in June 2012. The film featured the children's own artwork and the children themselves on the theme of "seasons".

The film was filmed over a year, from spring, summer, autumn and winter. All ten children involved in making the film attended the "premiere" screening at Theatr Clwyd. The children enjoyed the opportunity of making a film, which is one of the activities organised during school holidays to say "thank you" to the children for sharing their lives, toys and experiences with children in foster care. The group have also produced their own magazine answering children's big questions about "what's fostering like".

During 2012 Foster Carers were honoured at an awards ceremony for dedicating many years to looking after children. 15 Fostering families who had reached a milestone in caring during the year were presented with their long service awards from Flintshire County Council. Foster carers attended the event with their families which included their own children and foster children. One couple who had been caring for children for 30 years of ranging ages and duration received a long service award. The children had fitted into their family alongside their own daughter and had thrived in their care. To find out more about fostering in Flintshire visit www.flintshire.gov.uk/foster.

Over the past few years our pool of in house foster carer has increased, with the figure now standing at 100 approved carers. We continue to develop new ways of supporting and connecting our foster carers. An initiative at the end of 2012 was to set up a foster carers secure website which allows us to communicate more effectively and efficiently with our foster carers. As of January 2012 50 foster carers have been issued with their secure log-ins. The team has tested the site and we are now encouraging foster carers to book places on training and events electronically. The foster carers handbook and forms are available to view and download, and developments are in progress to add a chat forum.





AWARDS AND SUCCESS

A highlight which appeared in the July edition of our monthly workforce bulletin was Abbey Metal gaining a prestigious national award recognising their excellent practice in Health and Safety. Abbey Metal is a “small business” within our Learning Disabilities Day Opportunities service; which focuses on equipping people with employment skills in the metal fabrication industry. This is a tremendous achievement for the whole team who have succeeded against National UK entries to win the award.



Yet again we have held our uniquely successful Pride of Flintshire Awards. This glittering annual ceremony, our very own ‘Oscars’ hosted by young people is a real inspiration to everyone who attends. The Children’s Commissioner Keith Towler spoke at the event, quote ‘this is an incredible event which reflects part of the council’s role as a corporate parent to looked after children and care leavers, is unique in Wales and something we should be proud of’.

There have also been some key changes in personnel during 2012, Maureen Mullaney, our Head of Social Services for Adults since 1999 retired at the end of August. Maureen left a strong legacy of achievement in the service. Alwyn Jones her replacement joined us on the 3rd September thus enabling a smooth transition, has brought with him a wealth of knowledge and expertise.

I am also pleased that I have been asked to lead a new exciting Council priority, - to support social enterprises and co-operatives in Flintshire. A Social Enterprise is a business with primarily social objectives whose surpluses are reinvested for that purpose in the business or in the community. This way of working has a great potential to help improve Social Care Services.

Having been involved nationally last year in developing an implementation plan in response to the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Bill and the strategy ‘Sustainable Social Services for Wales,’ it will be an ambitious and exciting plan. The Bill will, for the first time, provide a clear framework for social services that ensures a strong voice and real control and will simplify the legislation that regulates social care in Wales, making access to services much easier and more understandable to those in need. It will be a great opportunity for change which will benefit the people who use our services.

FLINTSHIRE FOSTERING SERVICE

(PREVIOUSLY KNOWN AS THE FAMILY PLACEMENT TEAM)

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