

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: **SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

DATE: **THURSDAY, 9 JANUARY 2014**

REPORT BY: **DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES**

SUBJECT: **INTEGRATED FAMILY SUPPORT SERVICE**

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To update the Committee with the progress of the IFSS since the Service has become live in Flintshire.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 The IFSS delivers a family focused service to enable parents to achieve the necessary behavioural changes that will improve their parenting capacity, and engages with the wider family if needed. The service also seeks to address the social, cultural and organisational factors which have an impact on the safe care of a child or young person and their parents.

2.02 In order to achieve the best outcome for both children and adults and ensure that children are safeguarded, the IFSS seek to meet the needs of all family members. This approach requires a holistic approach to the work.

2.03 In order to address the needs of families with complex problems the IFSS team is multi agency and multi disciplinary, consisting of professionals with the skills and experience in working directly with children in need and their parents and adults with complex health and social care needs. The culture within the team is reflective practice, peer mentoring and support in order to deliver effective evidence based interventions which are relevant to families' needs.

2.04 It is important to note that IFSS is a reorientation of process and delivery of services to children in need, including those in need of protection and in care. Its key strength is the bridging of children and adult services across; local government and its health partners where both bodies are accountable for the efficient provision, either directly or through co-ordinated arrangements, of support services to children and families who are referred to them.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

The following information is taken from the interim report sent to the Welsh Government in October 2013.

Strategic:

- 3.01 The new North Wales Family Support Group now provides the IFSS Management Board function it is multi-agency and takes joint responsibility for ensuring that the Welsh Government agenda and expectations are working effectively within IFSS areas in the region.

Challenges and/or opportunities and removal of barriers:

- 3.02 Wrexham has written a comprehensive Section 58 agreement which is supported by statutory and voluntary partners and will now be used as a template for Flintshire and other North Wales partners.

Local:

- 3.03 The most successful cases continue to move over time from being children on the Child Protection Register (CPR) to Children in Need (CIN). In Wrexham we are fortunate that we have a 'Team around the Child' service (recently changed to Together Achieving Change (TAC) and that the TAC Co-ordinators are trained social workers. This means that they can therefore act as the lead professional for IFSS families receiving TAC support on a voluntary basis, which enables them to receive the full intervention. Without this facility they would have to remain in Children's Services unnecessarily to receive the complete IFSS term. This is an example of innovative practice to ensure the success of IFSS. It is hoped that this arrangement can be mirrored in Flintshire.
- 3.04 The Independent Safeguarding and Reviewing Officers' (ISROs) role within Wrexham works well, with a well established notification and planning procedure. This means that allocated CIN cases are reviewed within the statutory and IFSS time limits. The management of the meetings has been streamlined to reduce bureaucracy and repetition, for example the ISROs chair CIN meetings, thus preventing the duplication of meetings for families, IFSS staff and ISROs. It is hoped that this area can be developed with the Reviewing Managers in Flintshire.
- 3.05 The Child and Family Assessment Team (CAFAT), Family Support Team (FST) and Looked After Children (LAC) Team in Wrexham remain the main referrers to the IFSS. Maintaining a steady flow of referrals remains a challenge and recent strategies have included the provision of an updated laminated referral criteria and team information cards for referring teams. All new Social Workers in the authority spend time with the IFSS team as part of their induction and

are encouraged to attend any of the IFSS Training dates.

- 3.06 The service went live in Flintshire on the 1st August 2013, with an official launch taking place on the 10th September 2013, there were over 50 attendees who benefited from a presentation and information pack.
- 3.07 The Duty and Assessment Team (Duty), Family Intervention Team (FIT) and Children and Young Adult Support Team (CYAST) in Flintshire are our referring teams and Duty and FIT have made a number of referrals to date.

Impact on Families

- 3.08 During the period 1st April 2013 to 30th September 2013, 42 Wrexham referrals were made to the IFSS team. Of these thirteen families were re-referrals. From August 2013, 5 Flintshire referrals were made to the IFSS team.

IFSS	Number of families
Consultation/Referral	47
Re-referrals accepted	13

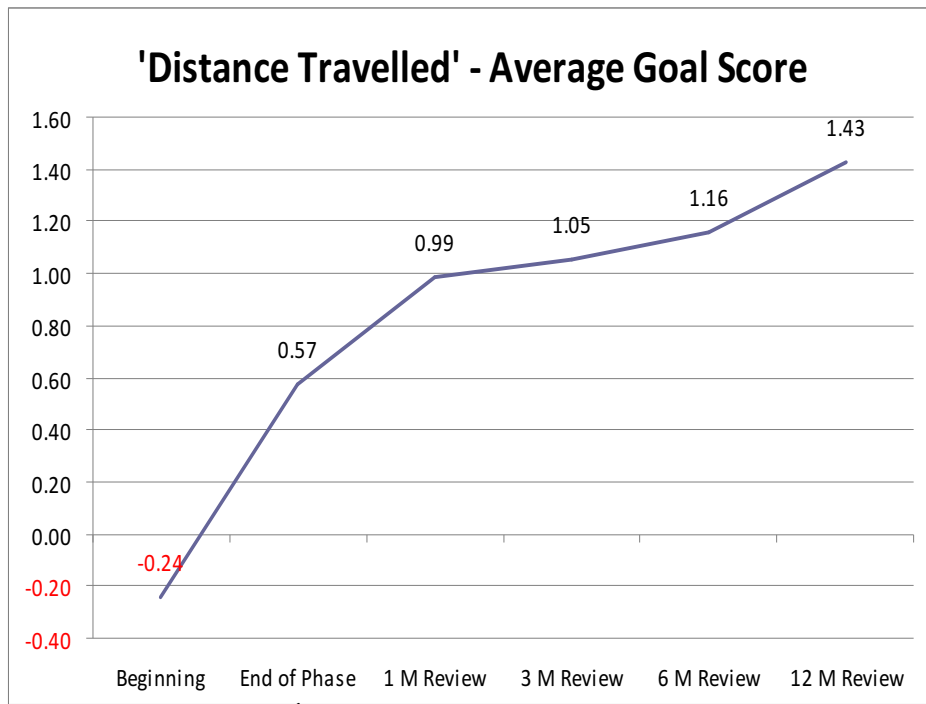
- 3.09 The table below indicates the numbers of families who have received a service at each stage.

Interventions	No.
Consultation	47
Consultation advice and signposting given	25
72 Hour Assessment including NFA following this period	22
Phase 1 completed and current cases	26
Phase 2 new and continuing cases	23

- 3.10 The table below shows the breakdown of the Legal Status for the Families referred to the IFSS Team between 1st April 2013 and the 30th September 2013. The last two rows show those families who have more than one child and the status of the children varies.

Legal Status	Number of families	Number of children affected
Looked After Child/Children	2	2
Child Protection	30	72
Child in Need	14	27
Child in Need & Looked After Child	0	0
Child Protection & Looked After Child	1	1

3.11 IFSS measures success by considering the “distance travelled” in terms of scores for each family’s individual goals. All the goals are strength based, requiring the family to be pro-active in making positive changes which contribute to safer, improved family functioning. The goals are negotiated with the spearhead worker, taking account of any child protection concerns. The goals are agreed during phase 1; each family scores itself and subsequently scores at the first, third, sixth and twelve month review. The chart below shows the aggregated scores for our families.



The pattern noted in previous reports to the Welsh Government remains in place, with an initial and expected significant improvement followed by steady progress and a final considerable rise at the end of phase 2.

Wider Workforce Training –

3.12 Flintshire and Wrexham’s training calendar for the year is set out below.

Date	Training Description	Attendees
Module 1		
Sept 13	Enhancing Motivation for Behaviour Change in Families	12
Feb 14	Enhancing Motivation for Behaviour Change in Families	
Module 2		
Sept 13	Lowering Resistance to Behaviour Change in Families	11

	in Families	
	Module 3	
Oct 13	Goal Centred Intervention with Families	10
March 14	Goal Centred Intervention with Families	
	Other Training (4 day)	
March 14	Building Stronger Families Through Integrated Family Support Service	

- 3.13 We identified that the four-days training should be reserved for Spearhead Workers in preparation for new teams that will be live by the end of 2013. The four-day training and module training focuses on the IFSS process and motivational interviewing techniques. The model also emphasises the use of Solution Focused Brief Therapy and Cognitive Behavioural interventions.

The Attendees come from a number of different organisations as set out in the table below

Figure 3

Area of Organisation	Number
Flying Start	2
CAIA Park Partnership	17
Youth Justice Service	11
Action For Children	1
Genesis & Quest	1
AVOW	1
Total	33

EVALUTION OF EFFICIENCIES MADE

Barriers/Issues

- 3.14 As with any new service, there is always a challenge introducing a new multi-agency team of professionals with differing skills, experience, values and pay and conditions coming together to deliver the same intervention. There are learned lessons about the support required for staff that move from working within the governance arrangements of a health environment to a social care workplace.
- 3.15 An initial challenge for the team was ensuring a steady flow of referrals to the service and whilst there had been resistance from some child care teams these have been largely overcome, but there remains a requirement for regular contact with referring teams. This appears mirrored in Flintshire.

- 3.16 The IFSS Central Training Resource (hosted by Western Bay IFSS) to establish a pool of Mentor Trainers as part of future sustainability and roll-out of training whilst welcomed in principal, has created a number of issues for the North Wales area of Wales.
- 3.17 At a local level, challenges have centred on maximising the potential for consistency of practice when working across two local authority areas that have different systems and processes that are well established and work effectively.
- 3.18 Whilst Welsh Government have confirmed that IFSS funding will continue in grant form for 2014/15. The roll out of IFSS is at a juncture where funding for every service is under scrutiny and provides a complex and critical challenge for local authorities who will need to seek reassurance from Welsh Government that an impact assessment will be undertaken to clearly establish the effect of changing the grant funding distribution formula.
- 3.19 The new North Wales Family Support Group which now provides the IFSS Management Board function is multi-agency and takes a joint responsibility for ensuring that the Welsh Government agenda and expectations are working effectively within IFSS areas in the region. They are currently considering their reporting processes for the IFSS
- 3.20 Maintaining families during Phase 2 with reduced team size and double geographical area will require further consideration.
- 3.21 **Priorities planned**
1. To continue to provide a service as close to the model as set out by the Welsh Government
 2. Emulate Wrexham's work in Flintshire
 3. Align Flintshire's policies and procedures with those of Wrexham
 4. Ensure there is an Information Sharing Protocol in place
 5. Explore if a Section 58 Agreement is required in Flintshire

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.01 That the committee receive the report

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Expenditure against the IFSS grant

- 5.01 The allocation by Welsh Government is on target to be fully utilised by the end of March 2014.
- 5.02 The roll out of IFSS in North Wales continues with the Wrexham/Flintshire collaboration in the North East being the lead.

The other North Wales authorities are making progress on their rollout.

- 5.03 In terms of the North Wales IFSS grant of £850,000 for 2013/2014. It is projected that full spend will occur against the £850,000 grant made available, as the Local Authorities already up and running with IFSS are providing additional support to the new authorities setting up their IFSS teams.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

- 6.01 A clear message from developing policies of the Welsh Assembly Government is that the future of effective public services in Wales must be built around integrated services to children and families to provide holistic support at every level of need.
- 6.02 The Stronger Families consultation¹ set out proposals to make legislation which would support vulnerable families by focusing on the complex needs of families where substance misuse, domestic violence, mental health problems or mental illness and learning disabilities may have impaired parenting capacity and where there is concern for a child's welfare.
- 6.03 The Children and Families (Wales) Measure 2010 provides the framework for the new approach starting with two key developments in.
- 6.04 New ways to tackle poverty through targeted approaches to co-ordinate the delivery of preventative services to families in vulnerable groups or communities.
- 6.05 The establishment of statutory Integrated Family Support Services (IFSS) where both local government and their respective health board partners will have collective responsibility to ensure the integration and provision of seamless services to families with complex needs, where a child/children can be at risk.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

- 7.01 The Welsh Assembly Government's fundamental belief is that children are best supported living with their family or friends of the family in their local community and social networks, for as long as this is positive for their welfare. Research suggests that there is often room for services to act earlier and more decisively to provide support to families and safeguard children's welfare. It is intended that the introduction of IFSS, taken with the development of wider changes through the implementation of the Children and Young Persons Act 2008 and the new Public Law Outline for childcare proceedings, will result in a greater number of children being supported to live safely with their families.

7.02 Working with families earlier, before children become at risk of entry in to care, will enable local authorities and their partners to foster a social contract with families to gain their commitment and to ensure they receive the right support to overcome their difficulties.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 IFSS is underpinned by a key principle of the Children Act 1989 that children are best looked after within their families, with their parents playing a full part in their lives, unless compulsory intervention in family life is necessary. The right to know and be cared for 'by one's parents' is also established in the United Nations 4 Convention on the Rights of a Child (UNCRC) 3. In UK law and policy the principal is reflected in the concept of parental responsibility. It is also reflected in:

- the local authority's general function to provide services to support children and their families;
- the local authority's duty to return a looked after child to his/her family;
- unless this is against his/her interest; and the local authority's duty to endeavour to promote contact between looked after children and his/her parents or others, unless it is not reasonably
- practical or consistent with his/her welfare.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 N/A

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 N/A

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 N/A

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 None

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None

Contact Officer: Ray Dickson & Marie Marlow

Telephone: 01352 701003 01352 701000

Email: ray.dickson@flintshire.gov.uk

marie_marlow@flintshire.gov.uk