

**FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL**

**AGENDA ITEM NUMBER:**

**REPORT TO:** **CHILDREN'S SERVICES FORUM**  
**DATE :** **06 JULY 2011**  
**REPORT BY:** **HEAD OF HOUSING**  
**SUBJECT :** **IMPROVING THE SUPPLY OF TEMPORARY AND  
PERMANENT ACCOMMODATION FOR VULNERABLE  
GROUPS**

**1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.01 To seek support/ advise Members of our proposal to aim to improve the service we provide to both victims of domestic violence and to vulnerable young people to whom we owe a duty, by providing extra units of accommodation from within our own stock.

This paper considers the use of 3 units of council accommodation to be used for people fleeing domestic violence to be managed by Hafan Cymru which is a specialist housing association. In addition to the above by further 3 properties will be made available by Clwyd Alyn Housing Association which will also be managed by Hafan Cymru.

Also, that we aim to make 10 units of accommodation available each year to enable the re-housing of young people and ensure that there is a flow through within our existing supported accommodation which can then be used for those who need it most.

**2.00 BACKGROUND**

- 2.01 Domestic Abuse

Tackling the issue of domestic abuse is a key priority for the Supporting People Programme in Flintshire Supporting People Strategy 2010-13. Wherever possible support will be provided to individuals in their own home causing minimum disruption to families. However, it is recognised that there remains a need for people fleeing domestic abuse to be provided with support within emergency refuge provision.

The existing refuge provision in Flintshire consists of two refuges:

	No. of bed spaces
Delyn Women's Aid Refuge.....	7
Domestic Abuse Safety Unit.....	4
Total.....	11

The two refuges provide emergency accommodation and support for vulnerable women and children. The refuges can be accessed 24 hours a day to ensure the service is available when people need it most. The existing refuge provision is in high demand but is unable to meet the needs of the number of people. The refuges are multi occupancy shared accommodation. The provision excludes a number of people including men, large families, families with make children over the age of 16, people with high support needs and people with pets they will not leave, Figures produced by the Flintshire refuges show that in 2009-10; 243 people were referred to the refuges. 161 people were eligible to access the refuges but 82 people were unable to access this provision owing to one of the above reasons.

The Supporting People Strategy identified a priority need to develop emergency provision for this significant number of excluded individuals and families. The solution is the development of six dispersed refuge properties. Hafan Cymru will lease the properties and manage the scheme which will provide emergency accommodation for people fleeing domestic abuse on a short term basis.

The domestic abuse refuge provision provides emergency accommodation and needs to be available to those in most need, The current configuration excludes a number of people who may be in most need of this provision. Flintshire needs to develop this important service to meet the needs of individuals and families who can no longer remain at home but cannot access the existing emergency refuge provision.

Accommodation for young people.

The authority recognises its responsibility to the young people of Flintshire who find themselves homeless. In addition to those children who have been through the care system, we also have statutory duties under the homeless persons legislation wherein 16/17 year olds are identified as a priority group and as such are owed a duty with regards to housing. Recent caselaw resulted in the Southwak Judgement which further highlights the need for children's services and housing to work together fir the benefit of the young person and to meet their needs. Fundamental to meeting those needs if the availability of appropriate accommodation/

Existing Provision.

The current provision within Flintshire is as follows:-

Wallich (16-19) Floating Support.....28  
*(this service supports people in their own homes in the community so have not been counted as an available bed source)*

It is felt that the above provision provides a good set of options when it comes to accommodation young people, however it is the ability to move the young on one they no longer require that level of support that causes the process to fail. This has the effect of situations arising where we have no other option than to place a young person in accommodation which is not suitable to their needs i.e. bed & breakfast, or it may be Children's Services in the position of having to resort to expensive out of county placements. This may have a detrimental affect on young people who may well find themselves isolated and removed from whatever support networks they have, whether it be extended family or friends.

In addition to the above we are currently working with landlords with a view to enabling young people, who are ready for independent living to be successfully housed, with relevant support, in the private sector. This support could be delivered by our own Tenancy Support Officers or by one of our partner agencies.

Based on the information we have we believe that so simply provide extra units of temporary accommodation is neither appropriate or cost effective, as once that extra capacity is filled we will still be left with the same issues.

A far better solution to this problem would be to ensure that up to 10 units of permanent accommodation are let to young homeless people on an annual basis. This would guarantee a flow through within our existing supported accommodation, and ensure that young people who are ready to move on to independent living are able to be moved on to permanent accommodation, thus releasing the more intensive supported accommodation they no longer need back to its intended purpose. We will of course continue to support

young people for as long as necessary to enable them to both settle and succeed in their new home.

No specific properties of areas have been identified as yet, and some more work needs to be done to ensure that whatever properties are used give both these vulnerable groups the best chance of success. For young people we aim to provide a spread of accommodation right across the county to suit the needs of the young people to live in various locations.

For the Domestic Violence provision we will, together with Clwyd Alyn Housing Association, aim for an even spread of accommodation consisting of two and three bed properties.

The above action if achieved will contribute to the objectives contained within in the service plan which refers to the need to reduce the use of temporary accommodation, and also complies with Welsh Government Code of Guidance which makes reference to the use of quotas in certain circumstance such as to enable the rehousing of specific groups especially in order to enable individuals to move on from a hostel or women's refuge.

### **3.00 CONSIDERATIONS**

3.01

### **4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.01 That support be given in relation to the aims of this report.

That delegated authority be given to Head of Housing to agree on properties and location in conjunction with Executive Member for Housing.

### **5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.01 There are no financial implications associated with the young person accommodation proposal. *(part of the young persons development when they are places in supported housing will be their preparation for independent living. This will include where and how to apply for grants, and information on organisations such as Flintshire Refurbs. The aim will be to enable the young person to be able put together their own home which in itself will give them a sense of achievement)*

The units allocated for dispersed refuge will be more at risk of potential rent loss. This is due to the temporary nature of the provision and the need for it to be available in an emergency. The lease with the provider will clearly detail the party liable to pay for any void periods. Void figures for emergency

provision would be likely to be approximately 20 %. We are requesting this amount be underwritten by Housing Cymru as detailed in the lease agreement. Every attempt will be made to ensure rent loss is kept to a minimum.

**6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT**

6.01

**7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT**

7.01

**8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT**

8.01

**9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS**

9.01

**10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED**

10.01

**11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN**

11.01

**12.00 APPENDICES**

12.01

Contact Officer:

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