

SOCIAL AND HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 14 th November, 2019
Report Subject	Innovation to reduce reliance on out of county placements
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member – Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer (Social Service)
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In July 2019 the joint Education and Social Services and Health Care Overview Scrutiny approved our Support and Placement Strategy 2019 – 2022. The Strategy sets out our priorities to:

1. Safely reduce the number of children who need to be looked after.
2. Support looked after children in local high quality placements.
3. Improve outcomes for looked after children.

A range of actions were agreed as part of the Strategy. This report provides a focus on the areas of innovation that are taking place to deliver transformational change and the difference this work will make.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Committee reviews the programme of innovation aimed at reducing reliance on out of county placements
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REPORT DETAILS






1.00	EXPLAINING INNOVATION TO REDUCE RELIANCE ON OUT OF COUNTY PLACEMENTS
1.01	The pressures relating to our out of county budget are significant both in terms of finding appropriate placements for our children and young people

and the financial impact for the local authority. There is no single solution to a national challenge. In Flintshire we are working to both reduce the need for children to enter the care system, whilst ensuring that there is placement sufficiency for those children who need support. Appendix 1 provides a report prepared for CROSC setting out the challenges faced.

1.02 The report provided CROSC with a high level summary of:

- the challenges facing Children’s Social care nationally and locally
- the associated financial pressures
- current and planned work to manage expenditure
- the need for additional financial investment from Welsh Government

and explored 5 central themes:

				
Increasing Demand	Insufficient Placements	Workforce Pressures	Finances	Solutions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Societal issues • Crime & exploitation • Poverty • Legal changes • Complexity of need 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Foster care • Residential Care • High cost placements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Experience • Stability • Agency 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Growing costs • Placements • Legal costs 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Early & targeted support • Investing in foster care • Commissioning • Resilience • National ask

1.03 This report provides an overview of the innovation we are driving forward to secure transformational change in delivering our Support and Placement Strategy. This work is summarised in the following 1 page overview, appendix 1

2.00 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

2.01 The Service is responding to, and managing significant pressures that are testing resilience with a shortfall in national funding. Pressures include the a growing volume and complexity of demand, with increasing numbers of older children entering the care system, often requiring high cost residential care placements, that are in short supply. A Care Crisis Review across England and Wales reported in 2018. The Review was commissioned in response to the growing number of children entering the care system. The review supported a call for central Government to make up an identified £2 billion shortfall in children’s social care.

2.02 Without investment in innovation and new approaches to service delivery the number of children requiring residential and IFA placements will continue to grow at an unsustainable rate with untenable financial consequences.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	All budget pressures and solutions are risk assessed stage by stage. The increasing cost of residential care for a relatively small cohort of young people is having a disproportionate impact on service budgets and risks the opportunity to invest in more preventative services.
3.02	The initiatives to develop the Mockingbird approach to Fostering and the development of residential provisions have their own risk procedures and associated controls.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED / CARRIED OUT
4.01	None

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1 - One page overview
5.02	Appendix 2 – Corporate Resources OSC report Sept 19

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	<p>i https://www.frg.org.uk/images/Care_Crisis/CCR-FINAL.pdf</p> <p>Contact Officers: Craig Macleod Telephone: 01352 701313 E-mail: craig.macleod@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

7.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
7.01	<p>Looked After Child - Looked after children are children and young people who are in public care and looked after by the state. This includes those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care. The term is also used to describe ‘accommodated’ children and young people who are looked after on a voluntary basis at the request of, or by agreement with, their parents.</p> <p>Independent Fostering Agency (IFA) - The main functions of an independent fostering agency are to recruit, assess, approve, train, support, supervise and review foster carers who will then be put forward to look after children local authorities are responsible for. IFA’s charge local authorities a weekly fee for placements made under these arrangements.</p>