

SOCIAL SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	4 March 2021
Report Subject	Arosfa refurbishment: update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer, Social Services
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

'Arosfa' is a well-established service providing short term breaks / respite for children with disabilities. The unused wing of the building has been refurbished to provide two additional bed spaces at the facility. The beds bring additional capacity to the current short break, respite provision for up to three children. Together the plans would enable us support a maximum of five children at any one time. This will provide a high quality, cost effective and local service. An assessment is currently being undertaken to identify the children/families that would most benefit from the provision and the associated support model. Action for Children are working to extend their staff capacity and secure approval the requisite approval from CIW to commence these arrangements.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Committee note the refurbishment that has been achieved and support progress to the next phase of service modelling and the opening the provision, once appropriate regulatory conditions have been met.
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REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE EXTENDING PROVISION AT AROSFA
1.01	Arosfa is a registered Children's Homes situated in Mold. It provides a short break facility for children and young people (5-19) with

	disabilities/their parents. The facilities provide overnight stays for those who require specialist care.
1.02	Since 2012 Action for Children have successfully provided a short breaks service for disabled children at Arosfa. Young people who attend the project have a severe learning disability / complex health needs with need for specific procedures such as gastrostomy, peg feeding / challenging behaviour / autism / communication issues / physical disability with need to have use of specialist equipment. It has three bedrooms; two of which are suitably designed and equipped for wheel chair use. Currently the project can accommodate up to a maximum of 3 children at any time plus two rooms for staff to use as sleeping in rooms.
1.03	This service meets a wide range of purposes. It gives young people an opportunity to spend time away from home, preparing them for future independent living and it gives them an opportunity to socialise outside of school with friends in a way that disabled children rarely get a chance to do. It provides an opportunity for parents and carers to get a much-needed break and spend quality time with other family members, in fact this provision for some families is crucial in keeping families together.
1.04	The Service has received consistently positive CIW reports and is a strong provision securing positive outcomes for children, young people and their families.
1.05	Arosfa opened in 2012 following significant refurbishment. At the time of refurbishment there was not sufficient funds to complete the whole building and as a consequence the left wing of the building consisting of two bedrooms, one bathroom and two living areas were left unused.
1.06	A physical assessment was undertaken to determine the potential refurbishment of the wing to offer additional care arrangements. This work informed a Capital allocation from our Council to fund building/refurbishment work. The building work has now been completed and we are currently in the process of internal decoration and soft furnishing.
1.07	Given the passing of time between the initial demand and needs analysis and the completion of the refurbishment (which has been impacted by COVID-19) we are revisiting our desk top analysis to ensure we have an up to date and in-depth understanding of the needs of children and families. This will inform the type of support that could be appropriately provided at Arosfa to secure better outcomes and financial efficiency. It is suggested that the final support model is brought back to Scrutiny to ensure a shared understanding of the extended provision that is being offered to support children with disabilities and their families.
1.08	It is proposed that the current management arrangements would continue, the present Registered Manager would remain in post with extended responsibility across both elements of the service. A larger staff team would be recruited with all staff being required to work across both units but with staff identified as having a primary link to each child. We are proposing as a minimum that staff would occupy accommodation in both

	wings overnight therefore ensuring staff are on hand close to the young people.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	The capital refurbishment of £177,162.43 has been met by the local authority as part of its commitment to support children in local placements.
2.02	The revenue costs are anticipated to be £200k per annum, subject to the final support model. The development of the provision has strategic commitment from BCU and there is joint agreement to use ICF grant funds in 2021/22 to meet the revenue costs of the service. Agreement will need to be secure when the ICF grant is replaced by a new funding allocation from Welsh Government for 2022/23 onwards.
2.03	The minimum annual cost for a residential placement is £182k with many placements exceeding this. Supporting two young people through the open market would therefore cost a minimum of £364k per year, and so this is a minimum anticipated cost avoidance for the council.

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	The provision of an additional 2 beds forms part of our strategic intent to reduce reliance on expensive out of county placements, and to support children and young people within County. Failure to undertake the work and to offer more respite and care provision with impact on our strategic ambition.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	At the time of the original refurbishments, extensive local neighbourhood events were conducted. Work will be needed to ensure the community is advised of the plans but it is not expected that extensive consultation will be required given no additional demands will be placed on local amenities or parking demands.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Before and after pictures

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	None

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Peter Robson Telephone: 01824 701028 E-mail: peter.robson@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
8.01	<p>SHORT BREAK REPSITE: This is the provision of overnight care and support and is determined by the needs of the child.</p> <p>Integrated Care Fund (ICF) A regional grant allocated by Welsh Government which is administered by a regional partnership board. Local authorities, Health and other partner agencies work in partnership to support older people, people with a learning disability and children with complex needs</p>