

## EDUCATION, YOUTH & CULTURE OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

<b>Date of Meeting</b>	Thursday, 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 2021
<b>Report Subject</b>	Flintshire Summer Playschemes and Summer of Fun
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Leader of the Council and Cabinet Member for Education
<b>Report Author</b>	Chief Officer (Education & Youth)
<b>Type of Report</b>	Operational

### EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The summer holiday period in Flintshire was particularly busy this year with two key programmes of activity to support children and young people.

2021 was the 26<sup>th</sup> year for the successful delivery of the Flintshire County Summer Playscheme programme. There were 55 summer playscheme site locations in towns and villages across the county. There were a total of 2,779 individual child registrations and a total recorded attendance for the 6 weeks of the playschemes of 14,019 children and young people.

In June 2021 Welsh Government launched its 'Summer of Fun' programme which was jointly developed with the Children's Commissioner for Wales, (CCfW) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Welsh Government made £5m available across Wales and Flintshire received an allocation of £218,000 to deliver a 'Summer of Fun' for children and young people from the age of 0 to 25 to help to alleviate some of the negative impacts of the necessary restrictions in response to the Covid-19 global pandemic.

This report provide details of how both programmes – Summer Playschemes and the Summer of Fun were delivered in Flintshire.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Members are reassured that children and young people in Flintshire had the opportunity to access and benefit from a range of suitable activities over the summer holidays through the Flintshire Playschemes and Summer of Fun programme.
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2	Members acknowledge the significant effort by council officers and officers in key partner organisations in delivering these successful programmes, particularly within challenging timescales.
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## **REPORT DETAILS**

<b>1.00</b>	<b>EXPLAINING THE FLINTSHIRE SUMMER PLAYSCHMES AND SUMMER OF FUN</b>
1.01	<p><b>FLINTSHIRE COUNTY SUMMER PLAYSCHME 2021</b></p> <p>2021 was the 26<sup>th</sup> year for the successful delivery of the Flintshire County Summer Playscheme programme. There were 55 summer playscheme site locations in towns and villages across the county (See Appendix 4). There were 2,779 child registrations and a total recorded attendance for the 6 weeks of 14,019 children and young people.</p> <p>To avoid any inequalities as a result of any limited access to digital devices, there were opportunities for families to register manually for the play schemes as well as online. Information about the playschemes were widely advertised (See Appendix 1).</p>
1.02	<p>For 2021, there was an even greater demand for localised play provision, largely due to the impact of lockdown and appreciation for the opportunities for their children to play and have fun.</p> <p>Summer playschemes were delivered from Monday 19<sup>th</sup> July through to Friday 27<sup>th</sup> August, 2021 for a duration of 3, 4, 5 or 6 weeks depending on the level of finance available locally. The 'County offer' was for a minimum of 3 weeks to allow us to employ temporary staff for at least 4 weeks duration, including a full training week in advance (Training programme attached – Appendix 2).</p> <p>The recruitment commenced in early March 2021, with a full team in place in time for all checks to be completed, including full reference and DBS checks. A total of 85 play workers were recruited in total with the majority of the team generally aged between 18 - 25 years and all were Flintshire residents.</p>
1.03	Summer playschemes were delivered in partnership with 28 local town and community councils. The local town and community councils are very supportive of children's play. The local town and community councils identify the local area need for play during the summer and also advise on appropriate and preferred locations.
1.04	All summer playschemes in Flintshire are funded jointly by local Town and Community Councils and Welsh Government, via the All Wales Play Opportunities Grant and Families First Grant.
1.05	Playschemes across the county were delivered for children and young people aged 5 -12 years. Older children up to the ages of 17 with disabilities attended the Flintshire Buddy scheme.

1.06	<p><b>Flintshire Buddy Scheme 2021</b></p> <p>2021 was the 16<sup>th</sup> year for the delivery of the Flintshire Buddy scheme. The Buddy Scheme for 2021 was delivered in partnership and funded via the Welsh Government Families First grant, the Flintshire Disability Cohort and the Welsh Government Summer of Fun Grant, and there were 38 children attending this year who needed a higher level of support. This funding enables children and young people who have disabilities or specific needs to have equal access to their local playscheme.</p> <p>Children and young people were supported as necessary, with the majority receiving 1 -1 support with the same team member for continuity for the duration of the scheme. Children and young people attended their own local scheme. The Buddy Scheme is a rights-based service. All children and young people have a right to play out locally with their peers. Our Buddy Team makes that happen. We go to where the children and young people are.</p> <p>The relationship and communication with the family, the team, the child or young person is paramount to the scheme's success. Our team buddies made 'garden visits' before the scheme to get to know their individual children and family whilst working safely with Covid regulations.</p> <p>There were a number of children who are 'looked after' (i.e. the Council fulfils the role of corporate parent) and children living in refuges who were also registered to the buddy scheme for 2021. This provided greater reassurance for parents and carers to encourage their children to join the scheme and was greatly appreciated.</p> <p>The age range to access the scheme for these children and young people was extended to 17 years. All playschemes are inclusive and staff are fully trained.</p>
1.07	<p><b>COVID 19 Management at Playscheme Sites</b></p> <p>The Play Development Team planned and managed control systems to minimise risk of Covid-19 to ensure the safe delivery of play sessions. There was no evidence of any infections stemming from children attending summer playschemes. All of the measures that were in place provided an effective control on site and enabled playschemes to be delivered throughout the summer. No playschemes were cancelled.</p> <p>The measures on site included :-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Crucially - information in advance of the summer was circulated to parents; carers; all schools; town and community councils via the FCC website and Flintshire Family Information Service. This information enabled a co-ordinated approach to safety and risk management.</li> <li>• Pre-registration for all children at all sites – including a Covid-19 'declaration' (Attached - Appendix 1).</li> <li>• Management of numbers – site restrictions were in place to allow no more than 30 children at each session. Where sites were 'over-subscribed' parents and carers were contacted via the registers and were asked to provide their preferred dates. This reduced the risk</li> </ul>

	<p>of greater numbers than our Covid-19 risk assessments would allow.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Team and Visitor Covid-19 declarations were completed before any work or visit.</li> <li>• Parents and carers were very supportive and appreciative of the control measures on site for Covid-19 and that we could offer a service in the circumstances because of this good practice.</li> <li>• Team members were advised to reduce their external contacts for the duration of the scheme. All understood the importance of 'getting this right' for children.</li> <li>• Compulsory hand gels were placed at entrances to site locations for all entering and leaving.</li> <li>• All equipment was thoroughly cleaned and wiped down before each use.</li> <li>• Team members changed their clothing between morning and afternoon sites.</li> <li>• Lateral flow tests were undertaken on Sunday and Wednesday evenings by all 85 team members. Results were uploaded to the Play Development Officer and the NHS. All completed – no positive cases.</li> <li>• The Play Development Officer, and the Chief Officer for Education and Youth worked closely with the TTP team to identify and manage any concerns.</li> <li>• Training was provided to all team members with regard to 'Emergency Covid-19' procedures on site i.e. what to do if cases are reported by parents as children are at play or if a child becomes unwell.</li> <li>• Emergency Covid-19 packs were available at all sites.</li> <li>• Training, advice and support was provided by FCC Health and Safety Officers.</li> <li>• The Health and Safety Advisor for Education and Youth inspected playschemes during the summer with regard to all risk management issues and particularly with regard to Covid-19 controls being implemented.</li> </ul>
1.08	<p>Overall, across the 2,799 pupils registered, there were 4 reported Covid-19 cases via the TTP team during the 6 weeks. These children obviously withdrew from the playscheme and observed the appropriate period of isolation.</p> <p>The parents of other children in the scheme were advised that a positive case had been identified but that they did not have to isolate their children from playscheme because being outdoors, the risk of transmission was significantly reduced. It was for parents and carers to decide whether or not to withdraw.</p> <p>We were made aware early on in the scheme that children were isolating in some areas of the county following school infections at the end of the school year. Attendances were minimal in those areas as expected but returned to normal expected levels following the end of self-isolation.</p>

1.09	<p><b>Welsh Language Summer Playschemes 2021</b></p> <p>A total of 120 children were registered to the Welsh Language playschemes held for 6 weeks at Ysgol Croes Atti, Shotton (32 children), and Ysgol Maes Garmon, Mold (88 children).</p>
1.10	<p>During the summer of 2021 Flintshire Play Development had two Welsh first language sites for those children who preferred to play through the medium of Welsh. These Welsh playschemes offered the opportunity for children who attend Welsh medium schools the opportunity to use their Welsh during the summer holidays. A high percentage of these children come from households where there is no Welsh spoken so to be able to play and use their Welsh language during the school holidays is very important for them. Parents commented regularly during the playschemes on how important this is for their children to keep up their Welsh. The obvious outcome was how happy and social the children were with each other and how much it helped their wellbeing. To be able to spend time with their peers and to have a safe space to do this and to use their Welsh is invaluable.</p>
1.11	<p>As part of the Council's focus on its Welsh in Education Plan and encouraging all children to use Welsh more regularly, the Welsh Language Officer undertook an informal audit across the play work team to identify those which had Welsh language skills and this revealed that 14 of them identified as a Welsh speaker and virtually all the rest described themselves as a Welsh learner.</p> <p>All play workers in the English schemes were encouraged to spontaneously use every day Welsh phrases and the response from the children was very positive with many reports that children were naturally moving between the two languages using phrases they were familiar with in schools. Developing more bilingualism during future play schemes will be actively encouraged.</p>
1.12	<p><b>SUMMER OF FUN 2021</b></p>
1.13	<p>Since March 2020 when the World Health Organisation declared the outbreak of Covid-19 to be a global pandemic, there has been a growing recognition of some of the adverse impacts of the necessary restrictions imposed on the population and particularly on the health and wellbeing of children and young people.</p>
1.14	<p>As in other parts of Wales, Flintshire children and young people had spent a large part of the last year at home, often online and only mixing with parents, siblings or small groups of friends. The research evidence on the impact of the pandemic on children and young people references consistent themes which include the impacts on socialisation, communication, emotional and mental health, low levels of physical activity, increased sedentary behaviour, healthy eating and obesity.</p>
1.15	<p>As a response, the Children's Commissioner for Wales (CCfW) began to promote a vision that every child (0-25yrs) should be 'entitled' to a week of fun activities within the school summer holiday period 2021. Many partners, organisations and agencies had been in touch with the CCfW</p>

	expressing an interest in offering their services and resources to put on activities for children and young people during the school summer holiday period in order to try and mitigate some of these negative impacts and experiences.
1.16	This concept of a 'Summer of Fun' was jointly explored by the CCfW, Welsh Government (WG) and the Welsh Local Government Association (WLGA). Welsh Government made £5m available across Wales and Flintshire received an allocation of £218,000. This notification was received in late June with a window for delivery of activity to be from 1 <sup>st</sup> July to 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2021. Whilst the funding was very welcome, there was very little time for the Council to create a delivery plan within the terms and conditions of the grant and get providers on board.
1.17	The focus of the Summer of Fun was on developing interactive, creative and play-based initiatives for children and young people from the age of 0-25 that were free and accessible. Councils were directed to particularly focus on children who were already disadvantaged before the pandemic, including disabled children, children of black, Asian, ethnic minorities, children who are 'looked after' and those on the edge of care. Children who have been effected by Covid themselves due to bereavement, trauma and illness and children aged 7 and under were also a priority. The grant also directed organisations to make provision for activities in English, Welsh and bilingually. The Summer of Fun was intended to be an inclusive programme of activities, easily accessible by all children and young people who wanted to take part.
1.18	<p>The terms and conditions of the funding encouraged provision through as many different council services or stakeholder organisations as possible. The response in Flintshire was co-ordinated by the Chief Officer, Education and Youth, supported by the Senior Manager for Children's Services. A working group of officers from relevant services across the Council and key strategic partners was quickly established. This included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Children's Services</li> <li>• Flying Start Team</li> <li>• Childcare Team</li> <li>• Play Team</li> <li>• Integrated Youth Provision including Estyn Llaw and Forest Schools</li> <li>• Youth Justice Services</li> <li>• Drug and Alcohol Team (SORTED)</li> <li>• Progression Team</li> <li>• Integrated Transport Unit</li> <li>• Aura Libraries and Leisure</li> <li>• Theatr Clwyd</li> <li>• Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam</li> </ul> <p>This working group was also very ably supported by a Planning and Development Officer from Children's Services and by an Accountancy Technician from Corporate Finance.</p>
1.19	Within a matter of weeks officers from each service area or organisation developed a range of activities suitable to meet the needs of children and young people within the remit of the grant funding. Some activities were

	<p>open to any child or young person whilst others were specifically targeted at those who needed particular support. Funding was directed to supporting childcare settings to offer additional sessions for the youngest children during the holidays and particular attention was also paid to the young people at the upper end of the age range to offer activities that would interest them and which they could access more independently. A number of activities across the age ranges were delivered through the medium of Welsh through the commissioning of Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam and wherever possible through the expertise within council teams.</p> <p>The range of activities over the summer holidays, which ran alongside Flintshire's Summer Playschemes and the Aura Summer Programme included :</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Summer Reading Challenge</li> <li>• Football Camp</li> <li>• Junior Holiday Camp</li> <li>• Fit, Fed and Read</li> <li>• Forest School Sessions</li> <li>• Pet First Aid</li> <li>• Fun cooking activities</li> <li>• Swimming passes</li> <li>• Gym Passes</li> <li>• Day Bus Tickets</li> <li>• Theatre Clwyd Summer Hub</li> <li>• Horse Riding</li> <li>• Hair and Beauty activities</li> <li>• Graffiti Vinyl</li> <li>• Crafts</li> <li>• Climbing Wall</li> <li>• Go Karting</li> <li>• Guided Family Walks</li> <li>• Story sessions and family picnics</li> <li>• Gardening activities</li> <li>• Treasure Hunts</li> <li>• Puppet and Magic Shows</li> </ul>
1.20	<p>The anecdotal feedback from officers and partners who worked with children, young people and their families is that the Summer of Fun programme was very successful, gave them lots of opportunities to engage in a range of fun activities which boosted their physical health and emotional wellbeing and also gave them valuable opportunities to interact with others.</p> <p>Through the joint working approach across the Council, new collaborations and partnerships have emerged which have been hugely beneficial e.g. Integrated Youth Provision's Forest School delivered to families entitled to support from the Flying Start programme. These will now be further developed to enhance future provision for children and families.</p>
1.21	<p>The biggest challenge, which has been fed back to Welsh Government and acknowledged, was although the funding was welcomed, the late notification of the funding was hugely problematic as it gave very little time</p>

	<p>for planning and organising activities. Flintshire's approach was to build on a number of planned summer activities as well as creating new opportunities for groups not normally supported during the summer holidays.</p> <p>This programme could not have been delivered without the enthusiasm and creativity of all the officers involved who developed it in a matter of weeks, in addition to their usual work streams and who gave up/delayed their own annual leave to prioritise it. This programme truly reflected the effective joint working across the Council and its key external partners.</p>
1.22	<p>Feedback from the Summer of Fun programme is now being collated by Welsh Government into a formal evaluation. Each delivery partner had to complete an online survey form to record the number of children and young people participating and to identify those particularly from the more vulnerable groups identified as the priority for support as well as the range of activities offered. A few individual officers have also been interviewed by the external company appointed by Welsh Government to evaluate the programme to share their experience of planning and delivery and the impact on the participants.</p> <p>A Wales wide evaluation report will be available in the new year and it is hoped that we will also receive a Flintshire specific report where all of the information has been collated to be able to share with members later in the year at the joint committee meeting with Health and Social Care.</p>
1.23	<p>Welsh Government have now committed to continuing funding for this kind of support until the end of the financial year and have allocated further money to the Council to deliver a 'Winter of Wellbeing' programme. This is now being planned by the working group, building on the success of the Summer of Fun. An update report will be presented at the joint committee with Health and Social Care later next year.</p>

<b>2.00</b>	<b>RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS</b>
2.01	There are no additional resource implications in relation to this report as the activity for both the Summer Playschemes and the Summer of Fun were fully grant funded.

<b>3.00</b>	<b>IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT</b>
3.01	N/A

<b>4.00</b>	<b>CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT</b>
4.01	Engagement/informal consultation around the provision for summer playschemes are undertaken with Town and Community Councils on an annual basis.

<b>5.00</b>	<b>APPENDICES</b>
5.01	Appendix 1 – Flintshire Summer Programme 2021 Appendix 2 – Playscheme 2021 Team Training Appendix 3 – Connah’s Quay Central Park – Risk Assessment 2021 Appendix 4 - Site List 2021

<b>6.00</b>	<b>LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS</b>
6.01	N/A

<b>7.00</b>	<b>CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS</b>
7.01	<b>Contact Officer:</b> Claire Homard, Chief Officer (Education & Youth) <b>Telephone:</b> 01352 704190 <b>E-mail:</b> <a href="mailto:claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk">claire.homard@flintshire.gov.uk</a>

<b>8.00</b>	<b>GLOSSARY OF TERMS</b>
8.01	<b>Summer of Fun</b> – a Welsh Government initiative to provide a range of activities for children and young people aged 0-25 during the summer holiday period 2021.  <b>Menter Iaith Sir y Fflint a Wrecsam</b> - an independent community organisation working to increase and strengthen the use of Welsh locally. Menter Iaith organise community events, host activities for children and families, and help businesses and services who wish to use more Welsh.