

EDUCATION, YOUTH AND CULTURE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	Thursday 9 th January 2025
Report Subject	Flintshire Youth Service Update
Cabinet Member	Cabinet Member for Education, Welsh Language, Culture and Leisure
Report Author	Chief Officer, Education & Youth
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Flintshire Youth Service is progressing positively towards a more sustainable model which safeguards the range and quantity of provision in the medium to long term, despite the challenging economic circumstances of local government. To support this, the service has led on the creation of a Youth Service Providers Forum, which aims to ensure there is a balanced and equitable programme of activity across Flintshire. There is continued analysis of data to plan for a broader cover of provision across the County so the service can be responsive to need within the resources available.

The service continues to focus on developing a well-qualified team with the aim of growing future leaders from within the service and from service users, showing them the career pathways that are available to them. A Young Leaders programme has been completed with 12 young people graduating the course endorsed by the Children's University in a ceremony at Wrexham University. An in-house training team has been developed to reduce the cost and the dependence on external agencies and this has resulted in the creation of a bespoke Level 1 entry level award into Youth Work. A successful recruitment campaign has been conducted with 14 new 'trainee' youth workers enrolled on the Level 2 Award. All of these training opportunities are aimed at attracting new talent into the service, increasing resilience, improving quality and making the service sustainable in the longer term.

In order to maximise budgetary efficiency there is ongoing partnership work to ensure that buildings still under the management of the Youth Service have multiple partners using the facilities and sharing costs.

The Participation Team continue to work with colleagues from Healthy Schools resulting in the launch of 'Young Flintshire', our integrated Youth Council, as well as developing and maintaining youth councils throughout schools and youth provisions. The team have supported various internal and external consultations, including working closely with the Children's Commissioner's office on a range of national

projects, thus ensuring that young people are actively involved in policy development and implementation at a local and national level.

Although performance can never be based solely on attendance, this does provide an indication of the level of engagement of service users and there has been a healthy increase in the attendance data, reflecting the growth of direct delivery opportunities through the Flintshire Youth Service. This dashboard captures the variety of youth service activity e.g. youth clubs, open access and targeted provision, including activities offered by partner agencies e.g. Flintshire Libraries and Leisure (Gwella).

The service is coming towards the end of the current delivery plan, which was a recovery strategy from the pandemic. Work has begun on the new plan which is due in 2025 and the Youth Work Management Team look forward to wide engagement to ensure that the vision meets the needs of our local communities. To support the ambitions of both community members and the Council, there will be a greater need to embrace digital provision as an area for further growth whilst evolving our face-to-face delivery.

Flintshire Youth Service has recently been successful in gaining the Quality Mark Bronze Award for Youth Services. This is a quality assurance programme administered by Education Training Standards (ETS). Prior to Youth Services in Wales becoming a standalone inspection area as part of the Local Government Education Services (LGES), the progressive award system run by ETS was, and in some ways still is, a benchmark and quality assurance for quality of provision.

Other service programmes have also been successful in gaining recognition e.g. The Athena (girls' intervention) and Goliath (boys' intervention) programmes which target toxic masculinity, recently won the Safer Communities Wales Award for the Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence (VAWDASV) category.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1	Support the creation of a digital strategy for Youth Work provision in Flintshire, including online provision which compliments physical open access and targeted provision.
2	Support the creation of an internal delivery team for youth work qualifications which supports the recent creation of the North Wales Training Partnership. Ensuring that future qualifications are affordable, accessible and reflect local and regional needs.
3	Commend the service for gaining the Quality Mark Bronze Award and the Safer Communities Award for the Athena and Goliath Programmes.
4	Commit to the application for the Quality Mark Silver Award in 2025 as part of the ongoing service improvement.
5	Support the continuation of creating a sustainable, affordable, equitable and quality youth service which prioritises front line delivery.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE FLINTSHIRE YOUTH SERVICE OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS									
1.01	<p>Data - Upshot, a monitoring, evaluation and learning tool was implemented in April 2023. Comparative data for 6 months shows an increase in both participation and session delivery hours.</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="320 443 1385 562"> <thead> <tr> <th></th> <th>Apr '23 – Oct' 23</th> <th>Apr '24 – Oct '24</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Participations</td> <td>8688</td> <td>12574</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Delivery Contact Hours</td> <td>1826</td> <td>2252</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>To compliment the quantitative data the system also enables the capture of good practice and impact evidence with the ability for staff to upload questionnaires, media, session notes and planning, feedback and essential service messages which all support the planning, delivery, and evaluation of all sessions.</p>		Apr '23 – Oct' 23	Apr '24 – Oct '24	Participations	8688	12574	Delivery Contact Hours	1826	2252
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1.02	<p>Partnerships – In the Autumn of 2023 a Youth Providers Partnership was created in Flintshire. The initial terms of reference for the group were to create an efficient reporting mechanism for the Youth Support Grant (YSG), as well as understand in greater detail what is being delivered where and for who. As this partnership has evolved it has achieved its initial aims and now serves as a planning forum for provision within Flintshire. This ensures that not only can a more equitable service be planned, but also there is an element of quality assurance for funded partners.</p>									
1.03	<p>Breadth Of Delivery/Provision – The Service currently directly delivers 9 youth clubs, 3 transition youth clubs, 2 LGBTQ+ clubs, a forest school, a schools' programme in 5 secondary schools with an additional peripatetic offer, a resilience programme, the Duke Of Edinburgh Award, Youth Homelessness Prevention, a Youth Council, and detached provision.</p> <p>Through our managed partnerships there are also Welsh language provisions, a speech and language club, a pan-disability youth club, an open access club, a training and employment pathway, a mental health intervention and a multi-sports youth work provision.</p>									
1.04	<p>Training – the full time and part time team complete their mandatory training and to facilitate their work, attend a range of informal and formal training courses and awards. In the past 12 months training has included Consent, toxic masculinity, Welsh language and culture, drugs and alcohol, street-based violence, and County Lines. Furthermore, the team have adopted the Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) approach to leadership and all staff with supervisor responsibility have completed or are enrolled on their ILM journey at 3 and above. The next stage will be for all other staff to complete their Level 2. Three members of staff are trainee tutors with Adult Learning Wales which will further support our delivery of future youth work qualifications. This approach is designed to ensure that future training can be delivered 'in house', not only helping reduce cost but also ensure quality.</p>									

1.05	<p>Funding – The service receives funding from three main sources, the Revenue Support Grant (RSG) which comes into the Local Authority annually with an element for statutory youth service delivery, along with the Youth Support Grant (YSG), which is in year 3 of 3, and Families First, which is due to be recommissioned in the Spring 2025.</p>
1.06	<p>A Sustainable Service – to provide sustainability and maximise front line delivery, spending has been prioritised on staffing. In the past two years a succession plan has been implemented for future staff needs but this has left a pressure on the existing resource. In order to provide more equity, it has been necessary to relocate staff into neighbouring areas as delivery/qualification regulations necessitate lead workers to be qualified to a minimum Level 3. It has also meant, that in prioritising delivery, the building stock held by the service has had to be reimagined. The service works with partners to ensure, as much as possible, that buildings are placed with services which maintain the community interest as well as being more cost efficient for the Youth Service which could use a facility for 3 – 6 hours per week but be responsible for all of the on-costs.</p>
1.07	<p>Staffing – Having a succession plan for recruitment and retention is key to a sustainable service. The recruitment continuum ensures that there is a young leaders programme, an apprenticeship programme, entry levels for assistant and lead workers at Level 2 and 3 as well as degree level jobs with direct involvement in the degree programme with Wrexham University. This is viewed as a key strategic element of having a motivated and highly skilled workforce which at all levels has access to appropriate, accredited and accessible continued professional development.</p> <p>Currently the service employs 17 Core Staff (a mixture of full and part time) and 30 part time staff as lead and assistant workers who mainly support the evening youth work delivery.</p>
1.08	<p>Good Practice – The report for the Bronze Quality Mark identified the forest school, resilience, youth clubs, and snow camp as good practice. Further good practice has been established with programmes such as young Leaders (the only one currently run in North Wales), the Youth Pride Event, (the only one of its kind in Wales), the toxic masculinity programmes and Consent – which is delivered to all year 9 learners in the county. The key to any of these programmes is the ethos that they interconnect, and therefore a young person within the service is able to follow their own journey depending on their needs, allowing them to achieve their own potential.</p>
1.09	<p>Welsh Language – The service ambition is to be fully bilingual by 2030. Support is given to all staff to improve their own knowledge, use and confidence in using the language. To do this, those identified as scoring 0 on their skills assessment will be supported to attend further training as part of the corporate intervention. The Play and Youth team have also been part of Adfer 1 with Bangor University and will be part of their new programme which aims to improve Welsh language and confidence of using incidental Welsh. To help monitor how Welsh is used, the question is asked on session feedback forms completed by staff.</p> <p>To further support the service ambition, in May 2024 the vacant Welsh language Youth Worker post was recruited to. This will support the wider team as well as directly delivering Welsh and bilingually. Partnership work</p>

	continues with the URDD, who deliver and co-deliver Welsh language youth provision.
1.10	Creating A Digital Strategy – A key component of the new plan will have to be the increased understanding and use of digital youth work to complement the existing programmes. There is currently digital youth work taking place with the use of technology such as gaming, virtual reality and Zoom, but its implementation is ad hoc and opportunistic as opposed to being strategically targeted. A digital approach will enable greater engagement through a variety of activities which would be harder to implement in a club setting. The strategy would therefore cover online delivery, in-club delivery, outreach and detached opportunities for digital integration as well as a system of training to ensure staff are delivering safe, effective and high quality youth work sessions.
1.11	Leadership – Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) qualifications have been implemented across the team. All staff with supervisory responsibility have completed and/or are in the process completing their awards. The leadership culture will support our collective decision making, the development of existing and new initiatives, the translation of strategy to delivery, and the effective management of our staff teams, supporting greater retention and improving performance. By working with Achieve More Training and the URDD, these courses have been provided for no cost.

2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS								
2.01	<p>Revenue: The revenue for the Youth Service mainly comes from three key areas, one of which is core funded from the Rate Support Grant and the two grant funds, Youth Support Grant and Families First.</p> <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Funding Source</th> <th>% Of Funding</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>Revenue Support Grant</td> <td>58%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Youth Support Grant</td> <td>36%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Families First</td> <td>6%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>The Rate Support Grant is allocated on an annual basis. The overall grant is awarded to the Local Authority from Welsh Government with an element for statutory youth work.</p> <p>The Youth Support Grant and Families First Grant are commissioned on a three year cycle. The Youth Support Grant is directly commissioned whereas the Families First funding is commissioned through Action For Children from Flintshire County Council, and resilience receive this funding from them, as a delivery partner within the disability consortium.</p> <p>Capital Funding: there has been no capital funding for the past year.</p>	Funding Source	% Of Funding	Revenue Support Grant	58%	Youth Support Grant	36%	Families First	6%
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	<p>Human Resources:</p> <p>Over the past 12 months there has been significant work undertaken to rewrite all of the service job descriptions and evaluate the jobs against Green Book (NJC) terms and conditions. This is with a view to move Pink Book staff (JNC) to Green Book, should there be no negative consequence.</p> <p>This review process has identified that there are a couple of vacancies which would potentially be affected, and as it would impact both terms and conditions and pay. Therefore, this has been on hold until a final decision is taken as to whether as to which terms and conditions the post will work to. This has resulted in other team members taking on additional pieces of work to sustain key, and long established services, as well as utilising part time staff on a temporary fixed term basis.</p>
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3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>Integrated Impact Assessment</p> <p>1. Impact on the Community</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Positive Impacts: More young people will have access to high quality youth work at a time and a format that is convenient to them. Young people will be informed, have choice, and be consulted with to develop these plans. • Negative Impact: Cohabiting buildings will bring about culture change in some areas, and the programmes offered may need to be modified based on local circumstance. Where no buildings are available and a detached provision is offered, the inclement weather challenges will be present. For buildings which are currently run by the Youth Service there may be some minor disruption to other service users within buildings as transition arrangements are implemented. • Mitigation: The changes to the delivery model will allow the service to achieve its funding efficiencies whilst ensuring that quality and quantity of delivery is maintained and further increased. The plan relies on community activation, as evident in areas such as Broughton, whereby, through working with the County Councillors and community council, as well as local volunteers, a cost-effective club has been established. <p>2. Environmental Impact</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Neutral Impact: Although there is scope for buildings to become more energy efficient, this is unproven. There is no further major impact either positively or negatively through the proposed actions. <p>Risk Management</p> <p>The following key risks have been identified as part of the Integral Impact Assessment:</p> <p>1. Risk: Buildings Remain Under The Youth Service</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mitigation: The plan becomes undeliverable, staff recruitment, training and retention is challenged by an unknown budget, reputational damage ensues as user groups receive no service, buildings unfit for use (no

caretaking facility), or regular temporary closures are small repairs are only identified as more major issues.

2. Risk: Challenges in Recruitment and Retention

- **Mitigation:** The in-house tutor team will support a more blended approach to learning. The suggested teaching hours for the level 2 and 3 Youth Work Award are 480. The coursework is completed in addition to this. In order to make this viable for a part time worker then being able to study and complete coursework on the job is essential. Not only does it benefit the learner but also the young people through enhanced and/or new provision.

3. Risk: Decreased Community Engagement

- **Mitigation:** The digital offer and the increased detached work will ensure that the reach of the service is equitable, and that the current and future offers remain relevant for young people.

Ways of Working (Sustainable Development) Principles Impact

Principles	Impact
Long-term	Positive: Long term planning, staff development and succession plans, leadership principles instilled, agile workforce and delivery mechanisms.
Prevention	Positive: Early recruitment strategies and funding efforts help prevent service disruption.
Integration	Positive: The service coproduces with relevant portfolio teams such as housing, parenting, schools and wider education, youth justice, social services and HR.
Collaboration	Positive: Creating strong partnerships with external partners including the third sector ensure wider service delivery and sharing of resources and experiences as well as a culture of one 'integrated' offer.
Involvement	Positive: Extensive community engagement and consultation, especially with children and families through the youth council, young Flintshire and linking in with local, regional and national participation opportunities.

Well-being Goals Impact

Prosperous Wales	Positive: Efficient use of funds and enhanced training opportunities contribute to economic and social well-being.
Resilient Wales	Positive: Positive youth work in its many forms has the ability to develop resilient people and communities.
Healthier Wales	Positive: Access to quality youth opportunities foster physical, social and emotional well-being in children and young people.
More equal Wales	Positive: Programmes such as resilience, youth homelessness, LGBTQ+, partner provision and the pillars of youth work

		ensure inclusive practice in all settings in addition to targeted work.
	Cohesive Wales	Positive: Community-driven programmes build social cohesion and engagement.
	Vibrant Wales	Positive: Youth provision contributes to vibrant community life, with opportunities for creative expression and participation within one's own community at any given time.
	Globally responsible Wales	Neutral: Education programmes within service focus on the environment, the climate and the individuals role in a greener future.

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	Young Flintshire 3 issues campaign was created to allow all young people the opportunity to share the 3 top issues which they feel most strongly about.
4.02	Flintshire Voice – Online consultation designed to understand the main issues facing young people including the range of challenges which they face and understand the reasons why.
4.03	Welsh Language use and future use within the service. Conducted by Owen Evans with findings supporting current and future delivery and also being fed into the WESP.
4.04	British Transport Police – Hate Crime survey. The survey was supported by the LGBTQ+ youth provisions and found that 1 in 5 LGBTQ+ young people had experienced hate crime whilst travelling on public transport.
4.05	Big Play Survey (Year 8 element). – A survey sent to all schools and completed by year 5 and year 8 learners.
4.06	Police Crime and Commissioner Survey. – Supporting young people to have their say on how North Wales is policed.

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	Appendix 1: Flintshire Youth Service Bronze Quality Mark Assessment Report
5.02	Appendix 2: Performance Data for April 2023 to March 2024

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	https://safercommunities.wales/2024-safer-communities-awards/ https://www.gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-04/quality-mark-for-youth-work-in-wales-introduction-and-guidance.pdf

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	<p>Contact Officer: Matt Hayes (Senior Manager) Telephone: 07798893509 E-mail: matt.hayes2@flintshire.gov.uk</p>

8.00	GLOSSARY OF TERMS
	<p>RSG – The revenue support grant (“RSG”) is the Welsh Government’s un-hypothecated grant distributed to local authorities via a needs-based formula.</p> <p>YSG – The youth support grant is a grant provided for youth work by the Welsh Government. There are three elements of funding within the grant including support for those not in education and/or training and youth homelessness prevention. An element of the grant is provided to support third sector youth work.</p> <p>Young Flintshire – The representative body made up of all secondary schools in Flintshire to form an overall County youth council. Flintshire Youth Council – The youth service forum which provides a voice of young people from our service users.</p> <p>ETS – ETS Wales professionally endorses programmes of training for Youth Workers to ensure they are of a suitably high quality, relevant to the needs of employers, youth workers themselves and the young people they work with. It undertakes this work on behalf of the Joint Negotiating Committee for Youth & Community Workers (JNC).</p> <p>Safer Communities Awards - Across Wales Community Safety Partnerships and other partners are working individually and together so that everyone in Wales feels safe and free from the fear of exploitation, crime and disorder. The awards recognise the exceptional work which has been taking place.</p> <p>Open Access Provision – Provision which is open and targeted to all young people within the advertised age range.</p> <p>Detached Youth Work - Detached youth work operates without the use of a building or activity and takes place where young people "are at" both geographically and developmentally. It delivers informal and social education and addresses whatever needs are presented to or perceived by the youth worker. As Detached Youth Workers have no physical building or specific activity over which they have power or control, the relationship between young person and youth worker is entirely voluntary and constantly up for negotiation.</p> <p>ILM - The Institute of Leadership is a professional membership body for leaders and managers. The organisation leads on a range of management qualifications which are delivered under licence by training organisations.</p>