

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

REPORT TO: SOCIAL & HEALTH CARE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY
COMMITTEE
DATE: THURSDAY, 4 OCTOBER 2012
REPORT BY: DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY SERVICES
SUBJECT: NORTH WALES ADOPTION SERVICE

1.00 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.01 To provide Members with a report of the current operational activity for the North Wales Adoption Service.

2.00 BACKGROUND

2.01 Following an extensive consultation exercise the North Wales Adoption

Service was launched on 01.04.10. Its purpose being to build upon and formalise the previous informal consortia arrangement which has existed.

2.02 Via a partnership agreement the North Wales Adoption Service provides the following elements for all 6 North Wales authorities:

- Assessment of Prospective adopters
- Assessment of Partner of Parent applicants for birth families including face to face contact and letterbox contact.
- Counselling for birth families in a contract with “After Adoption”
- General advice and support to the six authorities.
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2.03 The project is currently hosted by Wrexham CBC but overseen by the six North Wales Heads of Children’s Services who meet quarterly as the NWAS Board. An operational Management Group sits below the Board, discusses operational matters and supports the Project Manager, feeding matters into the Board as required.

3.00 CONSIDERATIONS

3.01 This report and its appendices provides Members with an update on the work of the North Wales Adoption Service.

3.02 The report covers annual activity from April 2011 to February 2012 and the most recent quarterly report (April – June 2012).

3.03 The operation of the services shows an improving picture now that the staffing gaps have been resolved.

3.04 The recent inspection of adoption services in Flintshire by CSSIW reported positively on the work of the NWAS. This echoed a similar inspection conducted in Wrexham in March 2012. A report on the Flintshire Inspection.

4.00 RECOMMENDATIONS

4.01 That Members accept this report as information on the work of the North Wales Adoption Service.

5.00 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.01 Funding for the project is based upon the percentage amounts agreed at the commencement of the collaboration when this was calculated on (i) Child population and (ii) adoption activity.

5.02 The total budget is £758,493. Contributions are staff and cash contributions. Individual Authority contributions to the overall budget are as follows:

FLINTSHIRE	22.4%
WREXHAM	19.4%
DENBIGHSHIRE	14.0%
CONWY	16.5%
GWYNEDD	17.6%
YNYS MON	10.1%

5.03 The consortia arrangement means that children placed across North Wales do not attract a charge whereas placements ex-consortia attract a charge of £30k.

6.00 ANTI POVERTY IMPACT

6.01 None arising directly from this report.

7.00 ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

7.01 None arising directly from this report.

8.00 EQUALITIES IMPACT

8.01 Children in the care system who are unable to return to their birth families need an opportunity to live with a permanent family of their own and this initiative ensures that wherever possible children can be found alternative placements where their cultural needs can be met.

9.00 PERSONNEL IMPLICATIONS

9.01 Some staff are seconded from individual local authorities as per the partnership agreement whilst others have Wrexham contracts as they are the host authority.

10.00 CONSULTATION REQUIRED

10.01 The partnership agreement requires confirmation of this continuance post April 2013 and this is currently being considered by the 6 North Wales Heads of Children's Services.

11.00 CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN

11.01 As stated in 2.03 the Operational Management Group report to the Heads of Services on a quarterly basis.

12.00 APPENDICES

12.01 (i) NWS annual Report April 2011 to February 2012.
(ii) NWS Quarterly Report April – June 2012.
(iii) CSSIW Inspection of Adoption Service in Flintshire 17th August 2012.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT) 1985 BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Contact Officer: Carol Salmon
Telephone: 01352 702504
Email: carol.salmon@flintshire.gov.uk