

FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

SOCIAL SERVICES ANNUAL REPORT 2020/21

& 2021/22 PRIORITIES



Gyda'n gilydd gallwn ni i gyd helpu i gadw **Sir y Fflint** yn ddiogel
Together we can all help to keep **Flintshire** safe



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I am so proud that the Council has continued to uphold its reputation as a leading light in the social care sector.

It says so much about the commitment and dedication of our internal teams, and of our commissioned providers and partners, that we have not only come through such a seismic pandemic but have gone from strength to strength.

Our social care colleagues have been local heroes over the past year and should have our absolute respect. A glimmer of hope from these darkest times is that social care will finally be given the national recognition, and the funding, it rightly deserves.

We continue to innovate - for example in Micro-care and support

services for Looked After Children; to invest - for example in Hwb Cyfle and Marleyfield Residential Care Home; and to lead the way - for example in foster care, the Early Help Hub (EHH) and Dementia friendliness.

Flintshire is built on shared social values. Our social care workforce has been a beacon of light over the past year, being there and caring for the most vulnerable throughout. This will be my final year with Flintshire and I look back with pride on all that we have achieved together.

I wish you well for the future in the knowledge that Flintshire will continue to light the way for others to follow.

Colin Everett
Chief Executive
Flintshire County Council



Introduction

This Annual Report is prepared under the requirements of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 and Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016, both of which place a statutory requirement on the Council to report annually on its social services functions.

The focus of this legislation is on well-being, and our report summarises the key things that we are doing in Flintshire to support our most vulnerable residents. It describes our challenges, provides our stakeholders with a picture of how we have performed and improved over the last year, and sets out our priorities for the coming year. Stakeholders include the people using our services, our staff, elected members, the general public, our partners, regulators and Welsh Government. Engagement with stakeholders is fundamental to what we do, and informs the development of our services and future plans.

In the report we evaluate our performance against last year's improvement priorities and set out our priorities for next year. These focus on well-being and are linked to the six National Outcomes Standards, which are:

NQS 1 Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

NQS 2 Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

NQS 3 Taking steps to protect and safeguard people from abuse, neglect or harm

NQS 4 Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

NQS 5 Supporting people to safely develop and maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

NQS 6 Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

Section 2 | Director's Summary of Performance

Welcome to the Social Services Annual Report.

The purpose of the report is to reflect on how we have performed during 2020/21, and to highlight our priorities and intentions for 2021/22.

There is no doubt that our plans for this year have been disrupted by COVID-19, which has had a significant impact on our planned work. You will see in this report, that some of the priorities for our work will have carried over from last year. However, we have been able to progress a number of things alongside the response to COVID-19.

To echo the words of our Chief Executive, we must first recognise the courage, commitment and resilience of our staff and those in the independent sector and partners, as they continue to improve the health and wellbeing of Flintshire's residents.

On 23 March 2021, we observed a minute's silence as part of a day of reflection to mark the Anniversary of the United Kingdom's first lockdown, when those who have died in the pandemic were remembered. The pandemic, and especially the early months of 2021 were challenging, and will no doubt leave a lasting impact on all of those working to support individuals and the sector for many years to come.



In tackling COVID-19 locally, new work streams emerged, including:

- The community approach with third sector partners to deliver a coordinated response to the pandemic locally.
- The establishment of the PPE hub by NEWCES, which enabled the distribution of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) to over 80 settings across Flintshire.
- The partnership work between Social Services staff and Environmental Health Officers in providing support to social care providers affected by COVID-19.
- The financial support we have been able to facilitate from Welsh Government's Hardship Fund to social care services.
- The creation of a temporary care home, Ty Treffynnon, to supply additional beds.
- Supporting an independent sector to develop a temporary 'step down' facility, which enabled people to move out of hospital beds as their health returned to them. This home is now moving to long-term model of EMI residential.

The challenges of COVID-19 has not stopped us deliver on our priorities and progress with as much 'business and usual' as possible.

The report will go in to more detail, but some additional successes from the last year include:

- The implementation of Micro-care, with 12 Micro-carers delivering services in the county.
- Further developing our actions to support people living with Dementia.
- Taking a stand to end all male violence against women by becoming White Ribbon Accredited.
- Recognition of our Learning Disability Services in the Social Care Wales Accolades and shortlisted for the APSE Awards.
- The employment of two graduates, young people with Learning Disabilities from the Project SEARCH programme, in our own services, with others entering in paid employment.
- The implementation of Foster Carer support Model – ‘Mockingbird’.
- The progress made with the extensions at Marleyfield House.

As we move forward, we know that COVID-19 will continue to impact our community and services in to 2021/22, and a theme running through this report is our continued response to this, and the recovery of services when safe to do so.

As a final note from myself and Cllr Jones, we would like to say again, as ever, how proud we are of our workforce when we have all faced unprecedented challenges, and yet were still able to continue to support our most vulnerable residents. This is testament to the hard work and dedication of our wonderful employees.



Neil Ayling
Chief Officer
Social Services



**Councillor
Christine Jones**
Cabinet Member for
Social Services

THE ODE OF A KEY WORKER

We give you our hearts. Although they are broken, they are still beating

We give you our souls. Although they are lost, we are still breathing

We give you our light. Although they are dimming we are still shining.

We give you our sunshine. Although there is rain, there are still rainbows

We give you our smile. Although there is hurt, there is still laughter

We give you our calm. Although there's a storm there is still peace

We give you our hope. Although moments fade we still have faith.

We give you our hands. Although we are apart, we can still hold together.

By Carol Morgan, whilst working as a Senior Support Worker at Llys Raddington Extra Care, Flint.

Section 3

How are People Shaping our Services?

It is a priority to ensure that the voices of people are heard and that we learn from them.



Officers have kept in constant contact with the providers we work with, to ensure they are supported by answering their enquiries and hearing feedback on the impact that COVID-19 has had on their services and the people who use them.

Going forward, investment will be made in reviewing and redeveloping user surveys and methods of engagement with a view to making them more relevant, accessible and targeted to specific service areas.

The Contracts and Commissioning Team have facilitated **regular meetings with residential care, domiciliary care and Supported Living providers**. Whilst these meetings took place before the pandemic, their frequency increased. The support and networking became a vital resource for providers. The meetings were also attended by colleagues from the Environmental Health Team, Health and Safety Officers and BCUHB officers so partners could advise and support when needed.

Alongside these meetings, a dedicated email address has been established where providers could pose COVID-19 related questions and queries where they could be responded to in a timely manner.

'Virtual coffee mornings' have been held to support managers of services who may have been working in isolation during this period. This event is more relaxed, with no agenda, but a chance to network and perhaps have some peer support.

The team have also had daily phone contact with providers to collect data, enquire about PPE supplies, discuss any arising issues or just to be there to listen and support in this difficult time.

Senior Managers and Environmental Health Officers are available daily, including weekends, to provide support and to liaise with colleagues in Public Health Wales.

“Thank you and your team for the ongoing support over the past twelve months you have all been amazing”. (Independent sector provider)

“I want to take this opportunity also say thank you to each of you for the continued support, guidance and collaborative working we've shared over the last 18 months. It's been a pleasure and a privilege to have worked with some amazing people and, such a brilliant, forward thinking and innovative Local Authority.” (Independent sector provider)

Young Voices Speak Out (YVSO) is a group of young people that are looked after or leaving care aged between 13 and 18 years old. The group have continued to meet online to represent the voices of looked after children in Flintshire. Workshops and discussions have taken place covering health and relationships, and models of fostering.

Representatives from the National Assembly for Wales and the Children's Commissioner for Wales have also attended their meetings to seek the views of the group. In May a Welsh Youth Parliament member approached YVSO about how they would like Flintshire and Wales to look like once out of lockdown. This was fed back to Hannah Blythyn (MS) to take to Welsh Government.

Members of the group regularly attend the Children's Services Forum, which is made up of Elected Members, Senior Managers and representatives from Children's Services and Education. At these meetings they share their views on topics which have included Housing, education and sexual health advice for young people. The group attended the first virtual Children's Services Forum in September, and spoke about how the pandemic has affected them. Some of their comments included:

“It's impacted on me mostly in a good way because it's given me time to work on myself and my attitude towards things like school, friends and family. It's made me appreciate them and appreciate things like going outside. It's obviously been hard but the good outweighs the bad.”

The group have also interviewed candidates for the new staff for the Multi Systematic Therapy project and the Permanency and Court Team Manager position.

People living with dementia and their carers worked with the Council and NEWCIS to develop an **interactive map** and a user guide as part of the Council's commitment to further develop dementia awareness and support across the county.

The map shows the locations of Dementia Friendly Communities, memory cafés and organisations and services which are part of a local dementia friendly businesses programme run through NEWCIS.

Users will be able to search the map to find dementia friendly locations in their area, alongside bus stops and other community facilities which may help them to plan their journey.



The map and user guide has been developed as a result of an idea by officers in the IT department, after attending an awareness session run by a Dementia Friends champion for County Council employees.

Chris Roberts, a person living with dementia, said:

“This project is very innovative and will be so helpful for folk to know where and which establishments will make them feel safe and understood, especially in a time where we are all feeling very alone and isolated.”

This work builds on the development of the existing **Dementia Webpages**, which bring together a range of information in to one place, acting as a directory of support services.

Young Carers have also been involved in the development of a new service specification to help in the commissioning of a new service for **Young Carers**. The engagement was informal, via social media and meetings. Four young carers were also involved in the procurement process.

The young carers interviewed all bidding organisations by asking questions they had chosen, had an equal say on the outcome of the procurement exercise. As result, NEWCIS were successfully selected to deliver the service in Flintshire, now offering all carers in Flintshire an equitable service.

In the words of one young carer who interviewed the successful organisation, “they are amazing”.

There have been new service changes in Learning Disability services with the relocation of the Castle Connections work opportunities site to new premises in Greenfield Business Park. Families and individuals were invited to view the space and give their input in to how they feel the site should be developed.

The site began as two workshops which were partitioned in to 4 separate activity rooms – one for general use, one for furniture repair and recycling, one is a salon area to teach beauty skills and the last is an IT suite for the

people supported. In addition, a changing areas was installed creating a large changing area for personal care and adapted toilet.

The building works finished in December, ready for activities to begin once restriction allow. After consultation, the new premises has been named **Hwb Dyffryn**, or Abbey Hub, in reference to the Basingwerk Abbey located in Greenfield Valley Heritage Park.

Families of individuals with Learning Disabilities have been part of **commissioning a new supported living service** for their loved ones. Two families agreed to be part of the commissioning process and attended several online meetings, provided feedback over email and were members of the interview and evaluation panels.

The families voice influenced the service that was being commissioned and were part of selecting the provider that they believed would provide the best care to their loved ones. They also assisted in developing a transition plan that was right for them and their family member. The families felt informed, valued and involved throughout the process, and had an insight in to the processes a local authority goes through when developing services. The officers supporting the process gained a better understanding of the well-being outcomes of the individuals requiring care and support.

Section 4

Promoting and Improving the Well-being of Those We Help

Quality Standard 1: Working with people to define and co-produce personal well-being outcomes that people wish to achieve

COVID-19 continues to have an impact on people living in their own homes and those who deliver services to them through domiciliary care and reablement services. Where possible, services have maintained business as usual, with some adaptations to ensure people and staff are safe.

Visits have continued using full PPE and with full risk assessments in place and other face to face meetings have continued, albeit virtually.

The services have needed to be flexible to changing demand and circumstances, such as an increase in support needed as family members returned to work after furlough and when lockdown restrictions eased. Direct Payments were also utilised, for example, to enable a carer to take someone out for a walk.

The teams have received so many wonderful compliments, from people in receipt of care and support, their families and carers.

“I would like it be known that the Flintshire team have without exception always provided exceptional care, and compassion to my Dad, taking the time to understand his needs and ensure his whole person is cared for. They treat him with dignity, respect, patience and good humour. His mood visibly lightens when he knows the Flintshire team are attending.”

“The carers are so thorough, professional and people who really care about my Mum and I’m sure so many other vulnerable people too. (Mum) has improved 100%, her confidence is back which has helped her wellbeing... Adult Social Care who are unsung heroes, deserve to be recognised for the fantastic work they do for the residents in Flintshire.”

The Council’s Hospital Social Workers played a key role in supporting people to return to their homes and worked with individuals, providers and families to ensure people were discharged safely. Working with each acute hospital in the area, this resulted in hundreds

of people returning home in a safe and timely manner, shortening the time they needed to spend in hospital.

Teams across the Council also worked to prevent hospital admission, such as the Dementia Support Workers, who provided emotional support to families and piloted a 'dementia sitting service', giving carers a break from their caring role. This made a significant difference for people who needed it as many carers had not been able to access their usual support structures due to COVID-19 restrictions.

In November 2019, Flintshire County Council introduced Micro-care, which was designed to promote social care as a career option and help develop micro-care enterprises to support vulnerable people across Flintshire. Micro-care was a new concept in Flintshire. The aim was to encourage people to become micro-carers who were either:

- Interested in providing social care services to older people but may have no experience.
- Currently working in the care sector but interested in being their own boss.
- Actively supporting people in their local communities.
- Wanting to do something that supports others and makes a difference.

Two Micro-care Development Officers, have been working with individuals to:

- Support them develop their business or idea.
- Provide information on training, funding and other available support and resources.
- Support individuals to develop and deliver a quality service in line with current Welsh Government legislation and regulations.
- Providing links to a network of other micro-care providers for mutual support.
- Over the last year, the development officers have been busy promoting the project and supporting interested parties to start their own businesses and as a result, they have eight new micro-care enterprises currently offering services across Flintshire, with another six people currently working through the Micro-care Programme.

There are now 12 Micro-care enterprises delivering services in Flintshire, all of whom are helping people to either remain in their own homes longer or supporting a person's ongoing wellbeing.

More information about Micro-care, how to become a Micro-carer and who is delivering services can be found on the **Care@Flintshire website**.



In 2020/21, the Progress for Providers Programme has been introduced to providers within learning disability services, where person-centred practice has long been a feature of care and support within this sector. Working with Helen Sanderson Associates once again, providers were engaged to review and adapt the existing Progress for Providers self-assessment tool to ensure it was aspirational and reflective of existing high standards within the sector.

Representatives from in-house and independent provider services worked with the Council to create a new, bespoke version of Progress for Providers, a version that acknowledges the particular importance of digital communication for people with learning disabilities. The programme supports the implementation of both the North Wales Learning Disability Strategy and Welsh Government Improving Lives Programme.

12 independent sector providers and the Council's in-house services have signed up to the part of the programme.

By law all local authorities in Wales must have advocacy services for children and young people to use, and that an **Active Offer for Advocacy** must be made.

Advocacy services can help by speaking up for children and young people, making sure that the rights of the child or young person are respected.

When children and young people need services, sometimes an advocate need to meet with them to explain what these services are. This helps them to understand what's on offer and how the service is able to help them. This is called an active offer.

An active offer must be made to:

- Children in care.
- Young people leaving care.
- Children and young people who need extra support.

A regional contract has been in place commissioning already in place and Tros Gynnal Plant provide advocacy services to children and young people looked after by Flintshire County Council.

The take up of the active offer can now be monitored. 13 children have received an active offer of advocacy since April 2020, nine of which went on to work with an Independent Professional Advocate.

One young person said:

"I have a right to be listened to. Thank you for making me understand this."

In March 2021, the new **North Wales Young Carers ID card** was launched to give recognition to the amazing young carers in North Wales. The card will provide photo-identification for any young carer aged 18 or under who would like one. This will enable them to easily identify themselves to professionals without having to share personal details about their caring role.



Young Carers have asked for an ID card so that teachers, health professionals and retailers know that they carry important responsibilities. In response the Deputy Minister for Health and Social Services, Julie Morgan, outlined her commitment to this initiative in rolling out a national young carers identification card in response to the National Assembly's Health, Social Care and Sport Committee Inquiry into the Social Services and Well-being Act 2014 and its impact on carers, as well addressing the three national priorities for carers in Wales.

Flintshire has been instrumental in achieving this unique regional approach in North Wales and ensuring its success. Young carers provide essential support to their families and loved ones and the Council greatly values them for their commitment and selflessness. The Council will continue to support young carers and provide opportunities for education and employment that other young people have access to.

There will be a phased roll-out of a national ID card, with all local authority areas in Wales having launched their card by April 2022.

Children's Social Services have been working to **embed outcomes based approaches** in

their work. An investment has been made in workshops to support practitioners to develop their knowledge of assessments and eligibility as well as giving practical support to case recording and the role supervision and management play in embedding outcome focused care planning.

This has resulted in changes to practice and inspired staff to work in an outcome focused way, which is making a real difference to children and families.

North Wales Together, the Regional Transformation Programme for Learning Disabilities (LD), have reviewed their website and populated it with good practice regionally and beyond, lessons learnt and resources.

Over the past year, the team have implemented a small projects fund, and over 50 small projects have been awarded funding, including:

- I-Team aims to help people to build their own I-Teams, made up of friends, family and associates, who can be there to support the individual. This has been adapted to be delivered virtually.
- Outside Lives runs various working groups which coproduce activities and events

(e.g. theatre, music, wildlife, conservation etc.) around particular themes. Their proposal involved specific outreach (and associated training) to people with LDs, to join in inclusive groups and develop inclusive community activities.

- Gig Buddies is a befriending scheme that matches people with a learning disability with a volunteer who shares the same interests, so they can go to gigs and events together. The project was formally launched 20th November at the Learning Disability Wales Annual Conference.
- Love to Meet U. Funding was awarded to Hft to host a relationships and dating Network across the east of the region although increased use of virtual means has enabled their reach to cover most of the central area and East.

The Additional Learning Needs (ALN) work stream is working to develop a resource for young people and their families to help with decision making on leaving school and entering adult services. The team are also looking in to an innovative app that will support the development of Active Support plans for people with learning disabilities.

The programme also set up a Provider Forum in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic

where partners have collaborated well and shared good practice and pooled resources to meet the needs of people with learning disabilities across North Wales.

Through the **Regional Transformation Programme for Mental Health**, the Flint 'ICAN' Community Hub opened in April 2020 at Flint Library. The Hub is designed to assist people to link in with support and activities which are most relevant to them with the aim of provide early intervention to prevent issues escalating.

The Hub team consists of two MIND Community Wellbeing Coordinators, a Flintshire County Council Wellbeing and Recovery Social Worker and will be expanded with volunteers.

Due to the COVID-19 situation it was not possible to have a physical presence in the library, which was closed. The service was adapted to the new situation to provide much needed programmes of support, which explore a person's strengths, build confidence and life skills and support people to approach difficult situations.

The Flintshire Father Figures group also began in March 2021, giving any male

care giver support with parenting and improving their mental health, with the aim of developing a peer support network.

As a result of the pandemic, the **Regional Transformation Programme for Community Support** was paused for a number of months. The team delivering the programme were diverted to support the opening of two additional care to provide additional beds to accommodate the anticipated surge in demand.

At the start of the global pandemic, team members also undertook preparation work for the development of a deployment pathway for volunteers and took a central role in the development of the first iteration of a recovery plan for social services in Flintshire.

As the team members were stood down from their emergency response, work resumed across the East area to develop the model of care and support for the new short term care beds at Marleyfield House, to develop some additional support for people living with dementia and the expansion of multidisciplinary working to meet the needs of residents with complex needs.

Priorities

Our priorities for 2021/22 will be to:

Contribute to the **Regional Population Needs Assessment and Market Stability Report**

Move **Micro-care** from a pilot programme to part of the ongoing **Social Services offer**.

Quality Standard 2: Working with people and partners to protect and promote people's physical and mental health and emotional well-being

Throughout the pandemic, the Council have been working closely with the independent sector to support the social care workforce across the county. This has included working with Welsh Government to administer the **£500 scheme** to recognise and reward the hard work and commitment of social care staff who provided essential care to our most vulnerable citizens during the most challenging period of the COVID-19 pandemic. The scheme was aimed at staff within registered care homes and domiciliary care services and included Personal Assistants (PA's).

The total paid out is £2,131,230 which is broken down as 442 Council employees, 319 PAs, 56 Newydd staff and 2391 staff from independent care settings.

The Council also supported the administration of the COVID-19 Statutory Sick Pay (SSP) Enhancement Scheme. The scheme supports social care workers who are required to stay off work due to actual or suspected COVID-19, enabling employers to pay eligible workers at full pay if they cannot work due to COVID-19. This removes the financial disadvantage to social care workers of staying away from work.

Additional funding was also provided to establish safe testing spaces in care homes and to support the testing programme.

Finally, the Welsh Government's **Hardship Fund** provided additional financial support to the sector which included:

- Support towards the cost of void beds in care homes, plus an additional £50 per week per resident.
- An additional £1 per hours for domiciliary care staff.
- Additional £37 per week per individual for Supported Living providers.
- Other support, for example, funding for additional staff capacity to support individuals who found it difficult to isolate in care homes.

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) has been an active and valued member of the Flintshire County Council's and Welsh Health Board's tactical response groups in their efforts to combat the COVID-19 crisis.

To enable this support FLVC assigned two **Social Prescribers** in Flintshire's Single Point of Access Service (SPoA) and one in the Early Help Hub Support Service.

The SPoA received a 700% increase of calls for assistance during the first lockdown, compared to an average number of referrals a month prior to the COVID-19 pandemic. In April 410 new referrals were received.

The calls covered many areas requesting support, from support with food parcels and prescription collections alongside a noticeable increase of calls for emotional support and help to ease people's loneliness.

The Social Prescribers have been playing a vital role by signposting people to local, self-organised and volunteer run community groups, food deliveries and third sector organisations such as Flintshire Food Bank, Age Connects, the Well-Fed programme and Homestart.



The Council has been working with registered day care settings, Aura and Theatr Clwyd to put together a programme of **support for vulnerable children, young people and their families over holiday periods**. The schemes provided children and young people with a much needed break following the lockdown, where they were able to make new friends and be involved with activities that they might not have tried before.

As part of the additional support to vulnerable families through the pandemic, the Early Years Support Team has worked hard to arrange for 20 children aged between five and eight to be supported in registered day care settings over the summer period. Aura provided 'Summer Multi Sports Camps' which were set up in various locations across the County. Children who attended the camps could take part in sport activities and work on their individual skills. During the sessions a range of different sports and activities we offered within guidelines, including football, hockey, basketball, athletics, gymnastics, cricket, golf, foot golf, throw golf and tennis.

Both children and parents gave very positive feedback and the coaches reported that they saw the confidence of the children steadily increase during the five weeks of activities. Theatr Clwyd set up a four week programme for children and young people which could be attended five days a week. The scheme was designed to be a fun-filled creative experience with music, dance, drama and craft.

Gwennan Mair, Director of Creative Engagement at Theatr Clwyd, said

“We feel privileged to have been able to open our doors once again to some incredible young people. We watched them grow in confidence and develop their performing skills and on the final day perform on our huge AHT stage. Everyone had such an inspiring time this summer. It was evident that the arts can make a huge difference to people’s lives”.

Double Click continues to flourish as a Social Enterprise supporting people with mental health problems to achieve their personal outcomes. Double Click achieve the perfect balance of operating a design and print service whilst offering opportunities for people to learn new skills and continue on their recovery journey.

Mental Health support services have been very creative during lockdown, adapting and developing safe ways to continue to support people. Examples included online training and learning sessions and craft kits delivered to people in the community.

The Council has been working closely with partners in the community to deliver a pilot project, to improve **community resilience and wellbeing**. This focus of the pilot is to deliver a ‘Community Resilience framework’ in two communities in Flintshire, Flint and Holywell (Holway) where there had been comparatively low health and wellbeing outcomes for a 12-month period. The purpose of the pilot is to develop an evidence base to support a case for wider systems change, demonstrating the effectiveness of this approach in improving community resilience levels and the wellbeing of children and young people within the local area.

The methodology of Systems Leadership, with its participatory based approaches, building on community assets, developing partnership working built around coproduction, is ideally suited to addressing the challenges of improving community resilience. A number of community members and organisations have been engaged.

The project has supported access to both a Community Centre and ‘Community House’ in the Holway. These can be places of contact with services as well as with other members of the community, where local people can take pride in their area. A community garden has also been installed at the Holway community centre which has already had a positive impact on the local aesthetic and attracted wildlife. As the pandemic recedes, the project will be able to be more visible within the community and engage with more local residents and schools.

Supporting people living with Dementia, their families and carers remains a key priority area within the Flintshire’s Council Plan, and there is much progress to build on.

The **Regional Dementia Strategy** was published in March 2020 to set out how services will work towards integrated dementia services in North Wales. It has been developed jointly by the six North Wales councils and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) supported by Public Health Wales, Bangor University and other partners.

In response to this strategy, the Council will be working with local partners to develop a Flintshire Strategy to meet the outcomes

on the regional strategy, alongside local actions that will be defined by the community and partners. This will encompass much of the work already taking place in Flintshire, alongside new areas for development which have been influenced by engagement with Flintshire network of Dementia Friendly Communities and people with lived experience.

The Council, have again, been recognised by the Alzheimer's Society as an organisation 'moving towards becoming Dementia Friendly'. The Council remains committed to raising awareness of the impact of dementia through regular Dementia Friends sessions with in-house Dementia Friends Champions. This work will further be strengthened by the development of a local Strategy.

Further information on services for people living with dementia and their carers can be found on the **Council's Dementia webpages**.

Alongside support for Dementia Friendly Communities, a number of Age-Friendly Communities are developing following the Older People's Commissioner for Wales' work towards making Wales a nation of Age-Friendly Communities under the Ageing Well priority of her Strategy.

Following a series of workshops on Age-

Friendly community development and presentations to Community Councils, Leeswood & Pontblyddyn became the first community to work towards being Age-friendly. It is now in its third year of Age-Friendly Community development and two further communities, Alyn Villages (Hope, Caergwrle, Abermorddu) and Holywell & district, are working towards being Age-Friendly alongside Dementia-Friendly development.

Children and families have benefitted from **flexible and creative respite support**, in partnership with Action for Children (AFC) and other third sector organisations. Arosfa is a well-established service providing short term breaks / respite for children with disabilities. The unused left wing at Arosfa has been refurbished to provide two additional bed spaces at the facility. The two new beds, are in addition to the current short break respite provision for up to three children.

The new rooms enable a maximum of five children to be supported at any one time, reducing reliance on expensive out of county placements, with local children being supported in their own county.



Priorities

Our priorities for 2021/22 will be to:

Developing a Strategy and Action Plan to support people living with Dementia and their cares and continue to be recognised as a Council 'Working Towards Becoming Dementia Friendly'

Implement the new model of care and support at Arosfa

Quality Standard 3: Protecting and safeguarding people from abuse, neglect or harm

Safeguarding is supported by Council employees across services and the workforce has been accessing training throughout the year to embed the All Wales Safeguarding Procedures introduced in 2019.

The implementation of the Liberty Protection Safeguards has been delayed, with a new implementation date of April 2022. A draft Code of Practice is to be issued for consultation in 2021, following which a detailed plan for staff training and system changes will be implemented.

Violence Against Women, Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

(VAWDASV) is an incredibly important area of work for the Council, across all directorates and the Council host the regional VAWDASV team. Since the start of the pandemic, Flintshire based specialist services have seen a 40% increase in referrals for support, despite

the obvious difficulties in providing this during lockdown restrictions.

During the last year, the Council have worked hard to acquire White Ribbon accreditation, the only Local Authority in North Wales to do so. This means that the Council recognise that male violence in all its forms has a negative impact on the well-being of staff as well as their safety and wish to promote a workplace culture of respect for all, by improving safety and morale.

The Flintshire VAWDASV Forum has been established and is attended by frontline workers from across the council, as well as partners from the statutory and third sectors. The forum feeds into the regional MARAC steering group to ensure more consistent provision across North Wales.

The Welsh Government established the National Training Framework in 2015, to ensure that all public sector workers had an awareness of VAWDASV and those working with vulnerable people at risk of abuse, had more enhanced training. The awareness programme for all staff (Group 1 E-Learning) has been made available to staff. The Group 2 (Ask and Act) programme has been embraced by the Council, with 9 staff undertaking 'Train the Trainer' module, ready to roll out the

programme across the authority in 2021/22. An initiative launched by the Home Office in January, Ask ANI, involves training pharmacy staff to listen to, and signpost victims of domestic abuse. Those seeking help are advised to "Ask for Ani", where they will be taken to a confidential space within the pharmacy, and signposting services will be offered. Information about the scheme was disseminated via the Intranet in January 2021 to all Council staff.

The Families First Programme in Flintshire has led the way in delivering key services to parents, young people and families with disabled children. The innovative delivery of the programme over the last three years, with its unique arrangement of being embedded in Flintshire's multi-agency Early Help Hub has been a real success.

Flintshire established a multiagency Families First Management Board (FFMB) to oversee local delivery of this Welsh Government funded programme and a plan was agreed with focus on:

- Early identification and engagement of families at more risk of escalating problems;
- More 'whole-family' approaches to work with young people and families with

- multiple needs; and
- Embedding inclusive practices across early support and prevention services for families with children with disabilities and for families preferring support in the Welsh language or language of choice.

During the lockdowns and fire breaks, pupils eligible for free schools meals and unable to attend school full-time have received a secure **Direct Payment** to give families more flexibility to buy food for children. Parents/carers have been able to sign up to the service through a secure portal on the Council's website.

Tier 4 restrictions have been especially difficult for the most vulnerable residents, people living alone and those who have been identified as Clinically Extremely Vulnerable, particularly over the Christmas and New Year period.

During this time, the Council circulated information of key contacts who can help and can arrange for food and medicine to be delivered to homes.

'Well-Fed', in partnership with Flintshire County Council, Clwyd Alyn and Can Cook, has been delivering meals, slow cooker bags and safety boxes to hundreds of vulnerable

households in Flintshire free of charge - ensuring that residents in difficulty, residents who are self-isolating and unable to get out and residents in need in sheltered schemes and supported housing will receive good, fresh food.

Over the pandemic, the service has been able to support those shielding and the most vulnerable tenants with nutritious healthy meals and provide fresh provisions in the form of Well-Fed shielding boxes. These consist of freshly prepared meals as well as provisions such as bread, milk, eggs and other fresh produce as well as any kind donations we have received to keep residents nourished. The deliveries reduced the need to visit supermarkets and are often the only food some residents, forced to shield, will receive.

"I am so thankful to your service for the excellent meals and produce delivered to me and my partner ... I am eternally grateful to you for the gift of your food package and it was delicious too. I just wanted to say THANK YOU."

In addition, NEWCIS supports over 9,000 unpaid carers in Flintshire, in partnership with Social Services. They offer a wide range of support to unpaid carers, ranging from



information, advice, carers assessments, counselling, grants, social opportunities and respite.

COVID-19 has had a massive impact on **unpaid carers**, who were suddenly unable to access the normal types of support they needed to look after themselves and their loved ones.

As a result, NEWCIS adapted the way they support unpaid carers, by providing information and support over the telephone and online, whichever is best for the carer. They have also helped with practical support, such as access to food and ‘busy boxes’, increasing their access to on-line support, emotional support and keeping in touch with them throughout this uncertain period.

NEWCIS’ **Bridging the Gap** respite service won a Social Care Accolade 2020 for the category ‘Improving care and support at home together’. Bridging the Gap was developed in partnership by the Carers Strategy Group, NEWCIS and Flintshire Social Services in recognition of the gap in short term, flexible and accessible respite for carers. A short video about the award winning programme can be found here.

Since its inception in 2013, the service has continued to evolve and work with over 40

different providers of replacement care and support. Recent additions to the service include the use of the new micro-carers and family support to offer greater flexibility for respite during the recent pandemic.

‘Bridging the Gap’ service enables carers to take a break from their caring role at times to suit them and to do the things that matter to them, offering truly person-centred respite. Carers can access the service following a Carers Needs Assessment where respite is identified as a well-being outcome for the carer. The carer is then allocated a respite code to the value of £300 to use as they choose over a 6 month period.

The Council are proud to have acted as the lead employer for the new North Wales Contact Tracing Service, and recruited tracing teams aligned to each of the six North Wales councils, working to keep people informed and safe during the pandemic.

Priorities

Our priorities for 2021/22 will be to:

Encouraging employees to complete the Welsh Government’s e-learning module “Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Against Women” to achieve 100% completion rate.

Implement the Liberty Protection Safeguards



Quality Standard 4: Encouraging and supporting people to learn, develop and participate in society

The partnership with Hft to deliver Learning Disability Services has continued to go from strength to strength, despite the challenges of the pandemic. During this time, individuals have continued to be supported through a blended approach, including virtual activities provided online, socially distanced visits at people's homes, socially distanced walks, support at home for people living in Supported Living and regular phone calls. Plants, compost and pots have also been delivered to those who access Tri-Ffordd so they can continue with their horticultural activities.

The service now has a digital library of 87 tablets which have been purchased through charitable grants and donated from the Council. The online activities, delivered as part of a 'virtual day centre' have been extremely popular and have enabled people to feel connected whilst



at home, combating loneliness. To support the virtual day centre, activity packs have also been given out for people to take part in on the Zoom sessions or to complete themselves. These include salt dough kits, dreamcatcher sets, art packs and sunflower growing packs.

The service has continued to make improvements to their facilities. As well as the developments of **Hwb Dyffryn**, Hft received £15,000 for the Postcode Lottery to enhance the garden at Hwb Cyfle. The people supported now have access to wheelchair accessible raised beds, grass sofa's, outdoor musical instruments and a Wheelchair swing.

Activities are also changing at Abbey Metal, following a review of the tasks. Now renamed **Abbey Up-Cycling**, the workshop space is being redesigned to upcycle bikes. A short campaign on Facebook provided the service with over 35 bikes in various conditions all



ready to be worked on. Five stations for bike stands and a painting booth have been installed. In addition the upstairs area will be allocated for electrical working. There will also be an area for refurbishing larger pieces of furniture and the front of the building will be redesigned in to a shop front to display items for sale.

Hft have been successful in launching Luv2meetU. Luv2meetU Flintshire, is focused on supporting people with learning disabilities and their families to develop and sustain relationships, improve their health and wellbeing and extend their social networks. Now more than ever, people need support to enable them to strengthen their social connections which are critical for everyone's wellbeing and happiness.



The Council and Hft were also recognised by the Social Care Wales Accolades as 'Highly Commended' for their work in providing meaningful daytime activities for more than 250 people with learning disabilities. A short video on the project can be found here.

The 19/20 **Project SEARCH** interns have graduated from the programme, with four young people now working at more than 16hrs a week, two of whom have secured positions in the Council. Follow on job coaching is still taking place through a job club for those not currently in employment.



Letitia on her first day working at Llys Raddington

Owen said:

“Being a part of Project SEARCH was very good I got to make new friends and got to know what working independently feels like. Working for Flintshire County Council is brilliant the staff are nice to work with and it keeps me busy throughout the day”.

Seven interns have now begun the next Project SEARCH programme, which is run as a partnership between the Council, Hft, Clwyd Alyn Housing Association and Coleg Cambria. The interns are all enjoying the programme and their volunteering, however, they are keen to get out of the classroom and into their work placements.

To help prepare young people for adulthood, and following a review of the current transition services for young people with disabilities, the new **Child to Adult (C2A) Team** have been established.

The team have invested in training to embed principles and actions required in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 in relation to children with disabilities. This includes a focus on hearing the voice of the child, the child's lived experience and working to achieving personal outcomes.

An action plan records the many achievements to date, and the developmental actions which are constantly evolving from this dynamic and developing service. The service changes are having an impact, with one young person reporting:

If it wasn't for X, I wouldn't have got through this. She has made my life easier during lockdown, sometimes with actions or sometimes just a phone call. When I heard that schools were closing from March to Sept, it was awful. X was there to talk me through this”.

Flintshire County Council has been awarded £4,890,000 by Welsh Government to improve childcare provision near or on school premises, referred to as, **‘the Childcare Offer Large Capital Grant Schemes’**. There are currently ten primary school sites that will benefit from this funding.

This is a significant amount of funding for Flintshire and will benefit many working parents in need of pre-school childcare and for children to have modern facilities in which to play, learn and develop. After a period of planning and working with colleagues in childcare and education, Wynne Construction won the contract to carry out this work.

Challenges presented by COVID-19 had to be overcome to ensure the work stayed on schedule and through a great team effort, significant progress has been made with this ambitious programme of works. The Council has worked closely with Wynne Construction to design what will be a modern airy space for children to play and flourish. It is hoped that construction will start in Spring 2021, with a finish date by March 2022.

After a successful bid, Flintshire County Council has been also awarded £622,000 by Welsh Government to provide capital support to childcare settings, referred to as, the **Childcare Offer Small Capital Grant Schemes**. This grant supported the provision of quality childcare settings in Flintshire with improvements to childcare rooms, kitchens, outdoor space, furnishings and digital capability. It also supported settings impacted by COVID-19 carrying out works, such as improving ventilation, and to purchase items to improve their outdoor provision.

The North Wales Integrated Autism Service (NWIAS) has modified consultation procedures for clients and staff to remain safe during the pandemic. The team are running training and groups online, such as 'Understand Autism' for newly diagnosed Autistic Adults.

The service continues to receive compliments for their work and have been complimented on the number of excellent 'lifestory' outcomes submitted to WLGA for making a difference to everyday lives of Autistic Adults.

One service user said:

“Without over-egging the pudding, you have provided me with the first step on an entirely new path in my life, and I am sure I will be thanking you again in the future for the success I am sure I can achieve now that I have a greater understanding of who I am, and who I have always been.”

To further support Autistic individuals, the Autism.Wales website (previously ASDinfoWales) has been launched by the National Autism Team.

Priorities

Our priorities for 2021/22 will be to:

Further develop Project SEARCH

Developing opportunities for Autistic individuals to access services locally

Quality Standard 5: Supporting people to develop safely and to maintain healthy domestic, family and personal relationships

Children's Services continue to work towards the ambitions set out in the Support & Placement Strategy to work to **safely reduce the numbers of children entering care and improve outcomes for those in care**, with a number of interventions in place including:

- The Targeted Support Team
- The Adolescent Strategy Team
- Family Support Team Officers put in place bespoke programmes of support, which are monitored and reviewed.
- The Missing Exploited Trafficked (MET) panel meets to keep children safe from trafficking, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and County Lines and provides a forum to bring professional together or to escalate to relevant agencies.

- Direct Payment support for families to implement preventative approaches.
- Support for families through the Team Around the Family (TAF) and Family Group Meetings (FGM).

The **Early Help Hub (EHH)** received 2641 referrals between April 2020 and end of March 2021 and the team have adapted to meet needs during the pandemic. All EHH members quickly reverted to having discussions online and agencies adapted well during lockdown and there was no interruption with meetings. Referrals slowed down slightly during April/May but started to pick back up again from June.

Following a rise in referrals for **parents with low to moderate Mental Health difficulties** in the EHH, a dedicated worker has been employed to work with parents to give advice and guidance, 1:1 support and to signpost to other services available locally, including the ICAN hub in Flint, and statutory mental health services.



The services feel that there is much to learn from the time during COVID-19 and should continue to implement different ways of contact and virtual meetings as staff feel they are less stressful for families.

During the year, local authorities were provided greater flexibility in the use of the **Flexible Funding Programme** to respond to COVID-19. Flexible Funding is the approach developed by the Welsh Government that enables local authorities to adopt a more strategic way of delivering early intervention, prevention, and support to families.

Together partner agencies continued to support children and families through digital channels and adopted new approaches to meet the needs of families and support their resilience. As required by Welsh Government a 'Lessons Learnt' report was produced reflecting the learning during the pandemic. A revised Delivery Plan was also submitted to Welsh Government reflecting priorities for the Programme from 1st October 2020 – 31st March 2021.

In 2017 the Fostering Team began partnering with Y Lab through the 'Innovate to Save' project to develop a model that could spark a new way of doing things in fostering services. The **Mockingbird Family Model (MFM)** replicates an extended family in 'Constellations' of 6-10 fostering households.

The Constellation is supported by a 'Hub carer' who provides planned and emergency sleepovers, as well as advice, training and support.

The model provides a more 'normal' experience for foster children, including interaction with a wider range of children and trusted adults and gives foster families a wider support network. This leads to placements becoming more stable as the children and carers are more supported, reducing placement breakdown and the need for high cost emergency placements and residential care.

Following testing, development and feasibility stages Flintshire Council was awarded £1.15million innovation funding to roll-out Mockingbird to 50 families in North Wales. The Flintshire project has the potential to save £2.4 million over six years by avoiding costs for the Local Authority.

The first Constellation was launched in Flintshire in January 2020 which now supports one Hub carer and six satellite families comprising six looked after children, one birth child and two young people in 'When I'm Ready' arrangements. Over the last 12 months the constellation has provided a range of:

- Emergency and planned sleepovers/short breaks.
- Monthly social activity events.
- Peer Foster Carer support and training opportunities.
- Family and sibling contact.

Although concerned about the impact COVID-19, the families involved have found new ways to communicate in order to stay in touch and offer support to each other.

The second constellation recently launched in February 2021 and consists of one Hub Carer and five Satellite families comprising eight looked after children, 10 birth children and two young people part of the 'When I am Ready' scheme.

Flintshire are planning five additional Constellations by the end of 2022, directly supporting up to 80 young people and 50 fostering households.

Since the onset of the coronavirus pandemic, care home managers and staff have worked tirelessly to keep residents physically safe and well, but there is so much more to well-being than physical health, and one of the most painful aspects of the pandemic has been restrictions on face-to-face **visits to care homes** by families and loved ones.

The Older People's Commissioner for Wales captured the deep impact of these restrictions recently, saying that 'the trauma of not being able to visit relatives in care homes will stay with people for years'.

Under Welsh Government policy, care home visits were cancelled in March 2020, although end-of-life visits were allowed regardless of any local restrictions or national lockdown. Local care homes have worked hard to facilitate permitted outdoor visits, rising to the challenge of keeping residents connected with their families.

Facilitating these much-needed visits has involved extensive planning, effort, innovation and creativity on the part of our care homes, and we are extremely proud of what is being achieved in Flintshire.

Services were happy to welcome visitors back from 12th March 2021.





Priorities

Our priorities for 2021/22 will be to:

Further develop Project SEARCH

Developing opportunities for Autistic individuals to access services locally

Quality Standard 6: Working with and supporting people to achieve greater economic well-being, have a social life and live in suitable accommodation that meets their needs.

January 2020 saw the introduction of a new Policy for 'Adaptations to Foster Carers' Homes'. Flintshire is supporting foster carers in making necessary adaptations to their home to provide adequate space for children and young people to live and thrive in their care. This policy supports siblings to be placed together, to meet the needs of children with multiple disabilities, secure extra capacity for current or potential fostering placements and to meet health and safety requirements which would otherwise result in a child being moved.

The grant funding will complement the existing range of support provided to foster carers, and this funding is another step forward in securing local and stable placements for children. Applications for granting funding will be considered up to a maximum of £36,000, with a £20,000 maximum grant for the relocation to a more suitable property. In order to access the grant, the carers and social worker must first exhaust all other options and resources to increase capacity at the placement.

The grant is not only available to approved foster carers, but also to also available to others including existing or prospective adoptive families, Family and friends / carers of children who are under a Special Guardianship Order and carers who are committed to their caring role for the long term, or at least until the child reaches 18.

Theatr Clwyd and Flintshire County Council together with members of the local community put out a public call for donations of **shoe boxes full of fun**, colourful treats to make the world a brighter place for a young person in Flintshire.

The appeal saw the public donate over 300 shoeboxes over two days which have now been distributed by Flintshire County Council

to the most vulnerable young people in the county.

Completed in Autumn of 2020, **Llys yr Iarll / Earl Street** was developed by Wales and West Housing Association in partnership with the Council to provide accommodation for adults with learning disabilities, Autism and physical disabilities. The development consists of 12 individual apartments suitable for independent living and, where support is required, a two bedroom apartments allow for carers to live-in.

The Council has nomination rights for the four ground floor apartments, of which two are bariatric and two are adapted for wheelchairs. The remaining eight 'general needs' apartments are being retained by Wales and West Housing Association.

One new resident put her thumbs up in the air and stated 'It's brilliant, I love it here'. Her Mum also said how well her daughter is doing and has settled in much better than they could ever have anticipated.

Another resident said,

"I was a bit nervous at first, but now I am used to it and I like my neighbours who are also my friends. I like how work is only

across the road. I also like that my mum can't nag me to tidy up all of the time now I am in my own flat'.

Glan y Morfa house is a temporary step up / step down shared accommodation for people who have a physical disability. The people accessing the house may be homeless, or temporarily unable to return home due to planned adaptations being made to their existing home. Whilst at the house, the individuals will be supported to improve their wellbeing and independence, so they are able to live as independently as possible when they have returned to their own or more permanent accommodation. This is a joint initiative between Social Services and Housing Services and commenced in February 2021.

Flintshire Social Services and Wales & West Housing Association will be opened Flintshire's fourth extra care scheme in Holywell, Plas yr Ywen Extra Care Scheme, on the 22nd March 2021, welcoming it's first tenants.

The new £8.5m Plas yr Ywen extra care scheme offers 55 one and two bedroom apartments for people aged 50 and over living in Flintshire who have a care and support need.

The scheme will follow the successful 'housing with care' model, with an on-site care and support team and a range of facilities to promote and support independent living. In addition, it will have seven apartments on its memory floor to support individuals living with dementia or memory loss.

Plas yr Ywen benefits from new smart digital system which features a digital emergency alarm, voice and video calling, video door entry, telecare compatibility and smart home connectivity. This is a positive step forward which will enable individuals to be more empowered to lead independent and fulfilled lives through a blend of support and technology.

Embracing innovative, construction firm Willmott Dixon and Flintshire County Council are on schedule to complete the major expansion of the **Marleyfield House Care Home** in Buckley.

The £8.4 million redevelopment project will double the number of beds at Marleyfield House from 32 to 64 and increase communal outdoor spaces and accessibility to support residents' well-being, reaffirming the Council's commitment to quality services, investing money in critical services.

Each room will have personal outdoor space either through a balcony on the first floor or a patio on the ground, while the extension will also see the creation of new communal areas, medical facilities, offices and store-rooms, extended car parking facilities and extensive sensitive landscaping.

This is an example of the local authority's pro-active approach to addressing the current significant pressures and fragility in the care sector across the country, the project is set to complete in summer 2021, with work having continued amid the challenges of the global pandemic.

During COVID-19, the home entered into lockdown and Willmott Dixon adjusted its construction practices to make sure the site was separated from the existing home at all times. This included a dedicated site access, the construction of additional parking bays for the home and deliveries.

To continue the improvement of the Council's care home provision, it has been agreed to look at the feasibility of developing a new residential care home at the old Flint Community hospital site. This building will have approximately 55 beds and will include moving residents from the current Croes Atti residential care home into the new building.



The project will be in close partnership with health colleagues to delivery on some of the health needs of the community as well as increasing capacity within Flintshire's in-house residential care sector. The feasibility is estimated to be completed by early summer 2021.

Following feasibility, an options appraisal is to be completed for the council to consider which option will best meet the needs of the authority and the local residents of Flint. Once an option is agreed it is estimated that the building will be completed in 2023.

A similar approach to Marleyfield and Croes Atti will be taken in due course with Llys Gwenffrwd in Holywell. The council will consider whether a new site is required or whether improvements to the existing site should be made.

Children's Services continue to work with Housing through the Integrated Young Person's Service (IYPS) for young people aged 16+, and two officers have been employed to support **young people presenting as homeless**, or families requiring additional support. An additional officer works within housing to support young people ages 18+.

Families will be supported to keep the young person at home or having a planned or managed moved involving other agencies, such as Supported Living, hostels and the Quay project. During this time the IYPS service can provide emotional support through this time, to ensure young people are safe and their well-being is improved. Funding needs to be secured to support sustainability of this service.

A Children's Residential Assessment Centre will provide short term (up to 20 week) residential assessment and support provision for children and young people up to the age of 18 years. The centre will provide the time and space to undertake an intensive assessment and support to meet the needs of young people whilst seeking family reunification, or a longer term local fostering/residential placement.

The Centre will be able to accommodate up to eight children or young people at any one time across all three buildings, including emergency placements. The staff team will be trained in the Multi Systemic Therapy (MST). As outlined in Quality Standard 1, MST is an intensive family and community based clinical intervention for children and young people aged 11-17, where young people are at risk of out of home placement

in either care or custody. MST teams focus on the whole world of the young person - their homes and families, schools and teachers, neighbourhoods and friends. MST staff go to where families live and work with them intensively for three to five months, including being on call to families 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Flintshire County Council will take ownership of the building by the end of March 2021 and will then be going out to tender to appoint a contractor to undertake the refurbishment work. It is envisaged that the refurbishment of three properties should be fully complete by Autumn 2022.

To further support children, the Council are looking to establish **small registered homes**, supporting one or two children. The model has a strong community and family feel to support children who would succeed in a smaller setting with more intensive levels of support. This model is being delivered successfully in other areas in the UK and will be adapted for Flintshire. It is intended that the first of two small homes will be operational during 2021/22.



Priorities

Our priorities for 2021/22 will be to:

Completion of the Extra Care Programme

Progress in-house residential care expansion schemes

Launch a short term residential service to inform the most appropriate move-on placement and support package for young people

Develop the 'Small Homes' scheme for children

How We Do What We Do

5.1 Our Workforce and How We Support their Professional Roles

The Workforce Development Team's core business is broad and covers both a planned and re-active approach to supporting the social care workforce training needs

The annual training directory has once again been developed based on sound analysis of a needs analysis from colleagues within the department and from external Care providers; reviewed against the new qualification frameworks; and through evaluations of previous courses. The courses are delivered through both internal and external providers and this year, more than ever before, has seen the strengthening of partnerships in order to meet and overcome the challenges the pandemic has presented.

Despite the challenges that last 12 months have presented, the team have achieved a great deal:

- Successfully transitioned a number of training courses to delivery on a range of virtual platforms
- Facilitated 313 training sessions on 87 subject matters.
- Development of an induction training programme for volunteers who were 'recruited' as part of the COVID-19 response. This was completed by 77 volunteers, most of whom went on to volunteer for the Council during the first stage of the pandemic.
- Continue to work in partnership with many internal and external training providers who kindly offer their training to us free of charge.
- In partnership with Communities for Work, the 'Pathways in to Social Care' has been offered virtually. This comprehensive intensive programme provides unemployed people with a pathway into working in social care and is closely aligned with both the All Wales Induction Framework and for the purposes of registration for support staff.
- A revised distribution of the Training Voucher Scheme went ahead this year, although there were limited opportunities for the vouchers to be utilised.
- A number of Digital Champions were trained, sharing of a wide range of information supplied by Digital Wales.

- Devised and delivered a programme of teaching and learning for the core qualifications in social care, that is fit for purpose and meets the awarding body requirements
- The Centre had a very positive European Quality Assurance (EQA) report from the November 2020 remote visit
- Supporting 38 Social Work students across teams in the statutory, independent and voluntary sectors this year across North Wales. 16 Social Workers have completed their Consolidation award to enable them to re-register in their 1st period of practice after qualifying which is now a requirement of Social Care Wales.
- In response to feedback from both internal and external managers, the team have developed an 'induction programme' of mandatory training that new starters are able to complete within a 3-week period, enabling them to meet a number of competencies essential for delivering quality care.

Behind the scenes, the Council's IT department have played a vital role in supporting the continued work of Social Services and undertook a major operation to **ensure staff are able to work remotely** and that services were not disrupted by the new ways of working. The team have:

- Researched and implemented Video Conferencing facilities for 780 people working in Social Services
- Responded to 140 orders from Social Services for additional IT equipment, much of which was required for the move to home working
- Responded to 400 requests for remote access tokens to be set up
- Researched and implemented an eSignature solution for the Foster Service to minimise the need for face to face contact.
- Provided alternative methods of engagement with clients use of WhatsApp and deployed to Social worker phones
- Donated 39 recycled iPad to service users at Hwb Cyfle
- Provided telephony facilities for Social Care contact centre staff to operate from home
- Development of a range of online forms including enhancements to the Child Care offer and well-being evaluations

In response to ongoing recruitment challenges and difficulty recruiting experienced social workers, it was agreed to take a different approach to **recruitment of social workers** and a new pathway for social work students to join teams has been developed. The pathway created a link between their university learning and the first year of practice. All of this happened during the pandemic and was supported by a robust

induction plan, including weekly virtual group sessions where there was the space for peer support, discussion and learning.

Induction processes for Social Workers joining Children's Services have been strengthened through a partnership with Community Care Inform (CCI). CCI is a well established online portal for social care staff working with children and families, housing a wealth of information and resources to support them with their practice.

The Council now have dedicated pages within CCI to act as a hub, with information about each team and links to relevant documents and policies to support staff in their development and practice.

Newly qualified staff also meet virtually each week for peer support and learning and induction sessions. Infrastructure in place to support development. One newly qualified social worker said:

"I have been very blessed in my experience working for Flintshire. I have been in two team TAF and the Targeted Support Team. Each team has massively supported me as a new employee who started during the COVID-19 world and as a newly qualified social worker, they were each very warm and welcoming."

Communities For Work (CFW) are working in partnership with Flintshire County Council's Workforce Development Team to continue to deliver the 'Pathway into Social Care' training programme.

This programme gives local people an opportunity to gain the training and skills necessary to work in the Social Care, providing care and support to the most vulnerable in our society.

The training which will take place virtually involves accredited training on a variety of subjects including; first aid, health & safety and infection control, food safety and safeguarding. At the end of the programme local care employers will be on hand to provide information on available vacancies for participants to apply.

The Council has also embarked on an exciting journey to challenge and change their traditional recruitment processes to recruit people with the right values in to social care roles.

The WeCare Wales campaign states that 'Wales needs around 20,000 more people to work in care by 2030', and in order to meet this demand, more needs to be done to showcase and promote working in care as a

rich and fulfilling career.

A small team of Social Services officers has been trained by Helen Sanderson Associates and Well-being Teams in **Values Based Recruitment**, and have since been working to develop their own new approaches to recruit people in to social care.

Our values and beliefs drive the way we behave, and people tend to thrive in places where they are able to demonstrate their values. Social Services needed to understand their own values, before they could look for those values in others, and are now looking to recruit people who share the services values.

Before COVID-19, Flintshire County Council began a series of recruitment days with a focus on encouraging participant to demonstrate the values they live by. These sessions included a team, listening and communication exercises and 'what if' scenarios. For part of the day, the candidates also took afternoon tea with people they may be providing care and support for. The workshops are observed by staff and individuals receiving services, who will look out for the ways in which the candidates interact with individuals and demonstrate their personal values.

In excess of 20 workshops for direct care and support workforce have been held, appointing over 60 people across services, some of whom have come from previous care roles, and others who have had no care experience but wanted to make a change.

Feedback from candidates has been positive with some feeding back that it was the 'best interview I have ever attended' and that they 'didn't feel like I was being interviewed'. Candidates enjoyed meeting the tenants and left with a feeling of knowing more about the role.

The Council continues to work closely with the national WeCare Wales campaign, promoting opportunities to work in social care during WeCare Wales week in November 2020. The campaign has also relaunched their jobs portal, where providers from across Wales can advertise vacancies for free, and candidates can search for social care jobs in their area.

The Council recognised that working in social care over the past year has often been a difficult and emotional experience. **Care First** is an Employee Assistance Service which is available to Council employees, which provides emotional and practical support for issues at home or in work. The services are available online, and via a Freephone number 24 hours a day, 365 days of the year.

Every call is answered by a Care First counsellor, accredited to the British Association for Counselling and Psychotherapy (BACP) and support is available in Welsh, via a translation service, if required. Following an assessment with a telephone counsellor, Face-to-face or online CBT counselling may be suggested. In July 2020, the Council extended access to Care First to all staff in independent sector care providers.

The Council have also worked with Mind in North East Wales to provide extra support for social care workers. Information, talking therapies and activities designed to support wellbeing during this difficult time were available.

Essential to tackling COVID-19 locally has been the effective supply of **Personal Protective Equipment (PPE)**. The North East Wales Community Equipment Service was identified in the early stages of the pandemic as the main platform to distribute the Welsh Government's provision of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) in North East Wales.

Preparation work began in March 2020 to adapt NEWCES in Hawarden to cope with the stock management for both Flintshire and

Wrexham Counties. The first delivery of PPE arrived on the 24th March 2020 and was distributed within days to protect care staff across Flintshire.

As stock levels and demand increased significantly, grateful assistance soon came from valued volunteers who gave up their own time to get the PPE packs out to over 80 locations a week throughout Flintshire.

The allocated space at Hawarden could not accommodate the amount of stock coming in, so a second unit in was opened. Three days later, after some challenging work, the new stores was operational.

Since the service started in March last year, in Flintshire, we have issued approximately:

- 2.5 million aprons
- 4 million gloves
- 3.5 million masks
- 60,000 visors

The British Army Logistics Team were visiting all distribution sites across Wales to give advice, guidance and support. NEWCES received a glowing report with no key recommendations. The Military Team promoted our Flintshire systems and approaches across other areas in Wales,



which led to presentations on our systems of work to other Authorities.

NEWCES are proud to have linked in with Project SEARCH, and have welcomed Owen into the NEWCES Team. Owen is involved with the front line service of the PPE Hub, in all aspects of stock management and delivering stock to Wrexham Social Services and is a real asset to the team.

NEWCES staff were praised:

“...they are playing a blinder with supporting at the moment. They could not be more helpful. Deliveries are very quick and accurate. If there’s an issue they are very helpful in problem solving.”

A small supply of equipment was also available from Preswylfa in Mold, which could be distributed quickly to where it was need most.

The recruitment of volunteers began at the start of April, initiated by colleagues in FLVC. In mid-April, FLVC handed over a group of around 70 volunteers to the Social Services Deployment Team.

The Workforce Development Team, supported by FLVC, provided some basic training to volunteers, relating to

safeguarding, food hygiene, health and safety, consent, data protection, dignity, principles of care and confidentiality. By the end of April 2020, following the training and required DBS checks, a group of 64 volunteers were available for deployment to volunteering opportunities across the county.

The volunteer group provided support from April to August to a number of activities and initiatives including twice-weekly delivery of PPE for staff at older people’s care homes and domiciliary providers and schools, weekly shopping deliveries to two Supported Living Homes, delivery of donates chocolate eggs, 1:1 telephone support, Well Fed project and Food Bank Food parcel delivery; and delivery of iPads and Codgers Quarterly Newsletter to reduce isolation in care settings. Volunteers also supported the opening of Ty Treffŷnon care home and transported an employee to shifts at an independent sector care home.

In August, with many volunteering activities either ceased or reduced greatly, the coordination of the volunteer group was handed over to FLVC’s third sector coordination team. The Social Services team remain in close contact with FLVC to collaborate on any future volunteering activities.

There have been a number of **digital** developments. A Contract Management System has been developed within our Paris system to hold provider details, which is with contract information and stored confidentially.

Flintshire County Council Direct Payments Support Team have launched a new Direct Payments Homepage. These pages include information on what are Direct Payments alongside information on how to employ a Personal Assistant (PA) and other useful links.

A new Personal Assistant Portal also provides a register of Personal Assistants (PAs) available for employment for Flintshire Direct Payment recipients. The register aims to help citizens and their families search for PAs and find the best PA for them, but also to help PAs find suitable employment in this growing and rewarding sector.

Social Services are continuing to move forward to implement the finance module of the **Welsh Community Care Information System** (WCCIS). The system will improve the way we are able to pay social care providers.

5.2 Our Financial Resources and How We Plan For the Future

The **Social Value** Development Officer has worked with partners to make a video to explain what Social Value is and how the Council is looking to get the best value for local citizens, out of every pound that the council spends.

The new Social Value Procurement Policy was approved by cabinet in March 2020, and to compliment this, a new system, IMPACT, has also been introduced to support measuring, monitoring and reporting on social value outcomes. This assists suppliers to report on a quarterly basis against their social value commitments. Inclusion on IMPACT will be part of procurement moving forward.

The Council's social value website is now live to promote the outcomes of this work stream through interactive videos, case studies, events and blogs. The website will also support Council staff, the Council's current suppliers and other

external businesses with a further understanding of social value, the Council's Social Value Policy, procurement process and Impact Reporting System.

The Council continues to support **Social Enterprises** linked with a wellbeing function who are contribution to the social value sector as defined by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014. These groups have been supported to become COVID-19 compliant so they can work towards reopening.

The Council developed a **Corporate Recovery Strategy** for the pandemic emergency situation. The strategy covered the following:

- The chronology of the emergency response phase and transition to recovery
- The handover arrangements for recovery
- The organisational recovery of the Council
- Community recovery of the communities we serve
- The Council's strategic priorities and performance for the remainder of 2020/21
- The roles the Council will play in regional recovery
- The democratic governance of recovery

Aligned to this strategy, Social Services

developed a Recovery Plan, setting out the objectives and timeline for the recovery of services, any risks and their planned mitigations, our contribution to any Council strategic priorities for 202/21, and performance indicators to measure how well we are progressing towards full recovery.

Social Services will also look at how new ways of working can continue to be embedded, which have resulted in efficient use of time and contributed to a reduced carbon footprint.

The Welsh Government's **Integrated Care Fund** (ICF) programme has supported the delivery of revenue and capital based projects under four structured themes:

- Early Intervention
- Learning Disabilities, Children with Complex Needs and Carers
- Older People
- Dementia Action Plan

Although the ICF programme was due to come to an end in March 2021, Ministers have agreed a 12 month extension until March 2022. This will allow time for a new approach to regional resourcing to be developed in readiness for April 2022. The scope and scale of future resourcing for three

themes - Early Intervention, Learning Disabilities, Children with Complex Needs and Carers, and Older People - will be reviewed as part of this process. The Dementia Action Plan theme will have recurrent funding, but will be subject to an ongoing evaluation to inform the content of future action plans and its subsequent outcomes.

Flintshire Social Services worked with care providers and the internal workforce to ensure that services were well prepared for **Brexit**. A number of meetings were held with care providers to share key information around Brexit preparations and the EU Settled Status scheme. Business Continuity Plans were also prepared and information shared on business preparations regarding medical devices, clinical consumables, food and medication.

5.3 Our Partnership Working, Political and Corporate Leadership, Governance and Accountability

Who we are

Elected Members represent the residents of Flintshire and play an important part in the governance of the Council. They agree the Council's priorities and approve policies to deliver its continuous improvement. Flintshire Council has 70 Elected Members who represent their ward interests and participate in full Council meetings to oversee the performance of all aspects of the Council. One Member is elected by their peers to represent each portfolio area. These are known as Cabinet Members and together with the Leader and Deputy Leader, Chief Executive Officer and Chief Officers, they form the Council's Cabinet.

How we make decisions

Each Cabinet Member is supported by Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and for Social Services this is the Health and Social Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Because of the close working relationship with the Education and Youth Portfolio, the Council also holds joint Health and Social Care and Education and Youth Scrutiny Committee meetings, to discuss services for children and young people that cut across both social services and education. The Council Leader, Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Social Services are also involved in the social services work programme through the Social Services Programme Board and the Cabinet Member also attends the Social Services Management Team meetings, which have continued virtually every month.

The officers of the Council are led by the Chief Executive Officer who is supported by Chief Officers responsible for each of the portfolio areas. The Chief Officer for Social Services has the statutory "Director of Social Services" role. The Council's structural arrangements for both members and officers are clearly laid out. The constitution details how the Council operates, how decisions are made and the procedures that are followed to

make sure that these decisions are efficient, transparent and accountable to local people. The Council also has its own internal governance through a system of internal audit. The outcomes of audits are monitored by the Audit Committee and officers can be called to give evidence to the committee should concerns be raised regarding their service areas.

Our partnership working

Flintshire has a strong record of partnership working, and in Section 4 we describe some of the services and initiatives that we have developed with other bodies and agencies. At the heart of our collaborative culture is the Flintshire Public Services Board. Established in April 2016, this statutory body is made up of senior leaders from public and voluntary sector organisations. It aims to ensure that statutory and third sector partners work together to manage shared priorities through collaboration, and these priorities are set out in the Well-being Plan for Flintshire 2017-2023.

The North Wales Regional Partnership Board was also established in 2016 and has a membership representing statutory bodies, third sector partners, carers and users of services. The Board works to enhance the

integration, efficiency and effectiveness of outcomes-focused care and support services in North Wales, and has been successful in its bid for a new Welsh Government fund made available to transform health and social care services in Wales.

The Council and Health Board continue to work closely together, with strategic meetings between the chief executives and leaders taking place bi-annually. Many joint operational meetings happen throughout the year, including a six monthly special scrutiny meeting where health colleagues are invited to attend and take questions from elected members.

Relationships with the voluntary sector continue to be strengthened by our involvement with the Voluntary Sector Compact. This three-way partnership between the Council, Health Board and voluntary sector facilitates mutual understanding in respect of roles and responsibilities, and enables opportunities for partnership working to be fully utilised. Membership comprises the Chief Officer and Chair of Flintshire Local Voluntary Council, other voluntary sector members, the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council, and a senior manager from the Health Board.



A NEWCIS volunteer delivering supplies to carers in the community

Section 6

Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

Social Care Legislation & Information Links:

National Outcomes Framework for people who need care and support and carers who need support

Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014

Well-being of Future Generation (Wales) Act 2015

North Wales Population Needs Assessment

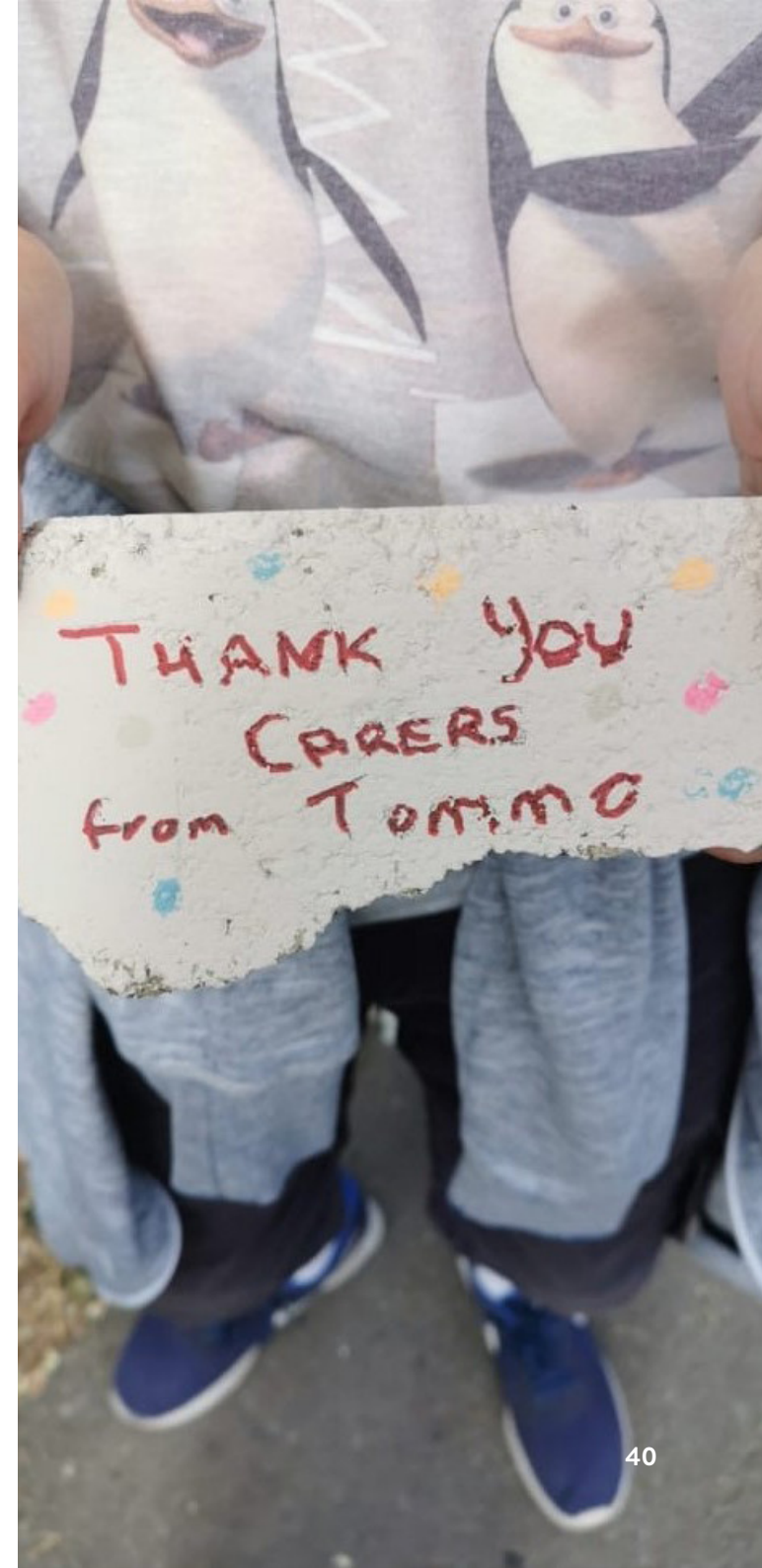
North Wales Safeguarding Board

Flintshire County Council's Key Strategic Documents Links:

Council Plan 2018-23

Corporate Parenting Strategy 2018-2023

Digital Flintshire 2017 - 2022



Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) - a term used to describe a wide range of stressful or traumatic experiences that children can be exposed to when growing up. ACEs range from experiences that directly harm a child to those that affect the environment in which a child grows up.

Advocacy - the act of speaking on the behalf of or in support of another person.

Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) - The largest health organisation in Wales, with a budget of £1.3 billion and a workforce of over 17,000 staff. Providing primary, community, mental health and acute hospital services for the population of North Wales.

Children Looked After - a child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a care order to place a child in care, or a council's children's services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards – provide a legal framework that protects people living in care homes or hospitals who are vulnerable because of mental disorder and who lack the mental capacity to make decisions about their own accommodation and care needs.

Direct Payments - give users money directly to pay for their own care, rather than the traditional route of a Local Government Authority providing care for them.

Extra Care – housing designed with the needs of service users in mind that provides varying levels of support which is available on site and promotes independent living.

Flintshire Local Voluntary Council (FLVC) - the umbrella and support organisation for over 1200 voluntary and community groups based in Flintshire.

HFT – formally known as Home Farm Trust. Flintshire County Council have commissioned HFT to deliver day services and work opportunities for people with learning disabilities in the county.

Integrated Care Fund (ICF) - a Welsh Government fund that “aims to drive and enable integrated working between Social Services, Health, Housing, the third and independent sectors.

Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) - MST is an intensive family and community based clinical intervention for children and young people aged 11-17, where young people are at risk of out of home placement in either care or custody.

Outcomes-focused - the definition of outcomes is the impact or end results of services on a person's life. Outcome focused services and support therefore aim to achieve the aspirations, goals and priorities identified by service users (and carers) – in contrast to services whose content and/or form of delivery are standardised or determined solely by those who deliver them.

Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) - PPE is equipment that will protect the user against health or safety risks at work.

Person-centred Care - an approach that moves away from professionals deciding what is best for a patient or service user, and places the person at the centre, as an expert in their own experience. The person, and their family where appropriate, becomes an equal partner in the planning of their care and support, ensuring it meets their needs, goals and outcomes.

Respite – a short period of temporary care in order to provide rest or relief for carers who require a break in their role

Responsible Individual - someone in charge of providing the service at an organisation or local authority.

Safeguarding - a term used to denote measures to protect the health, well-being and human rights of individuals, which allow people to live free from abuse, harm and neglect

Social Enterprise - an organisation that applies commercial strategies to maximise improvements in human and environmental well-being - this may include maximising social impact alongside profits for external stakeholders.

Social Value - Social value looks beyond the financial cost of a service and considers what wider additional benefits to the community can be generated. Implementing the Social Value Strategy will be a key element in delivering the Well-being of Future Generations Act.

Statutory Services – services provided by the Local Authority as a matter of course, examples of these types of services are domiciliary care and respite breaks.

Step up / step down – This provision enables professionals to support an individual's return to independence, as an alternative to hospital admission or to support discharge from hospital. Sometimes called 'discharge to assess'.

Third Sector - the part of an economy or society comprising non-governmental and non-profit making organisations or associations, including charities, voluntary and community groups, co-operations etc.

Well-being - the state of being comfortable, healthy or happy.

'When I am Ready' scheme - The overall outcome of the 'When I am Ready' is that a young person leaving foster care will have the time and support to develop the necessary skills and resilience to make a successful transition to independent living.

Appendix - Adult Social Services

6869

Contacts received for Adults by the SPOA team

2989

People received advice and assistance

2601

New assessments completed during the year

42%

went on to have a care and support plan to meet their outcomes

The number of contacts also includes people who received help from the social prescribing service

On the last day of this year we were helping

1136

people over the age of 65 to live at home and a further

501

older people in care homes

The average age of adults entering residential care home is

84

86%

of people with a package of support had their care plan reviewed within timescales

461

people completed a package of reablement during the year

1615

adult carers were identified and referred to our carers' service

378

people commissioned their own services through a direct payment

525

adult safeguarding reports were received last year

98%

of those which progressed to Section 126 enquiries were completed within 7 days

331

cases waiting to be allocated for a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessment in Flintshire

* The majority of the measures are Welsh Government experimental data as this is the introduction year and therefore trends and national comparisons are not available for 20/21.

Appendix - Childrens Services

11571

Between 1 April 2020 and 31 March 2021, statutory social services received 11571 contacts

4348

of those contacts were provided with advice or assistance

1257

The total number of families that received information and support through the Early Help Hub

There were **137** children on the Flintshire Child Protection Register on the 31 March 2021. 95% of initial child protection conferences and 99% of review conferences were carried out within timescales. 9% of children on the register were re-registered within 12 months of deregistration (18 children from 6 families), and the average time that children remained on the Register was 270 days.

On 31 March 2021 there were

113

children with a care and support plan where needs were being met through a direct payment.

181 children/young people are being supported through edge of care services, 77 young people up to the age of 25 who have left care.

794

New assessments completed during the year

56%

went on to have a care and support plan

23%

had needs which could be met by any other means

21%

had no eligible needs

256

children were looked after in Flintshire on 31 March 2021. We have a pool of committed and enthusiastic foster carers, with 71 foster carers (excluding kinship carers), offering 111 placements. 93 placements are currently occupied.

Where the need cannot be met in-house, children are placed with agency carers or in residential care. 9.4% of children moved more than twice in the year, although some of these moves were planned as part of their care package.

174

young carers were identified this year and referred to our young carers service Providers

There were

133

children who received the active offer of advocacy