

# MULTIPLYING IMPACT 2021 – 2024

## Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision Delivery Plan



## Introduction

Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) aspires for all Flintshire young people to have the support that contributes to their being safe, healthy, reaching their potential and living free from disadvantage and inequalities of opportunity. As a youth work provision service, we are committed to:

- The importance and relevance of all young people's voice in all that we do.
- Young people choosing to engage and to take part.
- Treating all young people with respect and where we respect and value differences.
- An asset-based and strengths based approach, working alongside young people to build their skills, their capabilities and their sense of self-worth and self-confidence.
- Helping young people develop stronger relationships and cohesive communities. We recognise that this happens when we are led by, and negotiate with, young people. We recognise also that this requires constant adaptation and ever closer partnering with a range of services and other sources of formal and informal support. This includes families, town and parish councils, schools, colleges, play and leisure services and diverse partners from across the statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors.

In reviewing our efforts and consulting on our future during COVID-19 pandemic, we recognise that there has been innovation in service delivery that is worth sustaining as we move forward. For example, embedding and further expanding digital and remote contact methods with young people and offering sustaining a youth club model that is safe, adaptable and sustainable.

We also recognise that there are significant worries about more young people and stakeholders requiring support for their mental and emotional health and wellbeing as the course of the pandemic and recovery in the coming months and years takes place. We also recognise that for many young people and families at the time when they needed support the most, many of the protective factors which normally help them to cope were inaccessible because of the restrictions imposed as a result of the pandemic; for example, school and workplace closures, as well as closing of gyms, leisure centres, sports clubs and missing out on meeting up with friends and family. Many young people and families also continue to face major financial challenges and worries about employment and poverty.

As lockdown conditions have now begun to ease, schools and further education offers have reopened and universal services have started to operate more normally, the full impact of the pandemic on the lives of young people and families will become more visible, especially for those who are more vulnerable. We will build on our history of advocating for, and partnering with, young people, schools and key support services to prepare for an increase in young people with more complex problems, such as young people with self-harming behaviours, suicidal risks and other mental health difficulties.

Welsh Government is promoting a whole-school approach to mental health and encourages greater use of youth-work approaches to support young people with emotional and mental health and wellbeing needs and those at more risk of disengaging with education, training and employment. As schools begin implementing the revised National Curriculum for Wales from September 2022 onwards, this focus will become sharper and more detailed. Youth work offers insights about how to engage young people who are at greater risk. In Flintshire, we are determined to work strategically and collaboratively with young people and partners to ensure everyone benefits and therefore multiply our impact. Welcome to *Multiplying Impact: Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision FIYP Delivery Plan 2021- 2024*.

## Flintshire context for youth work

Flintshire occupies a unique border location in the North East corner of Wales, serving as the gateway to North Wales. Flintshire is bounded by the Welsh authorities of Wrexham and Denbighshire as well as Cheshire West and Chester in England. The population is spread across the towns of Flint, Buckley, Holywell, Connah's Quay and Mold, but unlike some Welsh counties there is no main centre. The remainder of the population are located either in a westward linear pattern extending along the Flintshire coast, with more rural and dispersed communities to the central and western areas of the County or in more commuter-based villages to the south and east.

Almost uniquely in the UK, manufacturing is at the heart of the local economy, providing 24% of all jobs (the figure for the UK is 13%). High value manufacturing is central with aerospace, automotive components, specialty chemicals, food and paper and packaging industries all well represented. Brexit related regulatory burdens are a key worry, given estimates of £300m per year in lost revenue to Flintshire and Wrexham. This will cause higher unemployment, demand on already stretched public services and reduce opportunities for young people for good local jobs.<sup>1</sup> Sustainable energy generation is becoming a more significant part of the local economy. At the Port of Mostyn, Flintshire has the most successful offshore wind servicing and support centre on the west coast of Britain.

156,100 people live in Flintshire (2019 ONS estimates), which represents about 5% growth since 2001. Of the total population, 28% are aged 0-25 years (42,314). Young people aged 11-25 years account for 56%, totalling 23,714. Flintshire people are amongst the most economically active in Wales. In September 2020, 78.9% of people aged 16-64 years were employed, with only Monmouthshire having a higher economic participation rate at 80.6%. By contrast, the Wales average is 73.3% and UK average is 75.5%. There are 13.7% workless households in Flintshire, which compares to 18.4% for Wales and 13.9% for the UK.

Worries about rising unemployment caused by COVID-19, Brexit related trade disruption and economic contraction are reflected in rising numbers of claimants for out-of-work benefits. For example, in January 2021, there are 4,835 claimants in Flintshire (5.1%). This compares to 2,605 in November 2019 (3.1%): a 54% increase in 14 months. Young people are even worse affected. In January 2021, there were 10 young people aged 16-17 years in receipt of out-of-work benefits (0.3%) and 955 young people aged 18-24 years in receipt of out-of-work benefits (8.8%), which compares to an all-Wales average of 8.5% and a UK average of 8.8%. In November 2019, there were 10 young people aged 16-17 years in receipt of out-of-work benefits (0.3%) but only 545 young people aged 18-24 years in receipt of our-of-work benefits (5%). This represents a 75% increase in 14 months.

Our geography means that some of our young people are more confined to their own areas than is true for counties with main centres. This impacts most on those with less means and less confidence to travel in order to access provision in neighbouring towns and/or villages. This isolation has been exacerbated further for young people, their families and communities because of COVID-19.

Our geography and local patterns of inward and outward migration with nearby English towns and cities e.g. Chester and Liverpool, have also meant we have tended to have fewer Welsh language speakers (13.2% cf. 19% for Wales in 2011 census). Through our Council's *Welsh Language Promotion Strategy 2018 – 2023*, we are taking a multi-pronged approach to overcome this. Part of our strategy in the Integrated Youth Provision has been to appoint a Welsh Language Officer who has been in post since May 2021.

Youth work; the Youth Provision Service and Youth Support Services in Flintshire have been planned and delivered in an integrated way since 2015, with enhanced collaboration between

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<sup>1</sup> See Deeside News, *Brexit trade impact could see Wrexham and Flintshire economies lose £300m a year*, 8 March 2021 quoting a Grant Thornton report prepared for the Welsh Local Government Association.

providers in all sectors. Flintshire Integrated Youth Provision (FIYP) operates across the spectrum of need with a reach across all secondary schools, statutory and voluntary sector partners. FIYP utilises the Youth Support Grant (YSG) and the Families First grant to support a strategic approach to partnership work and an active voluntary sector provision. This has enabled us to adopt a strategic approach to planning and delivering support for young people. For example, we have been able to unlock broader opportunities for more comprehensive, well-coordinated wraparound support for those young people at more risk of poor life chances. This has included the creation of multiagency, multidisciplinary initiatives such as the Early Help Hub and is reflected in the local governance arrangements established to oversee implementation of the Children and Communities Grant and Housing Support Grant.

## Policy context for youth work in Flintshire

### National context



#### Youth Work Strategy for Wales



The Learning and Skills Act 2000 s.123 obliges local authorities to provide and/or secure the provision of Youth Support Services (youth services). Youth services operate from multiple settings, including schools, homes and in communities. This includes dedicated provision for young people more at risk of poor outcomes such as young carers and young people with disabilities, at risk of exclusion, having unhealthy relationships and those with emotional and mental health problems. Youth workers provide these services via 'youth work' - a recognised methodology for working with young people, underpinned by National Occupational Standards and regulated professional qualifications. Youth work aims to enable young people to develop

holistically, working with them to facilitate their personal, social and educational development, to enable them to develop their voice, influence and place in society and to reach their full potential.

Since 2010, traditional youth service activities in Wales, which were mainly community-based, drop-in and open-access, have reduced. Reasons for this include national policy change, young people's growing preference for digital interaction, more time spent on school-related activities and study and the impact of austerity. The national policy context increasingly focused youth service activities to more targeted provision. The Welsh Government and key agencies such as Estyn have increasingly recognised the essential role of youth workers to helping support positive outcomes with young people that are more vulnerable to disadvantage and exclusion. For example:

- Estyn (2018)<sup>2</sup>: *"The support for these (vulnerable) young people that is most successful in the long-term is engagement with well-trained youth workers who take time to build a relationship of trust with them. They then can foster these young people's personal development, build their confidence and resilience, and develop*

<sup>2</sup> Estyn. (2018). *Youth Support Services in Wales, The Value of Youth Work*. [estyn.gov.wales] Wales: Estyn, p.7 Used. Available at: <https://www.estyn.gov.wales/system/files/2021-08/Youth%2520Support%2520Services%2520in%2520Wales.pdf> [Accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022]

*their social skills, so that they are more likely to make better life decisions and in due course re-engage with learning programmes.*

- The Welsh Government reports that ‘youth work interventions have been shown to have a positive effect on formal education outcomes, behaviour, attendance and progression through key points of transition’.

### Key national policy changes include:

Youth Support Grant changes	Since 2019/20, requirements for youth work approaches to providing emotional and mental health support and to co-ordinate activity to meet statutory requirements for a Youth Homelessness Prevention Service.
Curriculum for Wales 2022	Embeds health and wellbeing as a core ‘area of learning and experience’ in the new curriculum progressively rolled out from 2022.
Estyn framework for inspection of secondary schools	Inspectors will make judgements about schools making appropriate use of partners to provide effective support for pupils where that is required and also about the quality of approaches to improving pupil wellbeing and addressing the needs of more vulnerable learners.
Families First	Since 2016/17, requirements for specific programmes to support young people at more risk of disadvantage e.g., because of experience of care, adverse childhood traumas (ACEs).
Youth Engagement and Progression Framework	A Welsh Government Implementation Plan that aims to increase the education, employment and training of young people aged 11 to 24.

## Flintshire policy and operational context

At a Flintshire County Council level, key local priorities are:

<p><b>Reducing homelessness</b> because Flintshire young people aged 16-24 represent 23% of those presenting as homeless. The aim is to reduce the number of young people who are homeless by 50% every year to 2024</p>	<p><b>Reducing school absenteeism &amp; permanent &amp; fixed term exclusions</b> as exclusions in secondary schools in Flintshire are higher than all Wales averages.</p>	<p><b>Improving outcomes for children and young people who are ‘looked after’ (LAC) &amp; for care leavers.</b> Flintshire currently has 252 children and young people who are ‘looked after’. This represents a rise of 21% since 2016. The Council is ambitious for their outcomes and future prospects.</p>
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We know from national research and local analysis that young people affected by adverse childhood traumas (ACEs) and with other challenges arising from factors such as being young carers, intergenerational poverty and/or having a disability, neuro-diverse condition and poor mental and emotional health and wellbeing underlie many of these key priorities.

For example, of young people known working with the Flintshire Youth Justice Service across January-November 2019, 85% have 2+ ACEs, of which 50% have 4 or more. 15% have 7+:

- 85% are affected by parental separation
- 58% by domestic violence
- 47% by drug use
- 46% by mental illness
- 33% by alcohol harm
- 31% parental incarceration
- 28% have been physically abused
- 14% have been sexually abused.

### Impact of the Covid-19 Pandemic

We already know that an online mental health support service, Kooth PLC found relatively steady engagement with their service across the pandemic period. Early presenting issues were anxiety and relationships but as the pandemic progressed there was an increase in young people presenting with thoughts of self-harm and suicide, (COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report<sup>3</sup>). The Early Intervention Foundation (June 2020)<sup>4</sup> Action for Children reports '*The assumption was that there would be a **significant spike** in early help and social care referrals. Services will face a double hit, not only from more families needing more support to deal with a wider range of problems, but also from the knock-on consequences of fewer children and families having received the support that would usually have been available at key moments in their lives.*

With this in mind, we consulted young people and wider stakeholders from within our staff team, councillors, parents/carers and partners during the third national lockdown (beginning in December 2020) to inform our *FIYP Delivery Plan 2021-2024*,

### Consultation Outcomes

**From our consultation which included over 80 young people, we learned that the majority who use FIYP services rate these as great or good** with informal education and play activities during the summer, 1:1 and group activities with youth workers in the community, during the school day (but not at school), online and youth clubs all scoring highly.

**The areas for us to develop further are** improving the experience of young people engaging with youth workers at school and in accessing information, advice and assistance through telephone/email contact with youth workers.

Service	Great/good	Not good/terrible
1:1 & group activities with youth workers in the community	72%	9%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers online	70%	14%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers during the day at school	28%	30%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers during the school day but not at school (e.g. Forest School)	73%	11%
1:1 & group activities with youth workers at youth clubs	64%	7%
Informal education & play activities at school during the lockdown (Resilience Hubs)	55%	22%
Informal education & play activities during summer time	75%	13%
Information & advice I can get from Youth Services Facebook page	57%	14%
Telephone or email contact with youth workers	62%	25%

<sup>3</sup> Kooth PLC. (25<sup>th</sup> February 2021). *COVID-19: mental health and wellbeing surveillance report; Research and analysis Children and young people*. [www.gov.uk/government/organisations/public-health-england] Public Health England, Ch.7 Telephone and online support service use – children and young people Used. Available at: <https://dera.ioe.ac.uk/37458/1/7.%20Children%20and%20young%20people%20-%20GOV.UK.pdf> [Accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022]

<sup>4</sup> Wilson, H & Waddell, S. (2020). *Covid-19 and early intervention: Understanding the impact, preparing for recovery*. [www.eif.org.uk] London: Early Intervention Foundation, p.14 Used. Available at: <https://media.actionforchildren.org.uk/documents/embargo-covid-19-impact-recovery.pdf> [Accessed: 18<sup>th</sup> January 2022]

### Amongst young people, we also found strong demand for FIYP to prioritise support:

- In how to feel more confident, for chances to learn something new, stay safe, relax/have a break, do something different and for support with education and/or employment (85-90% of all young people)
- Chances to meet more young people like themselves and for support to deal with anxiety, stress and problems at school with other young people (80-84%)
- Access to youth workers as sources of information and advice about other types of available support and to assist with problems with family/at home and in addressing problems with teachers and school work (67-79%)

At least half of young people also value as very important/important FIYP youth and play workers providing information and advice about sexual health, drugs and alcohol and housing.

While there was little difference in preferences based on location, gender, having a disability or a health/neuro-diverse condition, for some cohorts of young people there were particular areas of support that are more strongly valued. These include:

- **For LGBTQ+ young people**  
100% rated support with anxiety and stress as very important/important, of which 87% rated this as very important. They are also far more likely to want support with the following issues - problems with family/at home (93%), where else they can go for information and advice on housing (93%) and with sexual health information and advice (87%).
- **For young people where Welsh or English is not their first language**  
100% rate support for problems at school with other young people as very important/important and 100% rate the chance to relax/have a break as very important/important.
- **For young carers**  
100% rate support with anxiety and stress, the chance to relax/have a break, support for problems at school with other young people, problems with teachers and school work, feeling more confident, staying safe and school/college/getting a job as very important/important. Young carers were also significantly more likely than all other cohorts to report requiring support for problems with teachers and school work.

### For 122 FIYP staff, partners, parents/carers and councillors, they largely validated the key priority areas for young people in Flintshire in need of support.

- **Support for young people's mental health and wellbeing**, including anxiety and stress, support networks and to address waiting times for specialist mental health services (43%).
- **Pro-social community activities**, including access to informal education, play and activities that alleviate boredom and give young people something to do (33%).
- **Safe environments** for young people to meet, access support, hang out etc. (25%).

Other priority areas are:

- Information, advice and assistance related to alcohol and drugs (17%).
- Support for economic empowerment, including jobs and financial advice (13%)
- Support related to education, such as to help reduce exclusions, support pupil engagement (12%)
- Access to online support services, including improved online safety and to address digital exclusion (10%).

They were more emphatic than young people about FIYP prioritising as important:

- Supporting young people experiencing anxiety and stress e.g. feeling worried, feeling lonely, self-harm (99%).
- Supporting young people to feel more confident e.g. body image, peer pressure (99%).
- Supporting young people experiencing problems with family/at home (99%).
- Supporting young people experiencing problems at school with other young people e.g. bullying, peer pressure (98%).
- Support with school/college/getting a job (97%).
- Giving young people a chance to do something different (97%).
- Giving young people a chance to learn something new (97%).
- Giving young people a chance to meet more young people like them e.g. Welsh speakers, disabled young people, LGBTQ+ young people (97%).

We also asked young people and wider stakeholders about what they consider best ways of FIYP providing that support. There are some interesting differences between what young people and wider stakeholders told us. While both agreed that youth clubs near where young people live is the 'number one' priority, the consultation also indicated that:

- Online youth clubs are 2<sup>nd</sup> choice for young people but 5<sup>th</sup> choice for wider stakeholders
- Accessing information and advice from a youth worker at school was 3<sup>rd</sup> choice for both young people and for wider stakeholders
- Accessing information and advice from a youth worker remotely when needed e.g. by telephone, email, social media, Zoom was 4<sup>th</sup> choice for both young people and for wider stakeholders
- Accessing information, advice and support from a youth worker at places a young person might be, such as a leisure centre, park, sports club, hospital or homeless shelter was 5<sup>th</sup> choice for young people and 2<sup>nd</sup> for wider stakeholders.

**This tells us we need a multifaceted and inclusive approach to engagement to maximise access for young people to our support.**

We found mostly strong support for proposals for service development related to:

### 1. Expanding digital and remote engagement with young people and staff:

- 65% rate this great/good (78)
- 18% okay (23)
- 8% not good (9)
- 9% don't know (10)

Some stakeholders were concerned that digital interaction would become the default way of supporting young people, especially when many young people benefit from face-to-face interaction. For example, one partner noted '*Humans are social beings and as such require social connections and interaction in the real world. Whilst digital content may be better than nothing in times of perceived emergencies that limit freedom, they are a poor substitute for high quality face to face youth work.*

Overall, there was strong support for expanding the digital and remote offer. For many, there was a sense that this about adapting to the times and for others, simply identifying the benefit to having another method for contact with young people as part of a hybrid service model. For some there was also a sense that expanding digital services was important as a tool for education about online safety. As one community member noted, '*Because young people and*

*a growing number of adults inhabit a virtual, on line world, a world fraught with opportunities and also dangers, being able to navigate this space and act professionally within it is of vital importance.'*

FIYP have set up all communication systems in line with FCC policies and age appropriate requirements. All bilingual posts to our thriving social media platforms are made by the Estyn Llaw/Reaching Out team.

## **2. Sustaining and developing partnerships with schools and other services such as AURA, Housing and Children's Services to make youth workers available in settings that young people attend. For instance, young people at risk of homelessness, self-harm and who are at risk of exclusion from school:**

- 89% rate this great/good (109)
- 7% okay (9)
- 1% not good (1)
- 3% don't know (3)

There was very strong support for this objective with a clear recognition of the benefits of joint and more integrated work in order to provide a more seamless and accessible service relevant to the needs of individual young people. Some partners used the opportunity to seek to work closer with FIYP. For example:

- An AURA representative said, *"great for FIYP youth workers to be present in venues and services across the community and happy to support with our venues."*
- An Education representative said, *"We already link with some Youth Workers and Youth Justice Service so that is proving positive. But as always, could do more. Could Education and Youth also be offered similar training. A Senior Youth Worker has helped with some - brilliant. More joint work, provision to increase links and support for young people and staff. We have great groups running with AURA and Theatre Clwyd so instead of duplication, stronger links. Also using the tools, the Learner Profiling Tool which highlights potential NEETS". (Not in Employment Education or Training).*

## **3. Proposals to re-establish regular youth clubs at Connah's Quay, Flint, Greenfield, Leeswood, Penyffordd, Saltney and Sealand, Mynydd Isa and Treuddyn. To develop new provision in the Deeside area and to have schools and community organisations manage some buildings:**

- 60% rate this great/good (73)
- 18% okay (22)
- 16% not good (19)
- 6% don't know (7)

Worries about specific communities not having a regular youth club were the main cause for concern amongst those who said 'not good'. There were particular worries expressed about a lack of youth club provision in Buckley, Hope, Holywell, Caergwrle, Abermorddu and Cymau. There were also concerns raised about having static youth clubs. For instance, one councillor expressed worries about them being targeted by 'County Lines' (a form of Criminal Exploitation of young people by out of county drug dealers).

While many local authorities have closed all regular youth clubs, Flintshire will continue to operate clubs in specific geographical communities. We will aspire to supplement this with specific interest youth clubs and pop-ups, with peripatetic play and youth work in locations across the County that is based on local needs and conducted in partnership with town and parish councils and other key service providers. We will also continue to build on our response to the COVID-19 pandemic by further developing our online offer. This includes:

- Enhancing our social media presence. Building on our successful IYP Facebook page launched during 2020 (14<sup>th</sup> January 2022 – 282 “likes” 336 “followers”), we have also established an Instagram account in 2021 which now has 301 individuals who “like” the account (January 2022). This has been essential in promoting the new democratic voting entitlement for the 16+ cohort and other local and national campaigns.
- Online special interest youth clubs; for example, Welsh Language speakers that has over 70 young people participate, young people that are supported through the Inspire programme, LGBT+ people
- An online sexual health service delivered by the FIYP sexual health nurse who has a degree in youth work and two level 3 workers. This includes 1:1 support, videos and other resource. This is supplemented with a postal service for prophylactics. This will be supplemented with face-to-face sexual health clinics for young people when safe to do so.

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## Delivering on our vision for the future

Using the Youth Work Strategy for Wales 2019 as our overarching framework, we have structured our strategic plan to deliver on the following 5 aims:

1. Young people are thriving
2. Youth work is accessible and inclusive
3. Voluntary and paid professional youth work staff are supported throughout their careers to improve their practice
4. Youth work is valued & understood
5. A sustainable model for youth work delivery

### 1. Young people are thriving

To make Flintshire a great place for young people to grow up and thrive, we want young people to:

- Feel valued, respected and supported to live authentically in a community that is inclusive and draws strength from diversity.
- Have opportunities for personal and social education in English and Welsh relevant to their need and through which, they will grow in self-confidence and self-worth, stay safe, enjoy healthy relationships and develop resilience and emotional wellbeing.
- Have access to trusted adults in safe environments where they feel they belong and can enjoy opportunities to relax, have fun and meet peers, learn new skills and seek information, advice and assistance.
- Decide for themselves what support they need and how they access it. They will know their rights and responsibilities and have meaningful opportunities to inform decision making about the issues that affect them.

Some of the things we have done to further these aims include:

- Operating a fully bilingual service.
- Maintaining a network of youth clubs across Flintshire and where clubs have needed to close, working with partners to enable continued access to support.
- Supporting our Youth Council to meet regularly.
- Facilitating meetings of the Youth Council with the Council's Leader and Deputy Leader and other senior officers to inform the development of policy affecting young people within Flintshire.
- Partnering with services to co-locate youth work services within settings accessed by young people; for example, working with AURA sports club at Connah's Quay.
- Co-locating youth workers within 5 secondary schools, including our Welsh medium secondary school, Ysgol Maes Garmon, for 1 day per week each week of each school term to deliver 1:1 and group work. We also work with secondary schools to make available the Duke of Edinburgh (DoE) Award programme to 100+ young people across Flintshire every year, and were the first Welsh local authority to provide a specific DoE programme with our specialist secondary school, Ysgol Maes Hyfryd.

- Developing young people's leadership skills through a longstanding partnership with Glyndwr University. Thereafter, these young leaders work in youth clubs and at our annual residential camps providing support to young people. Some young leaders have gone on to represent the young people in their local areas in town and community councils. Four young leaders have gone on to study the Youth Work at Glyndwr University with two having progressed through foundation levels to their final year Degree. One of these has subsequently been employed in a full time capacity with our partner organisation, Urdd Gobaith Cymru, and will jointly facilitate the Young Leaders Project 2022 and the Youth Council. This further enhances our Welsh Language offer to young people in Flintshire.
- Delivering a summer play schemes for children – these have run for 26 years for children aged 5-12. In 2021, despite the pandemic the Flintshire Summer Play Scheme ran at 55 sites within 28 Town and Community Council areas. 2,779 children were registered to participate including 38 disabled children supported by our buddies system. In total, resulting in a total attendance across all schemes of 14,019 children including 120 children who received their play scheme through the Welsh language.
- Contributing to the Welsh Government's 'Summer of Fun' programme for children and young people aged 0—25 by leading the development of a range of activities and experiences across the County during the summer holidays of 2021. This work is currently being extended through the 'Winter of Wellbeing' programme being promoted and funded by Welsh Government.
- Rapidly innovating our service model in response to the pandemic, our Play Development Service delivered Informal education and play activities each day at Resilience Hubs based in several primary schools when schools were closed for formal education in the early stages of the pandemic.
- Developed a creative drama project (devised by a young professional director trained by the Welsh Arts Council) named 'what just happened?' that enables young people to share their thoughts, hopes and fears about the impact of COVID-19 on their lives and futures. The inclusive project involves young people sharing their perspectives using various devices and formats and gives them opportunities to work alongside script writers and digital editors to create a product which can have several uses, e.g. shape service/ amplify the voice of our young people in their own words.
- Making available safe digital, remote services for young people; including online meetings for the Youth Council, 1:1 support, online youth clubs and establishing a Facebook page and an Instagram account to share information and advice and to facilitate contact

<https://www.facebook.com/YouthProvisionFlintshire/>

[https://www.instagram.com/youth\\_provision\\_flintshire/](https://www.instagram.com/youth_provision_flintshire/)

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- Continue to deliver youth clubs where they are sustainable
- Develop new regular provision in key locations across the County to strengthen partnership working e.g. alongside Aura Libraries and Leisure service
- Deliver programmes of daily sport, recreation and informal education in areas where anti-social behaviour is high and where the Council's Play Sufficiency Assessment identifies gaps.
- Re-establish our Youth Exchange programme when travel conditions allow, which broadens opportunities for young people through involvement in a 3-way exchange with young people in Ireland and England. The programme also advances understanding and appreciation of Welsh language and culture.

- Utilising our new colourful distinctive FIYP Estyn Llaw / Reaching Out bespoke bus and pop up shelters, bringing youth services into communities throughout Flintshire. Working with town and parish councils and other key service providers, this provision is based on local needs and in partnership. For instance, we have commenced in 2021 with a pop up classrooms and forest school offer at Ysgol Maes Garmon, our Welsh medium secondary school.
- Expanding our partnerships with other services to co-locate youth work services within settings accessed by young people. This includes developing a more comprehensive youth work offer across AURA managed leisure centres and sporting clubs and working with Theatr Clwyd Cymru to develop creative provision focussed on self-care and preventative messages.
- Expanding the co-location of youth workers working one day per week every week of every term to five secondary schools in 2021, with aspirations for this model to operate at all secondary schools by 2024.
- Enhancing our digital and remote offer for young people. This includes:
  - An online youth club through our partnership with the Urdd for Welsh language speakers that involves 70+ young people and a digital Eisteddfod to facilitate the celebration and promotion of Welsh culture, augmented with TikTok dancing competitions and other social media innovation.

## 2. Youth work is accessible and inclusive

We want youth work to:

- Inform young people about available support
- Give choice to young people about how they choose to access support
- Work collaboratively with partners to help build resilience and wellbeing for young people that are more vulnerable to disadvantage and problem escalation
- Be responsive to changing needs, circumstances and interests of young people

We have multiple and diverse methods for engaging young people that includes face-to-face engagement through youth clubs, youth workers in schools and play and youth workers in settings which children and young people go to. This includes dedicated open access activities such as those made available during Easter and summer holidays for children and young people. Our engagement with young people is enhanced with digital and remote contact methods, which has expanded in response to the pandemic. We have maximised our offer through the additional funding programmes made available by Welsh Government e.g. Summer of Fun and Winter of Wellbeing.

We have also undertaken the following to advance accessible and inclusive youth work for young people with a wide range of needs:

- Offering informal education packages for young people that are struggling with educational engagement through our bespoke Forest Schools / skills programme which this delivers the John Muir Award.
- Making the Inspire programme based at the Wrexham Maelor hospital available to support young people in Flintshire with needs related to self-harm and suicide risk. This includes access to dedicated online youth clubs to support positive behavioural change and connection, including a dedicated club for LGBT+ young people. This project is support by a member of the Estyn Llaw team on a weekly basis.

- Co-located youth workers within Housing Needs and Children's Services to work with young people at risk of homelessness, including dedicated support for young people leaving care. This is helping contribute to annual targets in our *Flintshire Housing Strategy and Action Plan 2019-2024* to cut youth homelessness by 50% each year.
- Co-locating the Families First Young People consortia and Disability consortia within the Early Help Hub to enable comprehensive information sharing and a rapid and bespoke service response to meet the needs of young people and families that will benefit most from early help.
- PALS (Play and Leisure Support) Project provides 1:1 support for children and young people with disabilities to participate in play, the arts, recreational, cultural, sporting, and other social opportunities.
- Flintshire New Dragons Youth Project for young people with communication and language difficulties. The project is led by young people, with support from a communication champion and youth workers. We add value through providing accredited training.
- As part of our service response to the pandemic: facilitating access to laptops for young people at risk of digital exclusion; and making available additional support for young carers and carers in partnership with North East Wales Carers Support Service (NEWCIS) by providing food and essentials deliveries direct to the home as part of the "Keep well keep safe" initiative set up within the first 2 weeks of lockdown in March 2020.

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- Build on the legacy of the Resilience Hubs emergency provision to provide ongoing play support to young people attending Ysgol Maes Hyfryd Specialist High School
- Update our Play Sufficiency Assessment to identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Further develop our Welsh language provision
- Expand our Forest School programme and make it available to a wider cohort of young people including those 'school phobic' young people supported by the Education Progression Team and young people attending the PRU. We will also aim to expand this provision to work with Social Services for Children family Social Workers.
- Develop a pilot transition programme to help to smooth the progression for young people from primary into secondary school.
- Expand our support for young people to improve their mental health and wellbeing and to equip staff from across schools, universal and targeted services with the know-how to respond in light of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.
- Expand our support to prevent youth homelessness. This includes:
  - Equipping schools and other services with the know-how to consider homelessness risks in interactions with young people. This includes a focus on hidden cohorts such as young people that are LGBT+, carers and experiencing mental ill health.
  - Deploy play workers and youth workers to provide informal education and play opportunities for children and young people at family centres in Holywell and Northop attached to accommodation managed by Clwyd Alyn.
  - Develop a digital theatre production about homelessness will be used for a campaign to help prevent problem escalation and support early help for young people at risk of homelessness (and then be an available resource thereafter).
  - Provide youth work support to a planned Homelessness Prevention Hub in Flintshire by 2024.

### 3. Voluntary and paid professional youth work staff are supported throughout their careers to improve their practice

In Flintshire, we want voluntary and paid professional staff to:

- Recognise and be recognised for the essential work they do alongside young people
- Be highly skilled practitioners with ongoing support to develop their knowledge, skills and confidence
- Contribute to the development of local policies affecting young people

Some of what we have done to further these aims include:

- Evaluating of our work with young people and partners. For example:
  - Informal feedback has been very positive overall about Resilience Hubs, summer play sessions and commissioned services particularly Families First services delivered through the Action for Children led Young People consortia and Disability consortia.
  - External evaluation of targeted play work at the Holway Community Centre; the co-location of youth workers within schools, the hospital based Inspire programme; and a package of play, forest school and youth worker led 1:1 and group activities in targeted schools
- Making available support for staff to gain youth work qualifications. This includes staff of partner services, e.g. AURA staff access our IYP training programme.
- Expanding professional development opportunities for full time, part time, sessional staff and volunteers. This includes:
  - Increasing the number of staff that are qualified Forest School Leaders
  - Mindfulness training offered to all staff during lockdown
  - Zoom training offered to staff during lockdown
  - Delivering on line training offered to staff during lockdown
  - Internet delivery safety and participation standards training
  - Health and Safety mandatory training
  - Food hygiene mandatory training
  - First aid mandatory training
- Sharing learning and contribute to wider advocacy through the All-Wales Principal Youth Officers Group
- Funding the Flintshire Local Voluntary Council to support the local voluntary sector with training, advice and networking opportunities.
- Consulting staff about proposals for service development.

### 4. Youth work is valued and understood

In Flintshire, we want youth work to:

- Be positively recognised and celebrated for its contribution to the personal, social and emotional development of our young people

- Be positively recognised and celebrated for its contribution to prevention and early intervention for young people that are at more risk of disadvantage and problem escalation
- Inform the development of services for young people

Some of what we have done to further these aims include:

- Locating decision making about the Youth Support Grant and Families First provision within overarching multidisciplinary governance arrangements about prevention and support for children, young people, families and more vulnerable adults in Flintshire. For example, FIYP practice has informed commissioning of support for young people at risk of homelessness and support for families with multiple needs.
- Presenting to key decision makers and partners e.g. the Council's Cabinet; Education Youth & Culture Scrutiny Committee and Secondary Head Teachers Federation meetings.
- Progressively increased greater levels of joint work with key partners. For instance:
  - Increasing co-location of youth workers within schools. External evaluation confirms that school staff are very positive about the impact and would welcome increased provision.
  - Play Development Service delivery as part of the Resilience Hubs established in response to the pandemic has left a legacy. A number of schools have requested ongoing involvement of play workers to support children and young people.
  - More partnering with Education Inclusion Services to provide 1:1 support for young people at greatest risk of disengagement from education, training or employment.
- Gained recognition for the impact of our youth work practice. For example:
  - The Estyn inspection of Flintshire Education Services (2019) positively noted the Council's provision of good opportunities to develop young people's self-esteem and social skills and for purposefully engaging individual learners at risk of disengaging with education.
  - Duke of Edinburgh Awards evenings
  - Positive media interest about our play and youth workers.

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- Build youth worker knowledge and skills in techniques for effective evaluation of their roles and the impact they are having.
- Partner with schools and Education colleagues to help implement Curriculum 2022 which locates health and wellbeing as a core area of learning for all young people.
- Commission part of the Inspire Project to develop and deliver initiatives that further support schools, universal and targeted services and parents/carers with the know-how to better identify and support young people engaged in self-harming behaviours and at suicide risk.
- Participate in the updating and re launching of the Youth Engagement and Progression Framework
- Develop a communications strategy to inform wider stakeholders about the impact that youth work is having and the new initiatives and pilot work we are testing.
- Hold an annual digital celebration and promotion event in Youth Work Week.
- Recommission Families First support for young people and children and young people with disabilities.

## 5. A sustainable model for youth work delivery

We want a sustainable model for youth work in Flintshire that:

- Has strong creative leadership across the Flintshire statutory and voluntary and community sector to help guide the sector moving forward and is accountable for performance and standards.
- Maximises resources through effective partnership working and embedding youth work in diverse services and settings that interact with young people.
- Promotes good quality youth work.
- Is planned on the basis of good quality data.
- Is financially sustainable

Some of what we have done to further these aims include:

- Developing a financially sustainable service that is responsive to local and national priorities and the needs and interests of young people, especially those at greater risk of disadvantage and problem escalation.
- Facilitating support to key services for young people that have been at risk of closing. For example, helping the URDD with a transfer of staff to FIYP which has permitted the widening of Welsh language youth work provision across FIYP and funding AURA to redevelop two rooms that can support open access activities and delivery of targeted youth work in an accessible, non-stigmatising environment.
- Supporting community asset transfers of youth club buildings to other interested parties to reduce operating costs and allow for investment in other areas of service provision.
- Joint work with partners to facilitate improvements in settings that, in turn, facilitate opportunities for good quality play and youth work. For instance, FIYP brokering access to funding for play space redevelopment at Holway Community Centre.
- Growing our volunteer base consistent with safer recruitment practices. For example, PALS volunteer buddies support children and young people with disabilities to engage in informal education and play activities, including summer activities. The Welsh Language Co-ordinator recruiting and training volunteers to offer increased bilingual provision.

As we progress to 2024, we will also:

- Jointly develop more proposals for funding youth work services with key partners in the voluntary and community sector.
- Embed into our commissioning strategy requirements on providers to expand apprenticeship and accredited training opportunities for Flintshire young people.
- Expand our volunteer workforce with an ambition to develop a cadre of volunteer peer mentors to support young people during the transition process into secondary school.
- Continue to support community asset transfers of youth buildings wherever possible to maximise core youth service funding for investment in broader initiatives
- Develop access cards for free or low-cost services for young people at more risk of disadvantage and problem escalation. For example, looked after children and care leavers and young carers.
- Recruit and train apprentice youth worker through the Council's apprentice scheme to enable us to grow our own staff.

## Final observations

FIYP will make sure that we build on our collective successes, question ourselves continually and always listen to the voices of our young people, our staff, our partners and our wider stakeholders.

*FIYP Plan: Multiplying Impact 2021 – 2024* has been developed in that spirit and is grounded in our recent consultation feedback.

This Plan will bring the results of that thorough consultation to life, whilst embedding good practice and being agile and open to change across the lifetime of delivery.

The 2021 – 2024 Multiplying Impact plan promises to deliver through our proactive and effective partnership work, a relentless focus on quality and holistic support, a bilingual offer and evidence-based youth work provision.