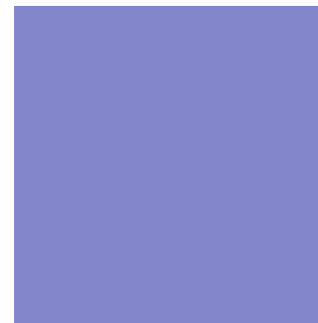
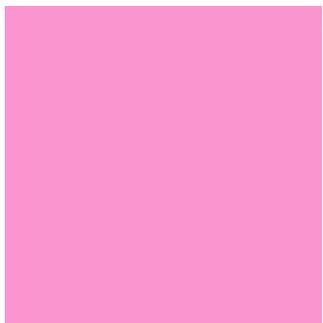
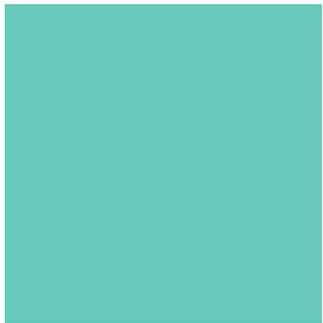


FLINTSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL



# Overview 2015-16

## Annual Social Services Performance Report



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This document provides a summary of our annual self assessment. If you receive a service from us please let us know if you think this report is a fair description of your experiences. Your views matter to us and are crucial if we are to continue to improve what we do and deliver on our future priorities.

If you are reading this on the web then there are links (in bold) throughout the document if you want to read more about individual projects. For words underlined there is a glossary at the end of the document that may help explain unfamiliar words and terms.

We welcome your comments on the format of this report, particularly whether it includes information that is helpful and of interest to you in a suitable format.

You can write or email:

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# Introduction

This is our fifth and final Annual Report, final in the sense it will be different in the future, as we will have a new way of reporting for the new Social Services and Wellbeing Act. Personally I have welcomed this annual opportunity to reflect on the hard work and achievements of our staff and partnerships in supporting, children, families and carers of Flintshire.

Over the last year we have been on countdown to the Social Services and Wellbeing Act which comes into force on the 6th April 2016, representing a landmark time for social care in Wales. It is going to mean a change to everything we do in Social Services. Throughout this report you will read about things we are doing in readiness for the Act.

Gearing up for the Act, we recognized the need for a Senior Management structure fit for the job. Now in place, the model works in a different way, concentrating on the needs of families, with all Managers having a role both in Children's and Adult services. One great advantage of this being how Children and Adults services are now working much more hand in glove. People don't fit neatly into categories, and this structure gives us more flexibility, to respond in one coordinated way.

The Act also means us having a new conversation with people,



and this starts at our 'front door'. We want to know what matters to people. Then, working together, we want to find the right solution that will help improve wellbeing and promote independence. In last year's report we told you that we were building a Single Point of Access for adults, which is our response to the Act's requirement on us to deliver an Information, Advice and Assistance Service. You can read about the progress we have made, working with key partners to make this happen. We have also made changes to our operational structure in Children's Services. This new structure sees

# Introduction

a new working arrangement at the front door of Children's Services which strengthens links with early intervention and improves the quality of our response to families.

The Act is an exciting opportunity for us to take forward services in Wales, and we in Flintshire have grasped this opportunity. As you will read throughout this report we are ahead of the game in our thinking and readiness despite the challenges we face. The budgetary position and the increasing demand with greater complexity of need places real challenges on our services and this continues to be increased, year on year. At both a Social Services and Council level we have had very significant community discussions and high public events, to share with people the big choices we face and to seek views. What is clear is the real support that exists for Social Services as a priority and a realism that the council needs to work well with communities and all partners to make the savings while maintaining quality. We have to secure efficiencies and have a range of approaches, which are not popular with everyone. Our approaches are set out in our business plan which we have been working hard to deliver during 2015. One proposal includes exploring alternative delivery models for our work opportunity services for people with learning disabilities. We do fundamentally believe that moving to alternative delivery models will help to protect and improve some services. We did report last year that we would make £2 million financial efficiencies in 2015/2016. We are pleased to report that we have achieved this by working differently to support people with learning disabilities, restructuring and changing the way we do business in Children's services, through better partnership working with health and with

more efficient and effective working across the whole service. We are fully committed to people and our partners being a part of shaping how we move forward and that is why we will continue to consult. People having a voice and control is important to us even when we know it will be difficult and challenging.

Our care sector is also facing considerable challenges due to a number of factors coming together. Namely the increase in demand for services as our population ages, at the same time, our care home and home care providers are seeing pressures on their businesses brought about by the impact of the National Living Wage coming at a time when there are also real challenges to Public Sectors finances.

Be reassured we are fully prepared to meet all our challenges head on and by working together, with the community, we will look for creative and innovative solutions. As Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board's new area based structure for community health services becomes more mature we are confident of working effectively together to ensure that people leave hospital when they are ready, and that the community support needed is readily available. Moving services out of hospital into community setting is one of the Minister for Health and Social care's priorities.

We are increasingly working with the other local authorities in North Wales, reaping the benefits of pooling learning and resources. Within Flintshire our strong relationship with our third sector is vital as we need them to work with us to find solutions. Within the Council we have the corporate support to take forward the modernization of our services to ensure they are efficient and sustainable. The Council though remains fully committed to Social Care Services, and will not be shy for the challenges ahead. Finally we have supportive senior politicians and a loyal and creative

# Introduction

workforce, who do their very best for people every day in Flintshire. I know this from the many complimentary letters I receive, the accolades, the awards and our positive inspections. New to 2015, our Early Years and Family Support Service won an Accolade in the 'Better outcomes through working together' category and we were endorsed as best practice in Wales in the Older People Commissioner's recent care home review, 'A Place to Call Home?'

Our Inspection report of Children Services, published in September, referenced that 'children's services in Flintshire are delivered by a suitably qualified experienced and competent workforce which is able to meet the needs of local children, young people and their families'.

It has been a busy year, with some exciting and new developments. Such as WARM, a new project and unique to North Wales, which is supporting people recovering from drug and alcohol problems. We were delighted when Double Click finally became a Social Enterprise in 2015, providing paid work and training opportunities for people with mental Health problems, supportive of this new business we are pleased that Double Click agreed to design this report. We are really pleased that Sian, an employee of Double Click, will be sharing her story of recovery at our forth coming Annual Social Services Conference, which is apt, as the theme for this year is people are at the heart of everything we do. This year our Pride of Flintshire Awards took on a new look, with a revamped informal format that went down well and yet another successful event where we celebrated our Looked after young people. We have a new Safeguarding board with all services represented, as

safeguarding is everybody's business. We are incredibly proud to be the first Local Authority in North Wales to achieve dementia friendly status and this has happened in two of our towns so far, Flint and Buckley. There is so much more and we have been pleased to be able to witness and offer our support to some exciting developments over the year. Yet we are not complacent and know we need to do more to introduce further successful change, in a difficult financial climate, if we are to continue to support people well in Flintshire.



**Neil Ayling**  
Chief Officer  
Social Services



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

# A Well Governed and High Performing Council

Flintshire continues to be a well governed and high performing Council. We have a strong Corporate Identity with a Chief Operating Team providing cohesive and professional leadership. We have a robust governance framework which includes a clear set of organisational priorities, a coherent approach to financial planning/management and an effective operating model for risk management.

Our governance framework for monitoring and reporting has been further strengthened this year by the adoption of a new Performance Management solution (CAMMS) which has assisted transparency, timeliness and the overall effectiveness of our performance and risk management approaches.

In addition to the organisational priorities, we have also developed three year business plans for each portfolio designed to protect front line services by reviewing options for alternative delivery models and reducing costs. This model of protecting the social business of the Council, whilst producing efficiencies is closely monitored by Programme Boards, of which Modernising Social Services Programme Board is one.

Arrangements for accountability and support include regular consideration of social services/social care issues at the Chief Officer Team meetings, the Modernising Social Services Programme Board that involves Senior Officers across portfolios, informal and formal Cabinet, Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee and The Children's Services Forum.

## Council Priorities

We continue to have a clear sense of purpose and direction; building on two of our shared priorities with our partners at County level and eight priorities for the Council itself. Last year we highlighted that Social Services would contribute mainly to 3 of the Corporate Priorities and here is a summary of the things we have done to fulfil our priorities (further detail is contained within the report):

# A Well Governed and High Performing Council

Priority	Sub Priority	Impact
Housing	Appropriate and Affordable Homes	Improving the choice and quality of local housing
	Modern, Efficient & Adapted Homes	
Living Well	Independent Living	Enabling more people to live independently and well at home
	Integrated Community Social and Health Services	
	Safeguarding	Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded
Economy & Enterprise	Business Sector Growth & Regeneration	Growing the economy and creating jobs
Skills and Learning	Apprenticeships & Training	Improving learning provision and opportunities to achieve better learner outcomes
	Modernised & High Performing Education	
Safe Communities	Community Safety	Keeping people and communities safe
Poverty	Maximising Income	Protecting people from poverty

Priority	Sub Priority	Impact
Environment	Transport Infrastructure and Services	Safely accessing employment, local services and facilities
	Sustainable Development & Environmental Management	Protecting our local environment
Modern and Efficient Council	Developing Communities	Supporting communities to become resilient
	Improving Resource Management	Front line services are efficiently and effectively supported

We work collectively as a Council across service areas to deliver on the Improvement Plan and Social Services has a key role in assisting in the delivery of wider corporate Council improvement priorities. During 2015/16 these have included contributing to our Asset Strategy with reductions in our office space and realigning services and locations to bring them closer to local communities. This is combined with using our Flintshire Connects facilities to deliver an increased scope of services and the plans underway to build a Single Point of Access (SPOA), a 'first contact right response' service for adults in Flintshire in need of support. Conversely, services from across the Council work to support vulnerable people and deliver priorities which impact upon the health and well-being of our local communities e.g. supporting resilient and active communities, keeping them safe through tackling impacts of poverty (debt and advice services and fuel poverty improvement measures) and increased provision of affordable homes and quality housing.

# A Well Governed and High Performing Council

For 2016/17 Social Services will continue to contribute to the corporate priorities through the three sub-priorities under the 'Living Well' priority that Social Services is accountable for leading the delivery of:

- 1. Improving the quality of life through the promotion of independent living**
- 2. Helping more people to live independently and well at home through integrated community Social and Health Services**
- 3. Ensuring adults, young people and children are safeguarded**

Improvements related to the safeguarding sub-priority (number 3) within the Council's Improvement Plan have been made regarding a new Corporate Safeguarding Board, which is developing a range of support and awareness approaches for all areas of the Council.

## Working Together

We continue to be proud of our longstanding track record of partnership working. The Corporate Assessment undertaken by the Wales Audit Office published in 2015 validated our position: "The Council has a track record of, and continued commitment to,

delivering services to the public in partnership and collaboration with other councils, public sector organisations, business and voluntary sector partners." We continue to value and treat our partners with parity, working to shared priorities with collective effort to get things done.

The Local Service Board (LSB) has continued to make good progress, refining its priorities to two from four, but retaining the Social Services and health care priority of "People enjoy good health, wellbeing and independence". The sub priorities under this heading have been given a refresh with specific focus on areas where partnership working will deliver added value to our communities.

We have also further enhanced our close working relationship with BCUHB. This year has seen us work together to reduce delayed transfers of care, improve response times for minor occupational therapy adaptations, and improve the quality of palliative care in Flintshire, amongst a range of other developments. We are hoping that the following year will see us secure a health resource within our Single Point of Access, and continue this strong relationship.

## Engaging our Communities

As part of 'working together' we have undertaken an increased range of consultation and engagement events with our communities; specifically around the budget for 2015/16, but also concentrating on our priorities and focus on our values as a social business with public services at the forefront of our financial challenges.

# A Well Governed and High Performing Council

This year we have undertaken a range of activities to engage the community within the development of services. With the co-production of carers services, further developments of direct payments, and consultation in supported living arrangements, along with a range of other examples contained in this report, we feel this year Flintshire's residents have more involvement in our social care services than ever before.

## Resources

We have continued to make significant progress despite our resources being reduced year on year. Our projected 'gap' for 2015/16 started at £18.3m; from which a three part strategy was developed as our Medium Term Financial Strategy to bridge the gap: service reform; corporate financial stewardship and working with Welsh Government. The successful delivery of these three areas meant that the Council was able to set a balanced budget in February 2016 for the next financial year. Planning already for 2017/18 and beyond we are continuing with our ethos to protect front line services as our priority, whilst working with communities and Welsh Government to build resilient and sustainable services for the future.

## Working with Members

This year social services have continued working closely with elected members, to ensure they can undertake their roles with the most information possible, regarding our services and the context they operate in. This year we have undertaken a variety of workshops to inform members on issues from corporate parenting, and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, to Loneliness and Isolation, and Dementia. Furthermore, our committed and experienced Social and Health Care Scrutiny Committee has met routinely to challenge and scrutinise the key agendas within social care in Flintshire.

# More Say and More Control

In Flintshire we aspire to be the best at giving citizens more say and more control in their daily lives. This year Social Services have developed this further by investing in this ethos to ensure you, our citizens, have a greater say in the services you receive, and more control over their design and delivery. We have utilised a variety of methods in order to consult with our citizens over such services, which are included within the following chapter.

## The Single Point of Access

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 means us having a new and different conversation with people, and this starts at our 'front door'. We want to know what matters to people. We want to hear about their skills and abilities, the important people and community places in people's lives. Then, working together, we want to find the right solution that will help improve well-being and promote independence. In last year's report we told you that we were building a Single Point of Access (SPOA), for adults in need of support, this being our 'front door'. Our first step in April 2015 was to move our First Contact, Intake Team and Social



Work Reablement into Preswylfa, Mold (a Health Building). This was followed by our Falls expert and Third Sector Coordinator, with Care and Repair joining the team two afternoons a week. We will become a fully-fledged SPOA when health input is confirmed, confident that it will be this year. This will be the point when you will hear about SPOA, as our new service in Flintshire to deliver on the duty placed on us, by the Act to deliver Information, Advice and Assistance to coordinated health and social care.

**38**  
Days

**Average waiting time for Occupation Therapy**

A service that is all about 'First Contact Right Response'. Having the Intake team in SPOA has reduced the time people have to wait for some services such as the bathing clinic and pieces of equipment. This ability to provide a quick response within 1 to 2 weeks has been maintained for 12 months. Rapid Interventions to support

# More Say and More Control

independence have also reduced the impact of increasing demand on our longer term Locality services. Our partnership with Flintshire Voluntary local Council (FVLC) is vital to the success of SPOA. The SPOA third sector coordinator employed by FVLC who is part of the team is playing a key part in strengthening team knowledge and linkages with the Third Sector and community. You can see how by reading about Elsie;

## Case Study - Elsie

Elsie is 83 years old and lives alone, she is partially sighted and profoundly deaf. Her son Martin, who works full time called SPOA as he was worried about his mother after she had recently fallen. Elsie hadn't been out of the house for over 2 years, has no friends or friendly neighbours. She used to enjoy dancing and singing when she was younger but after her husband past away she stopped going out. Elsie found it difficult to engage in previous hobbies, due to her impairments and lack of networks. However she expressed a desire to make a friend and possibly socialise if she could get out and about. Martin has been providing support with shopping and cleaning, but his working schedules have made this difficult.

Elise was referred to the third sector coordinator for third sector

support by another member of the Team, and a home visit was arranged. The third sector co-ordinator talked through Elsie's difficulties, and suggested a few ideas to her and her son. As a result Elsie started work with the third sector Reablement worker taking short trips into the garden and Hearing Loss organisation sorted out her hearing aids so they worked properly and other hearing support aids were put in place (doorbell, telephone).

Martin arranged for the shopping service and meals on wheels. For himself, Martin contacted the carers organisation and now feels he has 'somebody to talk to'. A web link was obtained for a Scrabble set made especially for people with a visual impairment, which Martin purchased. Elsie also obtained a large screen mobile phone she is able to communicate through text message to the third sector coordinator's mobile phone, hence contact was maintained without need for home visits. Elsie is now considering joining a hearing loss support group and is working with the Officer to achieve this.

DEWIS Cymru



**Dewis Cymru**

Have choice and take control

Our SPOA relies on having up to date information

about local community resources. The answer is DEWIS Cymru, a national website and the place for information about wellbeing, in fact a useful tool to help everyone find their own resources within the community. With our health and third sector partners we have worked really hard over the past year to ensure that there is plenty of useful information about Flintshire for you. **Take a look.**

# More Say and More Control

## Engaging and listening to our Looked After Children

The voice of the child is at the heart of what we do, and we need to continuously ensure that we listen to, hear, and act on what children and young people are telling us.

We have a well-established Participation Forum that provides an important opportunity for looked-after children to meet together to share experiences and speak out with a group voice about their care and aspirations. Over the past 12 months the Participation Forum has grown from strength to strength.

The group has actively engaged in various activities, such as;

- Meeting with the Children's Commissioner for Wales to discuss the future of her role
- Creating a DVD for Foster Carers to have a better understanding of what being in care is like
- Rapping about online safety and reviewing social services documents to make them more child friendly

The Forum members have shared their thoughts and feelings about their educational experiences which has contributed to a new Welsh Government Strategy document 'Raising the ambitions and

educational attainment of children who are looked after in Wales'.

Here are some quotes from the members on what they think about being involved in the Participation Forum:

**"Its about changing the perception of people in care"**  
**"Everyone is treated equally"**  
**"We contribute to events and services within FCC involving children in care"**  
**"Raising issues that are important"**  
**"Help to improve people's lives"**  
**"It helps to boost your confidence"**

Work is being undertaken to support young people to have a greater role in the Children's Forum, both in terms of the focus of the work program and their engagement at the meetings. Positively, recent issues raised by young people through the Children's Forum have helped shape priority actions that are now contained in the Council's draft Improvement Plan for 2016/17.

## Pride of Flintshire

Again this year we hosted our Pride of Flintshire Awards, which celebrates the achievements of children in foster care and young people who have recently left care and are still being supported by the social work teams; over 100 looked-after children and care leavers attended



# More Say and More Control

the event. Everyone enjoyed the bouncy castles, rides, ice-cream, singing performances from Princesses and the looked-after children themselves, face-painting, a disco as well as receiving their certificates and trophies! Take a look at our photos...

The Children's Commissioner for Wales Professor Sally Holland opened our event, along with the Chairman of Flintshire County Council Councillor Ray Hughes, and on Twitter she said: "Pride of Flintshire was a fun, warm, child-centered event celebrating great achievements by looked-after children – congratulations to all".

## Giving People Greater Control of Their Care

Last year we said that we were building on the success of our direct payments scheme and developing new initiatives that would support an increasing number of people to gain greater choice and control over their lives and the support they need. So, what have we done?

We have:

- Once again increased the number of people receiving direct payments
- Prepared for the implementation of the Act, and have supported Welsh Government in the development of regulations, codes of practice and practice guidance.

- Worked on a new direct payments policy and practice guidance that fits with the Act
- Made changes to make our scheme more efficient and accessible, which includes a new direct payment card scheme, a far less onerous way for people to manage their money. This will help support the expansion of the scheme moving forward.
- With local direct payments recipients supported the Care Council for Wales to develop and implement an online toolkit for direct payments employers. Flintshire County Council also hosted the launch event.
- Focussed on promoting pooled funds as an efficient way for people to meet their shared needs collaboratively and efficiently.
- Worked very closely with a number of people with learning disabilities, their networks and support provider to use direct payments as a basis for a highly innovative and progressive model of supported living.
- Continued to work with Personal Assistants and direct payments recipients to explore the potential for cooperatives and micro enterprise.
- Updated our public information to ensure that people receive high quality, timely information and advice in a variety of formats
- Developed an induction programme for Personal Assistants, in recognition that we need to invest in this part of the social care sector to ensure that they are highly skilled and given opportunities for personal development.

# More Say and More Control

## Gateway to Independence Scheme – Orchard Way

This year has seen us partner with three young men, and their chosen provider, to develop a new model of supported living aimed at supporting increased independence, a positive risk enablement culture, greater use of available technology, and support that is tailored to individual learning and development needs. We have utilised a property for intensive learning and skill development, which implements individual strategies to achieve personal outcomes, while enabling the tenants to continue a stepped approach to living independently.

The three gentlemen have been supported to commission a support provider using pooled direct payments. A partnership has been maintained throughout. This has seen success with the tenants developing skills, abilities, confidence and independence in a wide range of key areas, to significantly reduce the package of care they require

We have also seen success for the providers who have been enabled to challenge traditional support methodology, risk management processes and approaches to enablement. Additional benefits to the approach have included a highly motivated and involved support team and a change culture within the organisation locally. The provider has committed to rolling out the support ethos to their other North Wales Schemes.

## Individualising Supported Living

Flintshire County Council currently provides support to vulnerable people within their homes. This 'Supported Living' service provides support visits and overnight support to more than 50 people in around 20 separate properties across Flintshire.

However it's our aim to transform the way we deliver this service, developing more flexible and person centred models of support, while delivering on the requirement to make financial efficiencies. To do this we have consulted frequently, through events and meetings, with supported living residents, their families and support groups to ensure those who matter are central to the reshaping of our approach.

We are now inviting external providers to present proposals for providing commissioned supported living services in 5 of the existing houses. As part of a collaborative approach, service users, families and other key stakeholders will play a key part in the selection of one or more provider.

## Enhancing People's Say in Day Opportunities

Flintshire County Council currently provide a range of day opportunities for people with learning disabilities, include respite care at Glanrafon day centre, work opportunities in six small business environments in Flintshire, and job finding and coaching for service users in



# More Say and More Control

commercially supported placements. To meet the demands of the current economic climate, alternative delivery models are being considered to transform these services. This year we have engaged with service users and providers in a number of consultation events, to inform us on stakeholder views and ideas on agendas such as a new site for our day respite service.

## Crèche Service

The Flintshire Crèche Service has continued to provide quality sessional childcare to vulnerable families. In partnership with the Flying Start and Families First, the Crèche service enables parents to attend training courses that will in turn increase their knowledge and skills in preparation for further training or employment opportunities and good parenting.

There is potential for the Crèche service to develop and expand, to meet an increasing demand. Initial plans and proposals are being prepared to explore this opportunity, with a focus on the development of a social enterprise business model, supported by local and national funding opportunities.

## Welsh Language

Flintshire has continued its programme of work to strengthen Welsh Language Services in Social Care in line the Welsh Government framework '**More Than Just Words**'. This year we have advanced

our training initiatives and included information regarding the active offer into all induction packs. We have developed a Welsh Language reminiscence resource for people with dementia and held a number of activities in various communities to raise awareness about the importance of Language in Care. Moving forward we are looking to further enhance welsh language services internally and in the third sector, ensuring a consistent approach across all services. We are also working on devising a strategic Welsh and Equalities Development Group to lead on Welsh Language across our organisation.

## Our Priorities for 2016/17 for Giving Citizens More Say and More Control:



Confirm Health input into, and properly launch our Flintshire SPOA



Be the best at finding out what really matters to people through personal outcomes.



To select supporting living providers in collaboration with stakeholders



To develop an engagement strategy to expand the way we seek the views of Looked After Children, to inform service development and how we evaluate performance

# Smarter Commissioning

In the current economic climate, with increasing demand for services and reducing budgets, we have learnt to be smarter in the way we organise and deliver services. Flintshire County Council has adapted its approach to the commissioning of services to work closely with families, carers, service providers and health boards, to collaboratively come up with ideas that will allow us to use our resources more wisely, while ensuring the continued delivery of quality services.

## Re-modelling dementia services

The Flintshire integrated Health and Social Care dementia action plan has continued to take forward key themes and here is a flavour of the work that has been taking place over the last year on our dementia road.



## 1. Your Dementia Friendly Community

- Flint and Buckley recognised as the first towns in North Wales to achieve "Working towards Dementia Friendly" status
- Community drama event to raise awareness in 3 localities across Flintshire
- Arts and Dementia activities at Theatr Clwyd through "Art in the Armchair" and "Lost in Art"
- Creation of 'Never Ending Story' in Community location with intergenerational work taking place at Flint High School
- Creation of a Dementia Choir in the community



## Dementia Road

## 2. Living at home and living well with dementia

- Person centred care programme being rolled out in care homes across Flintshire with support from Helen Sanderson associates, work also taking place with 8 domiciliary care agencies



## 3. There might be a time in hospital

- Art in hospital programme for people with Dementia available in acute hospital settings and pilot of electronic technology designed for people with Dementia
- Investment in Dementia training for all BCUHB staff



# Smarter Commissioning

## 4. Deciding about long term care and accommodation

- Developing a "Welcome Pack" for all people admitted to a care home in Flintshire so that everyone can be clear about what good care should look like.
- Increasing opportunities for people with Dementia in care homes and extra care to engage with them and participate in new activities through Flintshire's Dementia Voucher Scheme.



Roll out Dementia Friends training in communities across Flintshire to raise awareness and encourage businesses and services to support people and their carers living with Dementia.



## 5. Carers, Family and Friends

- **Dementia café's running in Mold, Flint, Buckley, Mostyn and Holywell**
- Carers education and training in Dementia rolling programme by NEWCIS



Dementia Road

## 6. Your Public Workforce

- Introduce a Dementia Friends award for local Business and Services
- Dementia Friend training for elected members and local businesses

# Smarter Commissioning

## Commissioning in Children's Services

We have a range of services that seek to avoid the escalation of difficulties and reduce risk of family breakdown. These services are enhanced by services we commission from the voluntary sector. Over the last two years we have had to work closely with our voluntary sector partners to deliver significant savings which has developed a much tighter focus on the type of support they can be offered. During 2016/17 we will need to develop our commissioning intentions for services that prevent escalation/facilitate effective step down.



## Achieving permanency for our Looked After Children (LAC)

Over the last 7 years the number of Looked After Children has steadily increased in Flintshire from 193 in 2009 to 224 in 2015; the overall increase in the number of Looked After Children is consistent with the national picture across Wales.

It is important to note that whilst our Looked After Children numbers have increased in Flintshire they remain below the Welsh average at a rate of 69 in Flintshire compared to a rate of 89 in Wales. Reducing

Numbers of Looked After Children



Services. Flintshire is well placed to respond to this agenda with a rate closer to that for England (60) than the rate for Wales (89).

When children and young people enter care there can be a risk of losing regular contact not only with family members but also with friends and other significant people in their lives. The new Act seeks to achieve greater stability for children by increasing the choice of placements locally, supporting continuation of important relationships and school life, and finding the right permanency solution sooner. In Flintshire, we always ensure that there is careful consideration to the appropriateness of placements whether through kinship care, fostering, Special Guardianship arrangements or residential care. It is the case that these placements aren't always within the Flintshire border.

In Flintshire we are fortunate that we have a good fostering service that attracts carers from neighbouring authorities who prefer to foster for Flintshire. We currently have 16 children and young people supported by Flintshire foster carers who live outside Flintshire. We also have 13 children and young people who are living with a relative

# Smarter Commissioning

outside the Flintshire boundary. The decision to make placements outside Flintshire is not taken lightly and we work closely with Education to ensure that school and college links can be maintained.

In 2016/2017 we will start to explore the range, type and intensity of services/support that would need to be in place if we wanted to minimise the need for specialist out of county residential placements. To inform this work we will undertake a comprehensive analysis of our Looked After Children profile including service needs and gaps, allowing us to develop potential service models for supporting our Looked After Children population in local settings.

## Working with our Carers in the Community

We at Flintshire highly value not only the role of carers, as a form of a preventative service themselves, but also the knowledge and experiences they can contribute when developing a service.



Over the past year Flintshire has been developing a new Young Carers Strategy, working closely with our young carers and third sector partner to develop a single comprehensive young carers'

service that is responsive to local needs and circumstances and encourages independent, happy and healthy young people. A core function of the service is to ensure young carers and adult young carers are connected with universal services and groups which are aligned with what matters to the young person, this will include health, leisure and youth services. This core function will receive specified families first funding and will be supported by FCC Youth Services prioritising young carers within key youth service strategies.

- Within the strategy we have worked with the Youth Service, Health Colleagues and third sector partners to develop an outcome focused action plan that has been based on the feedback that young carers provided to us.
- The new Strategy has an increased focus on ensuring that the young carers health and wellbeing is supported, promoted and maintained, enabling the young person to feel confident and able to continue to care and maintain their own health and wellbeing with reduced support from services.
- This strategy has initiated a number of changes to ensure the service is effectively supporting young carers to become confident, independent young people who can access sustainable networks of support rather than targeted services. For example we have established a new outcome focused assessment process, which follows a 6 week Programme of support entirely based on what the young carer wants to achieve. There is a new outcomes framework that the young carers strategy group our working to achieve and a new reporting process to support this mechanism.

# Smarter Commissioning

## Co-Production

Over the coming year we will continue to work in co-production with our partners to achieve the outcomes that are outlined within the new strategy. We will be monitoring these outcomes via the carers strategy group where we will be able to determine the effectiveness of the changes that have been made and further develop the service to ensure it is meeting the needs of our young carers and young adult carers in Flintshire.

In regards to carers of all ages, we have invested more in co-production to ensure we are utilising our carers expertise and knowledge appropriately. We worked closely with current providers, via the carers strategy group, in order to identify the key priorities we need to be focusing on, and asked local people to vote on the importance of these priorities whilst giving feedback on current services. We also held an open event for all to attend, to talk about the current financial climate, begin an information sharing process, and review our priorities for services.

## Co-Producing Disability Services

Since the introduction of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 Flintshire has also been using a coproduction approach to align existing disability services to key provisions outlined in the Act. It is our intention that by working closely with providers and citizens we will ensure that we fully understand the needs of people in Flintshire and that the services that are available to them are fit for purpose

and future proof, moving us forward from historical arrangements to outcome based commissioning and person centred services.

The essence of the Act is about democratising services and rebalancing power between people and professionals. Flintshire is committed to continued improvement and will work to embed coproduction into our processes over the next three years, ensuring that “Nothing about Us without Us” is at the heart of what we do.



## Bridging the Gap Respite Scheme

Bridging the Gap is a respite scheme that Flintshire County Council developed in partnership with NEWCIS (North East Wales Carers Information Services). Its aim was to move away from traditional respite arrangements of fixed hours and days, and offer a more flexible that service that allowed carers to fit respite hours to where they really need them. Carers are allocated a voucher, after a carers needs assessment, in which they can choose a provider to deliver respite care at the time they most need it.

The scheme is growing year on year, with an additional 303 carers receiving a service in the last 10 months, at a much lower cost than previously. The numbers demonstrate how the scheme is a great example of working together with a voluntary organisation to increase the scope of a service, and maximise efficiency.

# Smarter Commissioning

303

Additional carers receiving a respite service from Bridging the Gap

## Six Steps End of Life Pathway – Joint Commissioning with BCUHB for Innovative Partnership

Flintshire County Council has been working in partnership with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board to support staff working in nursing and residential homes in Flintshire to improve their understanding and skills in managing residents who are palliative or who have been placed on an end of life care pathway. The Six Steps to Success programme has been hugely successful and the third cohort of residential homes is well on its way to programme completion. The programme aims to prevent the need for people living in residential care settings to move from their home, with staff who know them, into a hospital setting, which can be a long way away from families and friends. The programme has seen considerable success indicators to date, including a big reduction in the number of unplanned admissions of older people from care homes to hospital, a large increase in advanced care planning and improvements in staff knowledge and confidence.



40

Palliative Care Champions across 18 care homes and 2 extra care facilities in Flintshire

Helen Sanderson "A Place to Call Home...Delivering What Matters?"



Flintshire County Council this year have taken part in Working Together for Change with Helen Sanderson Associates, which is a 8 step programme that aims to inform strategic planning and commissioning by analysing person-centred information from individual reviews, support plans or person-centred plans. We

# Smarter Commissioning

recently conducted a workshop is part of this process which will involve clustering information into key themes, before analysing the information, looking at what is working or not working and why. This analysis can then be used to formulate an action plan to address highlighted considerations. This was done in conjunction with managers of independent care homes to consolidate the methodology behind this approach, and it is intended the workshop will be repeated to include a wider variety of stakeholders and include better person centred information. Independent managers also expressed desire to complete a similar exercise individually within their own homes, in order to get richer feedback from residents about what really matters to them.



## Working Together For Change

We recently held an event at one of our Care Homes in Holywell that involved people who lived in the Home, their family members and

carers as well as staff working at the Home and Commissioning Team members.

We looked at what works well as what's not working as well as what people would like to see changed in the future. We had lots of rich information about what it feels like for people living in the Home and with their involvement we prioritised the top three things that needed to change to improve their wellbeing. An action plan is now being developed to make sure we address these things over the next year.

## Commissioning Priorities for 2016/17:

- To develop alternative models of working in Children's to reduce the need for Out of County specialist placements
- To develop key strategic partnerships with specialist providers, for example Action for Children to strengthen our preventative services.
- To transform Learning Disabilities and Day services
- To embed person centered practice in care homes across Flintshire and role out a similar programme with domiciliary care providers
- Embed the Progression Model across all service areas
- To continue to co-produce services with citizens, communities and providers in order to build supportive communities for the future

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

Over the past year Flintshire County Council has sought to focus promoting well-being and in particular by asking people “what matters” to them. This has been done while continuing to promote independence, allowing individuals to maintain control over their lives whilst receiving support as and when appropriate. We have embedded this approach across all service areas, from Children’s to Adults’, Substance Misuse and Mental Health services. Here is just a flavour of what we have done during the year;

## The Spotlight on WARM

Well-being and Recovery Matters (WARM) is a unique project to North Wales, delivered by our Flintshire Substance Misuse Service. It offers people a next step in their journey of recovery, and into

independence. Supporting people to find and develop coping skills and build their own recovery well-being pathway, the project is all about what matters to the person. It is a new approach, based on trusted therapies and outcome focused support. Over the last 12 months Johnny, the WARM Social Worker has supported about 50 people, with group session opportunities meaning that many more people are benefiting.

The topics for the group discussions are decided by the people who attend, therefore responsive to the outcomes people want to achieve, for example support to explore employment or education opportunities. New partners have now come on board with the project and offering funding, e.g. a 10 week course of Tai Chi. Quote’s from those who accessed the project;

**“It gave me greater confidence to gain employment”**  
**“I remembered hobbies that I enjoyed”**  
**“I made new friends”**  
**“Life is about looking forwards not back”**

## Case Story - Jason

Jason was 48 years old when he came into contact with our service (Substance Misuse Service). Jason’s personal and professional life was spiralling out of control as a result of him drinking too much alcohol, and made worse by the stress brought on by an upcoming court appearance.

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

When we met Jason he was depressed and saw his only way out as suicide, so he was allocated a Community Psychiatric Nurse to work with him on his alcohol and mental health issues. But owing to the seriousness of our concerns that he would kill himself he agreed to be admitted to the Heddfan Unit, where he spent a few weeks.

He then returned to our service, for us to support him to get his life back on track. Once he stopped drinking he was referred to the Wellbeing and Recovery Matters Programme (WARM). WARM worked with him to build a different life, one that was free of alcohol and with a motivation to improve his physical and mental health and emotional wellbeing. His self-worth increased dramatically when he undertook the volunteering opportunities that were offered, using his business skills for the benefit of others.

Jason remains free of alcohol and has built a new life helping others, he is currently in India advising on issues relating to alcohol dependence. Jason has been on remarkable journey from the depths of crisis and hopeless to finding hope and self-worth.



## Promoting Well-Being in Mental Health Services

Flintshire County Council have undertaken some fantastic work in Mental Health Services that has been shared on a regional, and national, level. 'Sian's Story' illustrates the emotive work being undertaken by our services and service users, where in her own words Sian describes her remarkable journey of recovery. You can **read Sian's Story here**.

Our quarterly **Mindful magazine** during 2015 has continued to feature other remarkable stories of recovery and new initiatives. In our summer edition we featured the 'Hear/ Here' group, which has been set up by people who use mental health support services. This group allows for an open chat about the effectiveness of mental health support services in Flintshire and how improvements can be made. The group also encourages people to take control in identifying their own wellness tools and in considering how they can be involved in organising their own groups. We believe that this gets to the hub of what our service strives to do in supporting people to achieve the outcomes that matter to them and to have a valued role in society.

We know for some people to have a job is really important and during January 2016 we were so pleased to finally deliver on our priority, to see **Double Click** Design become a Social Enterprise. In this move towards independence from the local authority, a management board and business manager has been successfully recruited. **Double Click** has implemented a personal development

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

training programme where each individual has a clear learning plan this will allow individuals to gain skills ranging from office based tasks to computer graphic design qualifications.

One of our successful initiatives which has made a real difference is the Recovery Education Programme. A full time training support worker within the team enables the promotion and the attendance of learning opportunities for people with mental health problems and their carers via the Recovery Education Brochure. A major part of this role is to assist each individual to book on and attend courses and learning activities they have identified. From the start of the programme in 2013 to the time of writing this report over 322 individuals have been enabled to participate in the programme. The following quote is taken from a letter of thanks from a person who accessed the programme.

**“I feel my confidence has grown with attending group activities and look forward to many more. The help and support given has been excellent, I feel that without that level of support and encouragement my confidence would not be as it is now. I look forward to receiving the next brochure so that I may book myself on future courses and activities and continue the process of building confidence.”**

## Promoting the well-being and independence of our Looked After Children

Children in the care of a local authority are often referred to as Looked After Children (LAC). They are one of the most vulnerable groups in society. Our ambition is to be a strong and effective Corporate Parent with the same aspirations that any good parent would provide for their own children.

We know that Looked After Children share many of the same health risks and problems as their peers, but they frequently enter care with poorer health due to the impact of poverty, abuse or neglect. National research also suggests that looked after children are more likely to have mental health problems.

The last 12 months have seen some important improvements in the way the health and well-being of Looked After Children is supported.

Notably:

- following a period of vacancy there is a designated Nurse for Looked After Children
- 75% of Looked After Children’s health assessments took place on time between April and December 2015. This is an improvement from 2014/15 where 55% were completed on time
- all Looked After Children have been registered with a GP within 10 working days of coming into care or moving placement

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

Whilst there is good progress we recognise that there is more to be done. Positively looked-after children are a priority group for getting access to therapeutic and psychological support, with a dedicated CAMHS Practitioner working directly with our looked after children and young people. Also training and consultation is offered continuously to parents, foster carers and professionals. However, the reality is that waiting times for CAMHS are still too long.

We have had very promising discussions with CAMHS about how we can ensure looked after children can have timely access to support. The service is in the process of redesigning their operating model with a view to better targeting resources and reducing waiting times. The aim is to enhance the provision over the following 12 months to ensure improved outcomes for the emotional and wellbeing of looked after children.

## Providing effective prevention and early intervention

Being able to access advice, information and early help and support is integral to ensuring the well-being and independence of children, young people and families. The need to develop our framework for early intervention was a specific recommendation identified in the CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services. In response:



- The **Family Information Service** are now co-located with our frontline services in Flint, offering advice and information about universal and community services that can support families
- The **Team Around the Family** service have moved to form part of Social Services. The Team co-ordinate support around a family, helping build their resilience and preventing family breakdown
- We have established a new **Targeted Support Team** from within existing resources. The Team seeks to prevent children requiring formal statutory social services intervention and/or support children to step-down for formal services

During 2016/17 we will continue our efforts to strengthen the pathways between early intervention and statutory support as well as developing approaches that ensure early support is targeted to

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

those families where it is most likely to have a significant effect on future need. This will include working closely with partner agencies to harness and co-ordinate resources, skills and effort.

In 2016/17 we will work with young people and staff across the Council, including Elected Members, to refresh our Corporate Parenting Strategy to set out how the authority will:

- ensure Looked After Children have a voice and are listened to
- support Looked After Children in stable, local placements
- improve the stability of school placements and the transfer process where moves are needed
- support improved education outcomes for Looked After Children
- strengthen partnership working with Health to ensure timely access to health assessments and CAMHS
- strengthen the approach to support young people so they are better prepared for independent living
- build on what Looked After Children say we can do to help ensure they feel included/not excluded and what we can do to help steer them away from difficult behavior

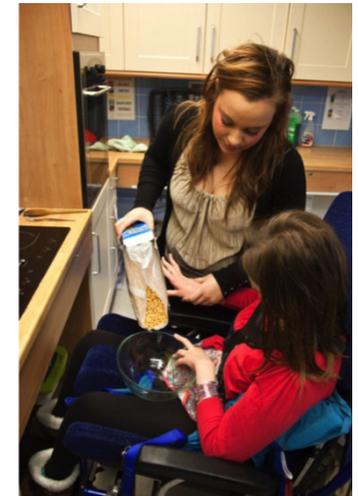
## Supporting young people leaving our care

In Flintshire we have a total of 53 care leavers up to the age of 25. All of our care leavers have an allocated Personal Advisor to keep in touch and offer support and advice. Following feedback from some care leavers our intention is to undertake work with young people to explore how we can ensure they are equipped for independent living and the responsibilities this brings.

The new Act creates a new duty placed upon local authorities for young people in foster care who wish to continue living with their foster parents beyond the age of 18. A new scheme called **'When I am Ready'** has been developed with the 6 North Wales Local Authorities working together to develop and implement the scheme. We know that at least 3 young people in Flintshire plan to take advantage of this scheme in 2016/17 with an additional 2 young people/foster carers considering the scheme.

## Improving the Well-being and Independence of those with Disabilities

We recently undertook a review of our Children's Integrated Disability Services and Transition Services. The findings were overall positive, but highlight the need for change in structure to ensure our children received the best support possible. In this review we have held a stakeholders survey, to ensure all those who interact with our service have chance to feedback and take part in its development.



# Promoting Well-being and Independence

Such structural changes meant that both CIDS and Transition are now co-located, which has improved communication between the teams significantly. We have also been successful in cost effectively negotiating with residential colleges, to bring down the cost of such placements. This has been vitally efficient in a challenging economic environment for services.

This year has seen both social work teams focusing on taking forward the principles of the Act, specifically in the area of promoting independence. A positive example of this, is the use of the "progression model" which is highlighted on [page 14](#). Both teams have also been at the forefront of the rising use of direct payments, and this is embedded into their practice; as can be seen the majority of all resource panel requests are now for direct payments.

**56%**

**of panel applications are now for direct payments**

## Utilising the Intermediate Care Fund

During 2015, the programme of work funded through the Welsh Government Intermediate Care Fund was reduced as a result of a significant reduction in funding. However, the impact of the work that did continue and further develop has been very positive. The Ministers' announcement in December 2015 that funding from April 2016 will be increased and provide a number of potentially significant opportunities for partners to continue to sustain and strengthen community based services to support people to remain out of hospital and long term care.

The wide range of initiatives to deliver joined up and effective intermediate care services delivered in 2015 have been in high demand, with personal stories shared by individuals and families being testament to the positive difference that is being made. Planning for 2016/17 is ongoing in relation to the additional monies available however priority has been given to maintaining the good work that has been started to provide opportunities for those developments to continue to flourish.

### Projects – Key Messages

- 153 people were supported in the Step Up/Step Down Service, accounting for a total of 3285 nights within a care home (rather than hospital in the majority of cases), with short term support at home by a multi-disciplinary team where that was required.

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

- 247 people went through detailed risk assessments with one of two part time workers within the physiotherapy team in BCUHB in order to identify ways that their falls risk could be reduced. These assessments led to a wide range of interventions for those individuals to help keep them safe, increase confidence, mobility etc.
- A part time funded worker within Care and Repair supported 15 people (as new cases) typically for 8 to 12 months between April and December 2015 who were unable to return home or stay independent at home as a result of significant hoarding behaviour. Requiring wide ranging and longer term emotional and practical support, this project continues to help some of our most vulnerable residents.
- A project with Care and Repair allows Occupational Therapists and Disability Officers in Health and Social Care to access a rapid response for minor adaptations for those aged over 60 years in their own or privately rented properties to support hospital discharge, to prevent hospital admission or to support clients with palliative care needs. The project commenced in July 2015 and by the end of December, 339 people had been supported through this project.

- Work delivered through the British Red Cross by a part time member of staff has continued to provide much needed practical support for people after a stay in hospital. Between April – December 2015, 52 people received short term support through this programme, with feedback illustrating the difference that a short term period of support can make to individuals in terms of confidence building the promotion of independence and skills to stay safe at home.

## The Reablement Ethos

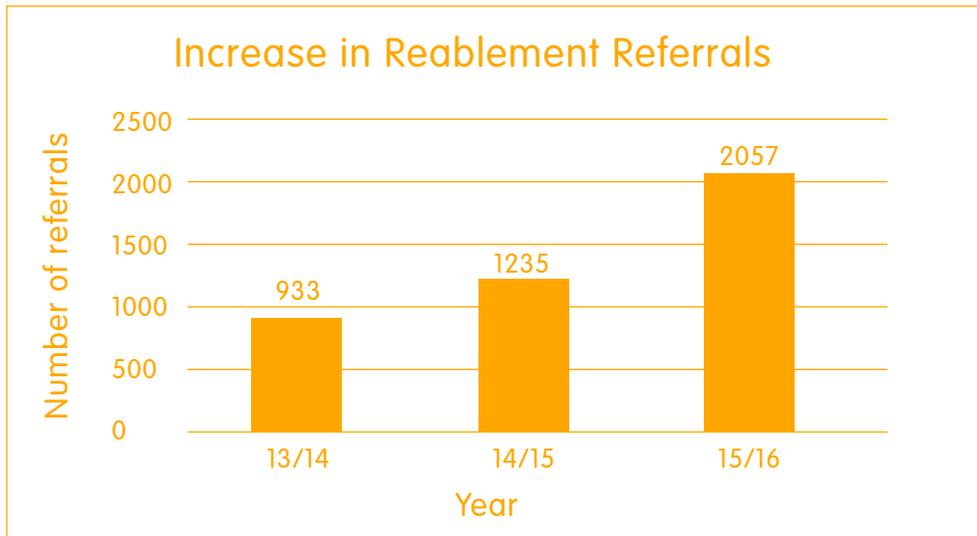
This year has seen another positive year where the Reablement service has been further strengthened. The Reablement ethos is truly established and continues to be promoted by all service areas and to adults aged 18 and over.



# Promoting Well-being and Independence

We are continuing to focus on an intake model of Reablement, focusing our commitment on early intervention and preventative work. This has been evidenced through a significant rise in the number of people being provided information, advice and a decrease in the number of people needing long term care after Reablement clearly demonstrating the effectiveness of these services.

The Reablement service has been strengthened through the presence of the third sector providing information, advice and assistance and to support the individuals beyond Reablement and supporting them to regain their position in the community.



**70%** of referrals now require no further after Reablement

This year has seen an expansion of the sources that offer Reablement within Social Services. Whereas previously Reablement was provided by the Reablement team, we have expanded our delivery pool, so that all service areas that have interaction with older people can provide a Reablement service.

Furthermore our telecare service continues to strengthen its position within Social Services for both children's and adult services. The telecare solution provided is following a person centered assessment and equipment tailored to meet the individual needs of the person and their family. This year we have expanded our selection of suppliers and the equipment that they can provide, meaning that we are now able to offer services and equipment that are more individual to the person's needs.

Here are some case studies on how telecare has assisted Flintshire residents:

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

## Case Study - Mike

### More independence for Mike

Mike is 38 years old and lives in Learning Disabilities Supported Living Accommodation, he requires one to one support whilst at home and needs two people to support him when out and about the community owing to his complex epilepsy needs which require emergency medical intervention when a seizure occurs.

Telecare was considered, which resulted in Mike's support workers being provided with a GPS panic button. The panic button is linked up to the monitoring centre with a clear call handling procedure of when button activated an ambulance is called. The monitoring centre would also know the exact location of Mike and his Support Worker and be in a position to pass on this information to the ambulance service.

This has enabled Mike to live a more independent life by accessing the community with 1 to 1 support rather than 2 to 1 support.

## Case Study - Beryl

### What matters to Beryl is being able to go shopping in Chester on her own

Beryl is 82 years old and has vascular dementia. Beryl lives in her own home with support from domiciliary care twice a day, morning and evening. Her family are very closely involved and support Beryl to continue to visit her favourite shopping areas, Chester and Wrexham independently on the bus. However, the family have been concerned as there have been a couple of occasions when Beryl has become disorientated and been unable to remember which bus to take to return home.

Telecare was considered and Beryl was provided with a GPS safer walking device which includes two way speech and a panic button. Beryl agreed that her family can access data that would enable them to locate her whereabouts at any time and contact her via the device. Beryl is also able to press her panic button if she needs assistance from her family who can help orientate her and either provide her with the correct information to get home safely or pick her up to bring her home.

Beryl was delighted with the outcome of being able to continue to go shopping independently and her family were reassured 'safe in the knowledge that mum can contact us if she needs help' or they can find out where she is, if needed, via the GPS device.

# Promoting Well-being and Independence

## Developing Extra Care

The award winning Extra Care schemes at **Llys Eleanor** and **Llys Jasmine** continue to provide high quality residential services, with



demand remaining as high as ever. Responding to the demand of our citizens for more extra care, the development of a new Extra Care scheme in Flint town centre has now commenced, in partnership with Clwyd Alyn Housing Association. The new Extra Care scheme will be a real flagship for Flint, which is undergoing a strategic regeneration, providing around 73 self-contained apartments, including apartments that are specially designed for people with dementia.

We recognise that Extra Care offers a support model that facilitates tenants living independently but having support on hand when needed. We will continue to explore opportunities to develop further Extra Care Schemes, working with tenants and key partners to identify suitable locations and address local demand.

## Our Priorities for 2016/17:

### For Adults Services:

- To ensure all our staff are competent and knowledgeable in delivering practice required by the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- To continue to work with all our partners to prevent unnecessary hospital admissions and return individuals home as speedily as possible
- To continue developing integrated health and social care teams

### For Children's Services:

- To continue and develop our ways of targeting early intervention and support for Children, Parents and Families
- To become a strong and effective corporate parent that will operate 24/7

# Workforce

The increasing complexity of people's needs along with the new requirements of the Act, have made us smarter in the way we organise, buy and deliver our services. This would not be possible without a competent and knowledgeable workforce delivering services with upmost professionalism. At Flintshire we are committed to ensuring our Workforce are able to work in an environment that maintains the quality and caring service they are providing, while continuing to offer opportunities for professional development, ensuring staff remain knowledgeable in the key issues and most up to date practice.

## Getting in on the Act

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (herein 'the Act') brings new legislation and cultural change to the services we provide. The Act encourages staff to engage with people and have different conversation which identify what matters to them. Therefore, the agenda for learning is significant.

A range of approaches have been taken to ensure that our staff are well placed to respond to changes arising from the Act. We have held overview information sessions through to detailed training events focusing on discreet areas of social care practice.

In 2016/17 we will continue this training programme and develop a series of action learning sets to embed the principles and details of the Act into practice.



In 2015, Flintshire took part in the national SSIA (Social Services Improvement Agency) pilot for the National Outcomes Framework project. This project was a series of learning and development opportunities to help front-line workers have engaging conversations with people and their families. The training enhanced professionals' skills helping them work with users of service to identify what really matters and use the resources within their community and own network of relationships to support them alongside more formal services.

Other initiatives to support the Act are giving staff working across social care sector access to a new one-stop shop **learning hub** "Getting in on the Act", an online resource providing information and training materials to help social care professionals implement the Act. The Information and Learning Hub has been developed by the Care Council for Wales and a variety of partners and will continue to be developed and expand.

## Embracing E Learning

In 2015 the Council launched a new e-learning resource known as '**Flintshire Academi**' where staff can access a variety of courses online, such as data protection, equality and diversity, some health and safety courses and more. This approach helps provide a cost effective approach to training and development enabling access at a time, and in a location, convenient to staff.

We have also launched Safeguarding e-Academi, which provides

# Workforce

on line awareness and training on a variety of safeguarding topics such as trafficking, exploitation and modern slavery, child abuse and neglect, child exploitation, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. This e-Academi again offers our learners an interactive convenient resources that is a cost effective way to deliver a range of training.

## Changing the way we work in Children's Services

During 2015/2016 our focus was not just on training and developing staff. We also reviewed the way our Children's Services were structured and we made some significant changes. These changes were informed by key messages and principles which include:

- Our staff wanting to be freed up to spend more time with children and families. They want to spend less time filling in paperwork.
- Children and families having too many changes in their social worker. They told us that they were fed up with having to repeat their story to new people.
- We need to work more closely with services that can help children and families early on. Children and families shouldn't have to wait until their problems become too big.
- Listening to children and young people is really, really important. We want to support more children and young people to have a say in their lives and have their voice heard.

Our new structure increases our focus on supporting families to be resilient through prevention and early intervention and, where appropriate, reducing reliance on formal statutory services. Taking a different approach applies equally to our partner organisations and we are working with agencies to refine, remodel and share new ways of working that seek to achieve positive outcomes for vulnerable children and families.

## Celebrating Success

Here are some good news stories that we would like to share....

We are really proud to report that one of our **Looked After Children** has been successful in gaining a place on the Flintshire Apprenticeship scheme.

A father has complimented the **Children's Duty & Assessment Team**, expressing his gratitude for helpful and concise advice which made a very stressful situation easier.

A dad praised the **Family and Adolescent Support Team** saying staff go above and beyond their duties to help his son feel happy and secure. He said the team do great work and he wanted to acknowledge this.

The **Disability Services Team** received a thank you card from a mother of a service user who said: 'I want to thank you for what you have done for my son. He is so happy and content and looking after his home and himself so well. It has certainly taken a weight off our shoulders. We can now face our remaining years with peace and less worry.'

# Workforce

Flintshire's Residential Care Homes (both in-house and independent) must be commended for achieving the highest evaluation of any Local Authority in the Older Peoples Commissioner for Wales' Care Home Review.

A massive congratulations to Jenni Rochfort, the Lead Parenting Practitioner, who has won the Incredible Parenting Coordinator Award 2016 awarded by the Children's Early Intervention Trust at the Centre for Evidence Based Early Intervention Conference at Bangor University in February.

Our Flying Start Team have been awarded the CANparent quality mark due to their fantastic delivery of the Family Links Nurturing Programme to parents and carers. The quality marker evidences the effective governance of the programme, evaluates engagement with families, and commends an evidenced based approach to service delivery.



Rhian Evans, Manager of Mental Health Support Services, has been nominated for "Leadership in the Public Sector" award at the national Leading Wales Awards. The award recognises individuals whose leadership is making a real difference in Wales and contributing to developing prosperity in our country.

## Our Priorities for 2016/17:

- Embed our new management structure in Children's
- Develop a robust focus on quality and practice
- Support the retention of care sector workers
- Work proactively to recruit new care workers
- Provide Traineeships for Social Worker and Occupational Therapists within Adults and Children's Services
- Work towards ensuring all staff who undertake assessments are suitably qualified, as laid out in the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014
- Support a Leadership and Management programme for managers within the independent sector.

# Stronger Safeguarding

The Act has brought about a change in culture across all service areas, with safeguarding being no exception. It has worked to ensure that the safeguarding powers and structures are stronger than ever, and a national independent safeguarding board has been established to ensure regional safeguarding boards are supported in the work they are doing in this area.

In April 2014 the North Wales Safeguarding Children's Board (NWSCB) was established to replace the 3 previous Local Safeguarding Boards. The NWSCB is a statutory partnership between the six local authorities, Betsi Cadwalader University Health Board, North Wales Police, the National Probation Service, the Community Rehabilitation Company, Public Health Wales, the Welsh Ambulance Service Trust and voluntary organisations.

The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act also requires a regional Safeguarding Adults Board be established to put the safeguarding of adults on a similar statutory footing as children. In North Wales the North Wales Safeguarding Adults Board (NWSAB) was established in September 2014 and Flintshire's Chief

Officer for Social Services is currently the chair of this board.

## Changes to our Safeguarding Approach

Within Flintshire, there has been significant developments at a service level with the appointment of a Safeguarding Unit Manager with specific responsibility for safeguarding across Adult and Children's Services. The remit includes management of the Independent Reviewing Officers who have responsibility for overseeing support for Looked After Children. This is combined with the continued development of our regional practice review groups. There was one Multi Agency Practice Forum (MAPF) undertaken in accordance with Adult Protection procedures and the report has just been published. Key recommendations from this report will be taken forward in the coming months.

We have worked in response to the report and recommendations from the Welsh Audit Office on the study of safeguarding, published in December 2014. This has entailed acting upon a number of priority actions including;

- 1. Create a single Safeguarding Unit to manage safeguarding and protection processes for adults, young people and children.** This has already been achieved with Adult Safeguarding Managers and administrative support joining the existing Safeguarding Unit in April 2015. Staff undertaking assessments under the Deprivation of Liberty procedures are within the same location.

# Stronger Safeguarding

- 2. Prepare for the new and additional safeguarding requirements of the Act.** Training and workshops are underway to support the Act. Whole service days are also being held to prepare staff groups for the changes.
- 3. Establish wider ownership and governance of safeguarding across the authority.** A Corporate Safeguarding Panel has been set up within Flintshire to develop wider ownership of safeguarding issues the group is chaired by the Chief Officer for Social Services but the responsibility for the forward work plan lies with Corporate Services. The Safeguarding Champions from each portfolio area attend the quarterly meetings.

## Child Sexual Exploitation Panel (CSE)

Flintshire County Council's Children's Services and its partner agencies use the CSE Panel as the mechanism to improve outcomes for children and young people in cases of known or suspected child sexual exploitation.

The CSE Panel has three primary roles:

1. To ensure that cases of suspected or actual child sexual exploitation are well-managed and co-ordinated and that all possible action has been taken to protect the victims.

2. To ensure that all cases are considered by a single group who are then able to identify any links between individual cases.
3. To ensure that intelligence relating to patterns of child sexual exploitation in the area can be identified and action taken where necessary. This will include the sharing of intelligence in relation to suspect groups of victims, perpetrators, vulnerable locations etc.

The primary role of the CSE Panel is to provide oversight of cases, it does not replace any existing systems or procedures for the investigation of child protection concerns but brings partners together as a consistent group to review all actual or suspected cases of child sexual exploitation.

## Advocacy for Flintshire Citizens

In Flintshire we firmly believe that giving people a voice to speak about the care they receive is integral to an effective safeguarding system. Advocacy Services North East Wales (ASNEW) are represented on the Flintshire and Wrexham Adult Safeguarding Delivery Group (a sub-group of the NWSAB). They are also closely involved in training and development with regards to safeguarding.

In addition to Advocacy, a number of projects have been developed to improve the commissioned quality of care services for citizens, these initiatives include:

# Stronger Safeguarding

## Listening Friends

The Listening Friends project is currently being piloted within four residential homes in Flintshire. Its primary aim is to gain intelligence about care quality from the perspective of older people living in residential care, by listening directly to their views. The project findings are being fed back to Flintshire's Quality Circle, which meets on a quarterly basis. Listening Friends is being delivered by a group of volunteers from Age Connects North East Wales who, by forming friendships with people living in the residential homes and visiting them on a regular basis, are able to determine how they really feel about their lives.



The project compliments the programme that is being co-produced with Helen Sanderson Associates 'Creating a Place Called Home ...Delivering What Matters' which is seeking to embed person-centred thinking and practices within care homes in Flintshire. Using wellbeing indicators, Listening Friends volunteers are able to record what is working and what is not working from residents' perspectives and this data can then be collectively analysed, themed and used to inform what needs to change to improve quality of life for people living in residential care settings.

## My Voice

The 'My Voice' project is being delivered by Advocacy Services North East Wales (ASNEW) and is being piloted within three specialist care settings in Flintshire. The aim is to develop an approach and set of resources that are tailored to each setting and enable the people living there to have increased levels of participation, to feel respected and listened to and to be more able to express their views on quality and choice. This is achieved through staff from ASNEW developing self-advocacy skills, facilitating group meetings and providing 'critical friend' input to care staff. In addition to increasing levels of control and satisfaction experienced by people living in these residential care settings, the project will also enable staff and managers to identify themes that will drive forward positive change.



## Advocating for Our Children and Young People

We have now entered into a **Regional arrangement for advocacy** for children and young people, complementing the already existing regional arrangements in safeguarding, with a service provided across North Wales by Tros Gynnal Plant. The service began in April 2015 and up until December the service had already supported 35 children and



# Stronger Safeguarding

young people in Flintshire. The feedback from children and young people accessing the service has been extremely positive;

**“Thank you for today, you helped me do good.”**  
**“Thanks for believing me.”**  
**“I am quite happy thank you!”**

## Our priorities for 2016/17:



Managing the risks identified through adult protection referrals including management of allegations against professionals.



Continue to evolve the multi-agency CSE Panel (Child Sexual Exploitation) to meet service demand and requirements and establish regional links.



Working with Children’s Fieldwork services to link the proposed single assessment into the Child Protection framework.



Working with Adult and Children’s Services to bring safeguarding practice in line with the Social Services and Well-Being (Wales) Act 2014.



Establishing agreed priorities for action in relation to Mental Capacity Act/Deprivation of Liberty Safeguarding (DoLS) issues, both in care homes under the DoLS framework and in community settings.

# Evidencing our Improvement

We collect and assess quantitative and qualitative intelligence from a wide variety of sources and use this information to show how we are working effectively with service users to achieve the outcomes that they want, how we are meeting the standards identified in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014, and whether we are achieving our aims identified through the vision for 2015-18:

- Keep people as our focus
- Safeguard and support
- Do “what matters” well
- Promote independence and strengthen families

Together these standards provide a framework against which we can measure our progress, form a judgement on the quality and performance of our services and evidence how they are improving. This judgement is derived from a variety of sources, including the findings from external inspection, internal quality assurance activity, information about the workforce and our commissioning activity, and the experiences and perceived

progress of citizens who use services. Information that is gathered through the quality assurance framework is being used to inform and develop practice and policy.

In May 2015, implementation of a new performance management system known as Sycle began across the Council. Sycle is an integrated planning, risk management and programme / project management and reporting software package. We have been using Sycle for reporting on the priorities in the Council Improvement Plan since June 2015, and are now developing two further aspects of the system: ‘global collaboration’ and ‘community dashboard’, that can be used by all Public Service Board Partners to aid performance management of our priorities.

Sycle will provide benefits which include:

- Efficiencies by reducing duplication and data entry
- A single version of the truth
- Improved visibility and accountability for performance and programme / project management objectives including an audit trail
- Dynamic, exception based reporting with dashboards and standard reports

## External Inspection:

The following external inspections took place during 2015/16, and here is a summary of the key findings:

# Evidencing our Improvement

## CSSIW Inspection of Fostering Services, April 2015

The inspectors found the service to be very child centred, with staff aware of each individual's needs and circumstances. Despite staff shortages, the service has maintained, and even improved in areas, the standard of fostering service. The supervision recording format for fostering staff was commended. There was praise for the way in which the team engages prospective applicants, through information sessions and producing a DVD. There had been improvements since the last inspection, such as the introduction of the connected persons' assessment process, the process of having three independent co-ordinators chairing disruption meetings, and the co-location of the team with other child care teams.

## CSSIW Inspection of Children's Services, May/June 2015

The Inspectors noted evidence of good practice in social work assessments, and found that child protection conferences and reviews were well managed and appropriately child focused. The quality of care plans was found to be satisfactory or good. The inspectors commented that "Senior leaders and offices had a shared commitment to improving safeguarding arrangements and had sought to strengthen this in strategic priorities". Senior leaders were found to be knowledgeable about how the service is performing and focussed on improving frontline practice and quality. The workforce were described as "suitably qualified, experienced, and competent".

## Internal Audit

Every year certain aspects of our service are subject to internal audit; this acts as a check to ensure that our procedures are robust and that our internal control processes are operating effectively. This year we have been audited on direct payments and commissioning for third sector contracts. Both audits produced recommendations which are being followed up this year.

## Quality Assurance Activity

We have reviewed and strengthened our case file audit procedures for Children's Services, and have drawn together a quality panel which meets to discuss the findings from file audits and make recommendations for improvements to practice. Our case file audits are, on the whole, demonstrating good quality practice but have highlighted the need to revisit and update our recording policy with a view to achieve consistent recording practice. Similarly in Adult Services we have introduced a quality element to Older People's panel, to ensure that the services provided are clearly linked to the outcome that the person wishes to achieve. In the forthcoming year we will be rolling this approach out to other services.

## Quality Circles

Quality Circles is an initiative set up in partnership with Flintshire County Council's Contract & Commissioning Team and Care & Social Services Directorate Wales. The 'Quality Circle' approach was to ensure on-going quality monitoring of adult services across all care settings in Flintshire. To date the approach is now well established and has welcomed more members from health settings, third sector and the local authority. We have developed a central point where

# Evidencing our Improvement

positive and negative information about commissioned services can be shared informally amongst organisations with a view to securing improvement before issues need more formal action.

## Managing our Performance

Our Senior Management Team monitors progress against the Council and Business Plans, and report regularly to Cabinet and Health and Social Care Overview Scrutiny Committee who provide challenge to our judgements about how we are performing. The key activities that contribute to the Council's priorities and drive forward service change are overseen by Modernising Social Services Board.

With respect to the data we collect to inform the national picture of Social Services performance, we are in a period of change, and are working to develop new data sets which will show how we are progressing with the implementation of the Social Services & Wellbeing (Wales) Act. However we continue to consistently measure our performance in those areas which we consider to be a priority in Flintshire, and this information is regularly presented to the Senior Management Team and the quarterly Performance Forum to highlight best practice and identify areas for improvement. Our performance continues to be strong, and we have made good improvements this year, particularly in Children Services, in some of the key measures that last year were noted as needing to improve, such as the rate of repeat referrals, the timeliness of reviews for children in need, and

the timeliness of health assessments for looked after children.

## Measuring Outcomes

This year we have continued to develop the co-productive approach to addressing and finding solutions to people's support needs, in line with the ambitions of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act and the accompanying National Outcomes Framework. Working through a multi agency stakeholder group in North Wales, we have developed new procedures and documentation which support the Act in removing the need for expensive, time-consuming and bureaucratic assessments and giving people to decide 'what matters' to them and how they can direct their own support to achieve the outcomes they want. We are continuing to implement these processes in the forthcoming year, supported by an extensive and ongoing programme of training and mentoring for all staff. Alongside this we have introduced a method of measuring the progress people are making towards their personal outcomes, so that we are able to evidence the positive impact that the new approach is having on people's lives.

## Complaints

Learning from complaints is important and we use the findings and outcomes to inform policy and practice in delivering services (known as the 'lessons learned' process). Examples of action taken on issues raised as a result of complaints to Adult Social Services include:

# Evidencing our Improvement

- We will review our processes whereby allegations of inappropriate behaviour shown toward care staff, including those working for a private provider, are formally looked into and an outcome recorded.
- Action sheets are now drawn up at the end of each learning disability review so the service user goes away with the three most important outcomes they want to achieve, with a copy to the provider. This will further ensure an individual's planned actions are followed up with service providers in preparation for their next review.
- Contracts with privately registered homes have been revised stating the Council will now pay the host Local Authority rate, including cross border placements in England.

And for Children's Services:

- Holding separate meetings between parents/partners if one parent/partner does not engage effectively and removes themselves from the situation if the other is present.
- In core group meetings where parents are distressed and may not be fully taking in what is happening, Chairs will summarise outcomes to ensure parents fully understand what will happen next.

- Fostering processes strengthened regarding expectations at the time of a bereavement in a looked after child's life and the timeliness of foster carers receiving a thorough and comprehensive induction following their approval.
- Service information booklets for services are to be updated and revised.

## Service user experience

We regularly gather feedback from people who use our services through care plan reviews, service user engagement groups and targeted questionnaires. We are now reviewing our feedback questionnaires in line with the National Outcomes Framework and a priority for next year will be to develop new and innovative ways to enable more people to have their say about our services.

# Glossary

**Assessment** - A conversation about promoting independent living, or achieving a good level of development for a child, where personal outcomes, and the barriers to achieving outcomes are co-productively identified.

**Alternative Delivery Models** - New ways of working to provide services more efficiently which can be shared services, outsourcing, shared management arrangements, joint ventures and establishing social enterprises.

**Cabinet** - The Council's Cabinet comprises 8 Elected Members. Each Elected Member, supported by a Lead Director and accountable Heads of Service / Managers, is assigned a portfolio of Council services / functions.

**Care Council for Wales** - The social care workforce regulator in Wales responsible for promoting and securing high standards across the social services and social care workforce.

**Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales (CSSIW)** - The inspectorate that has the powers to review Local Authority social services at a local and national level, to inform the public whether services are up to standard, to promote improvement of services and to help safeguard the interests of vulnerable people who use services and their carers. They also provide professional advice to Welsh Ministers and policy makers.

**Care Leaver** - Young people who have been in the care of the local authority and are deemed to be eligible for a leaving care services. i.e. young people who have had a period of care exceeding 13 weeks, from their 14th birthday, are entitled to ongoing support as they move into adulthood.

**Commissioning** - involves making decisions about what services are required to respond to need. It involves making decisions about the capacity, location, cost and quality of services, together with who will deliver them.

**Collaboration** - where agencies pool resources (time, expertise and money) to work together to deliver and develop services.

**Coproduction** - Citizens, carers and families working with decision makers and service providers to create a decision or service that works for all parties.

**Corporate Parenting** - The Council has a duty to act as a good parent to children and young people in its care and those young people in the process of leaving care. The Council wants these children to have the best possible outcomes. Clear strategic and political leadership is crucial in ensuring that Looked After Children and the Corporate Parenting agenda is given the appropriate profile and priority.

**Direct Payments** - Cash payments given to people who are eligible as a means of controlling their own care, allowing more choice and flexibility. They are regular monthly payments from Social Services enabling people to purchase their own care, instead of receiving help arranged by social services.

# Glossary

**Domiciliary Care** - Also known as home care, is whereby supportive care is provided to individuals within their own home.

**Enhanced Care** - forms part of the spectrum of intermediate community based services, but specifically provides care at the 'far end' of this spectrum for people who have medical and/or nursing needs who, without enhanced care, would otherwise be admitted to a hospital bed or would remain in hospital for a longer period of time. (This includes people admitted to an acute hospital bed and those who are admitted / transferred to a community hospital bed).

**Extra Care Scheme** - Schemes that provide independent living and greater housing choices for some older people in Flintshire; apartments can be purchased by or rented to people aged 60+ who have care and accommodation needs.

**Family Information Service** - A confidential and impartial information, advice and guidance service for families with children and young people aged between 0 and 19 years of age. The FIS work with public, private and voluntary sector organisations to ensure our customers know where and how to access information and support.

**Integrated Family Support Service** - An innovative service model that aims to reform services provided to vulnerable children and families. For families with complex problems there is an increased likelihood that the child's physical, social and emotional development will be impaired and for some children there will be repeated or long term episodes of being looked after by the local authority. The main aim of IFSS is to support families to stay together by empowering them to

take positive steps to improve their lives.

**Locality** - A locality is a defined geographical area and there are three in Flintshire - North East (Deeside), North West (Flint and Holywell) and South (Buckley, Mold etc). The overall aim of the is to enable multi-agency staff from the locality to work in partnership as an integrated team to plan, deliver and monitor the best possible locality services for residents.

**Local Service Board** - A local Leadership Team of Flintshire's public service bodies (Council, Police, BCU Health Board, Further and Higher Education, Probation, Fire and Rescue, Environment Agency, Voluntary Sector).

**Looked After Child (LAC)** - Looked after children are children and young people who are in public care and looked after by the state. This includes those who are subject to a care order or temporarily classed as looked after on a planned basis for short breaks or respite care. The term is also used to describe 'accommodated' children and young people who are looked after on a voluntary basis at the request of, or by agreement with, their parents.

**Minor and Major Adaptations** - Minor Adaptation is an adaptation which costs under £1000 such as a grab rail or level access shower (not equipment). A Major Adaptation is over £1000 and would be through the Disabled Facilities Grant or if a Housing Association tenant through Scheme 1A which is Welsh Government funded (e.g. bathroom, kitchen or bedroom extension, stair-lift or lift).

**More Than Just Words** - A strategic framework for Welsh language services in health and social care in Wales, developed by the Welsh Government. The framework outlines the current position and provides a systematic approach to improve services for those who

# Glossary

need or choose to receive their care in Welsh.

**Neglect** - Neglect means a failure to meet a person's basic physical, emotional, social or psychological needs, which is likely to result in an impairment of the person's well-being (for example, an impairment of the person's health).

**Outcomes** - The benefits, changes or other effects that result in an improvement in quality of life for a person from services provided. E.g. an improvement in physical functioning or maintaining a life skill leading to continued independence.

**Permanence** - Achieving 'permanence' will be a key consideration from the time a child becomes looked after, and the Part 6 care and support plan should set out from the outset how this is to be achieved. Permanence includes emotional permanence (attachment), physical permanence (stability), and legal permanence (who has parental responsibility for the child). Together these give a child a sense of security, continuity, commitment and identity).

**Prevention** - The prevention approach enhances the person's well-being by preventing or minimising major problems of living. Providing information for people to self-manage alongside early intervention before problems escalate, monitoring and proportionate risk assessment means that problems are reduced and the need for ongoing longer term support is minimised.

**Reablement** - A short term assessment and intervention service which is person centred and outcome focused, and aims to maximise independence, choice and quality of life. Most people who now wish to access Social Care Services undergo this period of assessment and support to enable them to live as independently as possible, minimising the requirement for ongoing support.

**Scrutiny Committee** - Decisions are usually made by the Cabinet for all issues including major policy matters. The role of Overview and Scrutiny is to hold the Cabinet to account as a critical friend and to monitor/ assist in the improvement and development of the council's policies and services.

**Single Point of Access (SPOA)** - A new single point of contact for adults who wish to access advice, assessment and co-ordinated community health and social care services.

**Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act** - The Act will set out the core legal framework for social services and social care, reinforcing people's rights to information and services and supporting the delivery of our services in an integrated way to ensure that social services and social care are sustainable.

**Supported Living** - Housing and support that is built around a person, allowing them to choose where they live, with whom and how they are supported.

**SYCLE** - Software package for integrated planning, risk management, programme and project management and reporting

# Glossary

**Team Around the Family** - Co-ordinates early support for families with multiple needs that are broader than one service can address. TAF seek to make best use of all local resources to ensure family and community strengths are harnessed and problems are prevented from escalating.

**Telecare** - A way in which support can be provided through telecommunication devices in the home. It uses simple technology to manage risk and give people the peace of mind they need to live in their own homes for longer.

**Well-Being** - Reference to well-being in the Act means the well-being of an individual who needs care and support or carer who needs support. Well-being relates to the physical, intellectual, emotional, social and behavioural development of a child. It also relates to the control over day to day life and participation in work in adults.

**'What Matters' Conversation** - A conversation to establish 'what matters' to a person in terms of their well-being, what they wish to achieve and what strengths, capacity and capabilities they can draw on to enable them to overcome barriers. This conversation will be undertaken through the assessment process to identify personal outcomes.