

# Flintshire County Council Social Services



## Annual Report 2024/25



& 2025/26 Priorities

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Mae fersiwn Gymraeg o'r adroddiad hwn ar gael.

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# Contents

<b>Section 1 - Introduction</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>Section 2 - Director's Summary</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Section 3 - Context</b>	<b>8</b>
• Contextual Data and National Performance Measures	8
• Leadership	10
• Workforce	12
• Financial Resources	14
<b>Section 4 - Performance Assessment</b>	<b>17</b>
• People	18
• Prevention	24
• Partnership and Integration	38
• Well-being	42
<b>Section 5 - Other information</b>	<b>47</b>
• Inspections and Reviews	47
• Complaints and Representations	50
• Referencing Other Sources of Information	52
<b>Section 6 - Appendices</b>	<b>53</b>
• Glossary of Terms	53
• Summary of Social Services' Priorities for 2025/26	57

## Section 1

# Introduction

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

The focus of this legislation is on well-being, and our report summarises the key things that we are doing in Flintshire to support our most vulnerable residents. It describes our challenges, provides our stakeholders with a picture of how we have performed and improved over the last year, and sets out our priorities for the coming year.

Stakeholders include the people using our services, our staff, elected members, the general public, our partners, regulators and Welsh Government. Engagement with stakeholders is fundamental to what we do and informs the development of our services and future plans.

In the report, we assess our performance against each of the four areas in the Performance Improvement Framework – People, Prevention, Partnership and Integration, Well-being, and the eight quality standards under these four areas. This assessment is completed for both Adults' and Children's Services and describes how the local authority has aimed to achieve these standards throughout the year.

There are instances where the work described in this report relates to multiple quality standards, however this will be detailed in the area most appropriate.



## Section 2



**Craig Macleod**  
Chief Officer, Social Services

# Director's Summary

Welcome to the 2024/25 Social Services Annual Report, my first as Chief Officer and statutory Director of Social Services. Over the past year, Flintshire Adults' and Children's Social Services have worked hard to support residents and their carers, empowering them to have control over their lives, promoting independence, and helping them live well in their communities.

### Some of the highlights of 2024/25 include:

- Our **Direct Payments** team has developed mapping software to help supported individuals connect, enabling people to pool funding and further improve outcomes.
- **Foster carer** recruitment has been active, with four new general foster carers and eight connected person carers being approved.
- **Early Years and Family Service** secured Welsh Government capital funding to support childcare and early years programs, enhancing community pathways between childcare and school.
- The **Flying Start** childcare expansion enabled 280 children to access sessions at registered childcare settings. **Brain Story** training has been delivered to over 100 staff, improving their understanding of adverse and positive experiences on a child's development and the longer-term impacts. The **Parent Champion** pilot scheme has improved family access to information, making services more accessible.

- Our **Progression Team** has been awarded the Social Care Wales Accolade Award 2025 in the category of 'Working to the Principles of Strengths-based Practice'. This recognition celebrates their exceptional work in empowering individuals to achieve what truly matters to them. Congratulations to the team and everyone involved in this outstanding achievement.
- North Wales Together's **Supported Employment Programme** is now available across North Wales, with support accessible through the Employment Pathway Coordinator in Flintshire's Progression Team.
- The recommissioning of our **Carers Services** is complete, improving services for carers. **NEWCIS** has opened a new premises which will enable us to better identify and connect with carers.
- **Micro-Care** has grown with 23 new businesses this year, supporting personal care and well-being for around 300 people in Flintshire. With 16 providers now registered for commissioning by Flintshire County Council.

We have also made good progress with our capital projects, including Tŷ Croes Atti Residential Care Home and Coed-Y-Ddraig, set to open in summer 2025. These new facilities will provide high-quality, integrated health and social care services for Flintshire residents.

Croes Atti (Ysgol Gymraeg), Oakenhalt, is our new Welsh childcare facility and is planned to be opened September 2025. We have worked closely with education colleagues to develop a childcare and education facility, that will provide a 'gift' to children, providing a wonderful play and learning experience.



In Flint, Ysgol Cornist has begun development, providing much needed childcare in the area and pathways into school with wrap-around childcare available, requested by parents.

Whilst we have made solid progress in developing our services in 2024/25, I want to be transparent about the size and scale of the challenges faced across the health and social care system. Demand for services is increasing, budgets are not stretching as far, unpaid carers and families are facing further strains, and recruitment and retention remain huge challenges across Wales. Locally, there has been strong political and corporate support to lobby for a fair funding settlement for Flintshire which recognises the growing demographic challenges, the impact of the cost of living crisis, workforce, inflationary pressures, increasing complexity of demand, and the increasing needs of young children and young people post-Covid, in relation to areas such as speech and language, behaviours and support needs.

Between 2023/24 and 2024/25 there was a budget pressure of £6.306m arising from increased demand, complexity of need and the cost of care. Of the £6.306m budget pressures, 78.5% related to increases in commissioned care fees for both Adults' and Children's Services to support our independent care providers. It is important to note that even with the pressures, we sustained our focus on efficiency and were able to deliver savings of £1.272m.

Looking forward the Council has made further financial investment in social care to recognise growing costs and demand. Over £10m additional funding has been allocated to support social care in 2025/2026. Over half of this will fund increases in the charges made to the local authority for the cost of care that we buy from the independent sector. This includes residential care

for adults and children, day services, support to enable people to live in their own home and independent fostering. This money is needed to sustain existing services. Positively, the local authority has allocated an additional £3.5m to meet the growing need for care and support across services for older people, adults with a disability and to support children and families. This additional investment recognises the value the local authority places on supporting vulnerable residents. However, my assessment is that central funding settlements are unlikely to keep pace with local demographic needs.

**Our priority for 2025/2026 is to develop a sustainable model of social care for our residents of Flintshire. This will require more than our efforts to date to secure better coordination of services and to find more efficiency savings. We have commenced a range of projects that start a journey to transform the future delivery of social care. Our focus remains firmly on improving the quality of care and achieving outcomes for individuals, based on the 'what matters' conversation, and how we can address the needs of individuals and families building resilience and focusing on well-being. Enabling individuals to make informed decisions about potential solutions to their own situations is central to this approach.**

The approach requires strong partnerships with our residents and communities who will continue to play a central role in supporting people to live independently and to connect to community-based services, or seek information that can help themselves, a family member or friend. Statutory social care will focus on targeted intervention and support to build resilience and autonomy and meeting the needs of residents with the most complex social care needs that cannot be met through other resources.

Digital transformation is also crucial for the future of social care, both in supporting our workforce by freeing up their time from administration tasks, and by expanding digital tools to enhance care and support experiences. As part of this, we are working across North Wales as part of a national project to implement a new IT system for social care that will be implemented in 2026.

While the challenge is significant, we are exceptionally well-positioned to transition to a sustainable model of social care. Our passionate, committed, and professional workforce is innovative and dedicated to finding the best ways to support the well-being and independence of our residents. We also have strong, productive, and collaborative partnerships, and we will continue to work positively with voluntary, statutory, and independent sector partners to ensure a holistic approach to social care and support.

This journey, though demanding, offers incredible opportunities to focus on positive, strengths-based practices that enable people to live independent, quality lives, receiving social care support precisely when they need it. Our model will centre on:

## Passion for Practice

Through 'what matters conversations,' we will adhere to the principles of strengths-based practice, driven by a collective desire to make a positive impact on people's lives.

## Supporting Independence

We will adopt approaches and programmes designed to empower individuals and reduce the need for statutory support where safe and appropriate.

## Care Closer to Home

We will support people within their community, reducing the need for hospital admissions and enhancing the quality of life through locally based provision.

## Digital Support

Leveraging technology to enhance the quality, efficiency, and personalisation of care.

## Sustainable Market

We will pay a fair price for care services that are environmentally, economically, and socially responsible, providing quality personalised outcomes to meet assessed needs.

## Section 3



# Context

## Contextual Data and National Performance Measures 01 April 2024 to 31 March 2025

### Adult Social Services

**9,915** - Number of new contacts received by statutory services during the year.

**7,221** - Number of those new contacts who were provided with advice or assistance. (This figure includes 939 contacts to statutory social services which resulted in advice & assistance from our social prescribing service).

**6,969** - Number of new assessments completed during the year.

**15%** - Percentage of assessments that went on to have a care and support plan to meet their outcomes.

On the last day of the year, we were helping **1,072** people over the age of 65 to live at home and **649** older people in care homes.

**68%** - Percentage of people with a package of support who had their care plan reviewed within timescales.

**265** - Number of people who completed a package of reablement during the year.

**1,855** - Number of adult carers who were identified and referred to our carers service.

**640** - Number of people who commissioned their own services through a direct payment.

**1,279** - Number of adult safeguarding reports received during the year.

**96%** - Percentage of those which progressed to Section 126 enquiries which were completed within 7 days.

**335** - Number of cases waiting to be allocated for a Deprivation of Liberty Safeguards assessment in Flintshire.

### **Children's Services**

**14,898** - Number of contacts received by statutory services during the year.

**10,922** - Number of those contacts who were provided with advice or assistance.

**974** - Number of families that received information and support through the Early Help Hub.

**1,753** - Number of families passed to the Information Assistance and Advice (IAA) service.

**114** - Number of children on the Flintshire Child Protection Register on the 31st of March 2025.

**97% & 98%** - Percentage of initial child protection conferences and review conferences carried out within timescales.

**9%** - Percentage of children added to the register that were re-registered within 12 months of deregistration.

**12.7** months - Average time that children remained on the register.

**111** - Number of children with a care and support plan where needs were being met through a direct payment as of the 31st of March 2025.

**76** - Number of children / young people who have left care during the year.

**1,973** - Number of new assessments completed during the year.

**25%** - Percentage of those who went on to have a care and support plan.

**56%** - Percentage of those who had needs which could be met by any other means.

**19%** - Percentage of those who had no eligible needs.

**271** - Number of children who were looked after in Flintshire on the 31st of March 2025.

# Leadership

## Political Leadership

Elected Members represent the residents of Flintshire and play a crucial role in the Council's governance, including agreeing the Council's priorities and approving policies to deliver continuous improvement. Flintshire Council consists of 67 Elected Members who represent their ward interests and participate in full Council meetings to oversee the Council's performance. The Leader, Councillor Dave Hughes, appoints one Member to represent each portfolio area as Cabinet Members. Together with the Leader, Deputy Leaders, Chief Executive Officer, and Chief Officers, they form the Council's Cabinet. Councillor Christine Jones is the Cabinet Member for Social Services and Well-being.

## How We Make Decisions

Each Cabinet Member is supported by Overview and Scrutiny Committees. For Social Services, this is the Social and Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Joint meetings with the Education and Youth Scrutiny Committee are held to discuss services for children and young people that cut across both Social Services and Education.

The Council Leader, Deputy Leaders, and Cabinet Member for Social Services are involved in the Social Services work programme through the Social Services Programme Board and Management Team meetings.

The Chief Executive Officer leads the Council Officers, supported by Chief Officers for each portfolio. The Chief Officer for Social Services also holds the statutory role of Director of Social Services. The Council's constitution outlines its operational structure, decision-making processes, and procedures to ensure efficiency, transparency, and accountability.

Internal governance is maintained through audits monitored by the Audit Committee, which can call on officers to provide evidence if concerns arise.



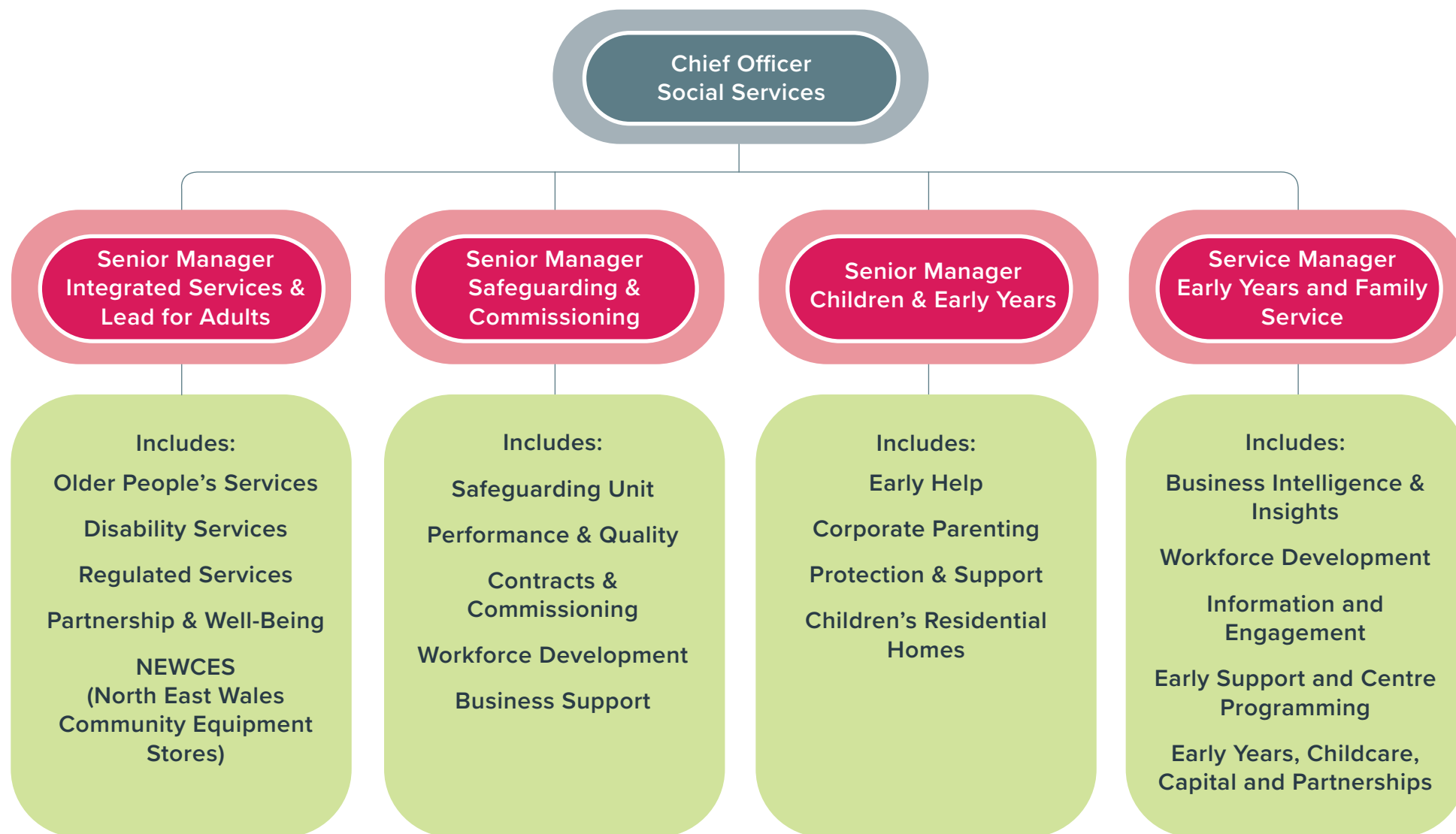
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**Councillor  
Christine Jones**

Deputy Leader and  
Cabinet Member  
for Social Services  
and Well-being.

## Social Services Management Structure



# Workforce

## Workforce Summary

- There are currently 1,172 staff employed in Social Services in Flintshire. This equates to 979 full time equivalent posts.
- 285 of the staff are employed within Children's Services, 749 in Adults' Services and 137 in Safeguarding and Commissioning.
- 41% of our staff work on a part time basis.
- The majority of the workforce are women, 86%
- Social care workers span a broad age range. The dominant age range is 56-65 which makes up 28.9% of the workforce.
- 58.2% of the workforce are over 45.

## Recruitment, Retention and Turnover

There have been just over 100 staff leavers within the year, but overall numbers of staff have remained very steady, with a decrease of just three in total staffing numbers since the beginning of the year.

Turnover has decreased significantly since last year and is projected to be just under 10%, compared to 13.76% for 2023-24.

We have some areas where vacant posts are hard to fill, and we undertake regular recruitment initiatives and marketing campaigns to advertise these posts. However, vacant posts remain in some areas, and as a result, we do have agency workers and external providers who enable us to continue to deliver a high level of service.



## Professional Development

Flintshire’s Workforce Development Team maintains high-quality learning and development opportunities, providing both planned and responsive support to meet the training needs of the social care workforce, and support the statutory functions of Social Services. The Workforce Development Team support pre and post graduate learning, vocational learning and offer training programmes to promote continued professional development and career progression for staff.

## Staff Support

The Council’s employee assistance programme, ‘VIVUP’, is available online and via freephone 24/7. VIVUP provides support for employees with personal and work-related issues, as well as management support to complement existing policies. We have

also worked with Canopi to offer a free self-referral service which supports social and health care staff with mental health support.

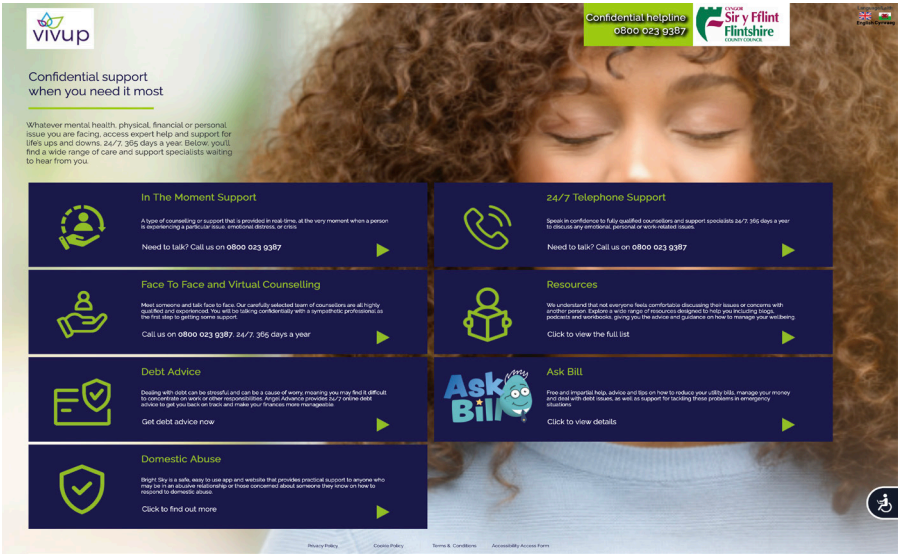
Our hybrid working policy allows flexible and agile working arrangements, to enable staff to have a greater work life balance, which in turn supports well-being.

Leaders are accessible, approachable, supportive, and overall ensure practitioners have the right training and skills. Flintshire has a comprehensive supervision policy, ensuring practitioners benefit from regular supervision. This policy facilitates positive conversations between staff and their managers, with annual appraisals strongly focusing on well-being.

The Workforce Development Team offer a one-hour online workshop to provide new staff members of Social Services the opportunity to meet and learn about our processes and ways of working. We have developed comprehensive induction booklets to support members of staff who are new to the authority/Social Services in the first three months of their role, and also for newly appointed managers to guide them in the transition into their managerial roles.

## Micro-Care

Flintshire’s Micro-Care project is a groundbreaking approach to support people or small businesses to deliver care and well-being services in the area. Micro-Care has strengthened the local care market by offering a different option for care and support, and by bringing a new source of care workers into the market.



# Financial Resources

The service is facing a large increase in demand for 2024/25, leading to a significant projected overspend. Like many other authorities, we are seeing a rise in both the amount and complexity of service need. This demand challenges both our capacity to respond to supporting people with more routine needs, and the financial capacity of the local authority.

In summary our financial position is:

	2024/25 Budget (net) £m	2024/25 Expenditure (net) £m	2024/25 Variance (net) £m
Adult Social Care - Older People	34.812	37.546	2.734
Adult Social Care - Working Age Adults	43.791	45.067	1.276
Children’s Services	12.934	14.898	1.965
Safeguarding & Commissioning	2.031	1.426	-0.605
<b>Total Social Services</b>	<b>93.567</b>	<b>98.937</b>	<b>5.370</b>

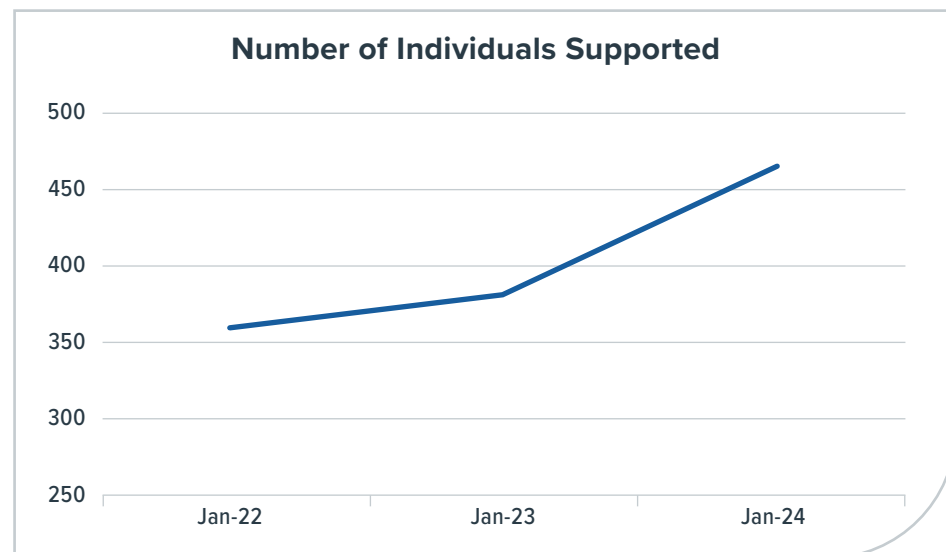
Between 2023/24 and 2024/25 there have been total budget pressures of £6.306m and efficiencies made of £1.272m. The pressures have largely arisen from increased demand, complexity of need and the cost of care. Of the £6.306m budget pressures, 78.5% related to increases in commissioned care fees for both Adults’ and Children’s Services to support our independent care providers.



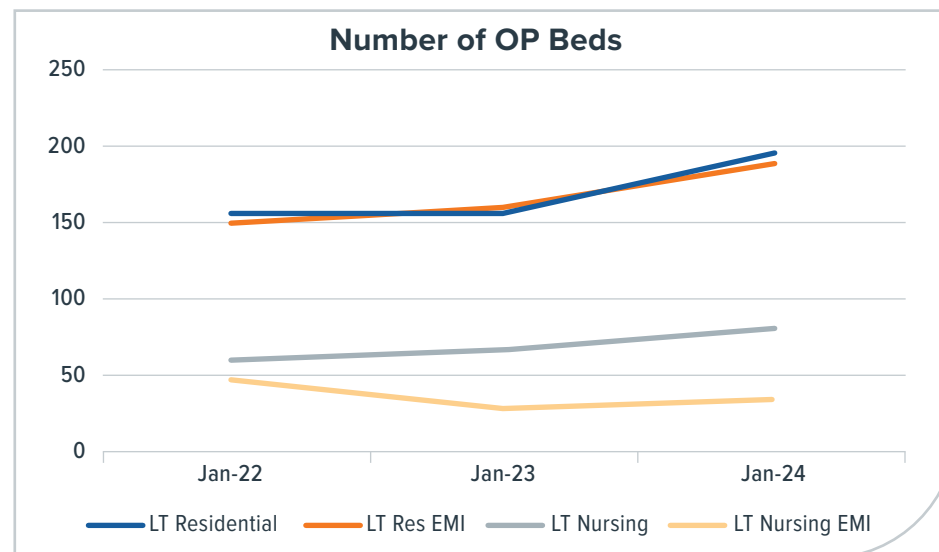
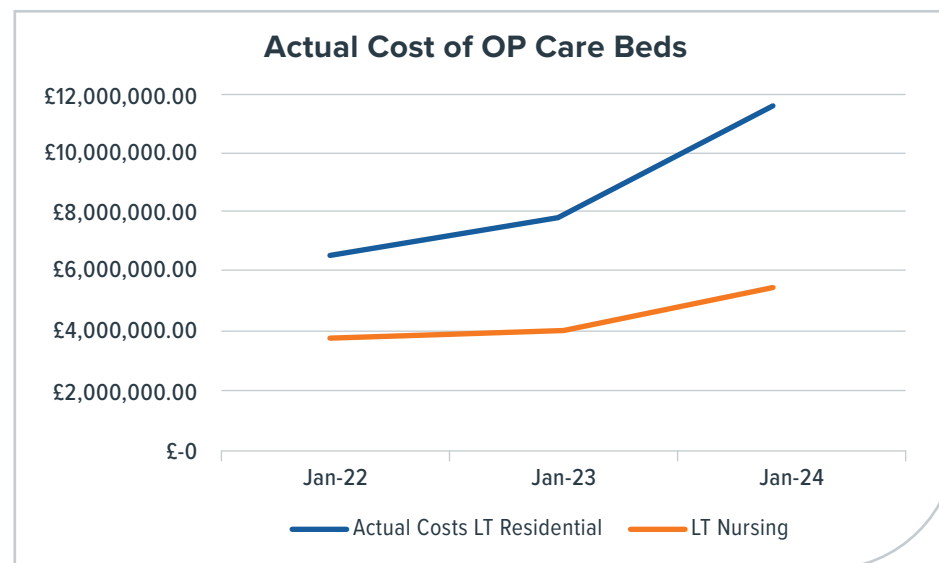
## Service Demand

The demographic pressures have led to a significant increase in service requests within the context of finite workforce and service availability. We have worked hard to ensure that we provide a timely and responsive service to people in greatest need. However, service demand is exceeding our capacity. We know that if people have to wait for care and support their conditions could worsen, leading to more expensive care needs. We also know that in hospitals, patients who are not discharged when medically fit could deteriorate and need more intensive, long-term support. Flintshire is unique because our residents use three hospitals outside the county, spreading our social care resources and creating extra demand in serving three settings with different processes and operating models. The following graphs show the increase in service demand for older people:

## Domiciliary Care



## Long Term (LT) Residential Care for Older People (OP)



### **Additional Funding 2025/2026**

As part of the budget for 2025/2026 the local authority has identified additional investment for Social Services given the level of service demand. This is within the context of a very challenging budget cycle with a comparatively low funding settlement, and the difficult decision to raise council tax to provide the infrastructure and support needed for our residents.

The 2025/26 budget includes a 7.44% increase for social care to meet the estimates of current demand and the additional costs of commissioned care. In addition, £3.5m has been allocated to support older people, adults of work age and children's services. Even though we've added more funds to the budget to cover these costs, there's still a risk that the financial burden of meeting the growing demand could exceed our resources.



## Section 4

# Performance Assessment

This section asks local authorities to address the eight quality standards under four sections. This assessment is completed for both Adults' and Children's Services and describes how the local authority has aimed to achieve these standards throughout the year.

The self-assessment approach asks local authorities to address the following four questions:

- What do we know about the quality and impact of what we are doing?
- How do we know? e.g. what evidence from research, engagement and the metrics are we using to inform this assessment?
- What are we doing well and how can we do better? What are our priorities for improvement particularly over the coming year?
- What progress did we make on the areas for improvement identified in last year's report? What difference did we make?



## People

### Quality Standards

- All people are equal partners who have choice, voice and control over their lives and are able to achieve what matters to them.
- Effective leadership is evident at all levels with a highly skilled well qualified and supported workforce working towards a shared vision.

### The Corporate Parenting Charter (CPC)

Flintshire County Council are committed to the aims and principles of the Welsh Governments [Corporate Parenting Charter](#). The Charter places a responsibility on key public, third and private sector bodies to ensure care experienced children and young people receive support and are able to access services without restrictions given their own life experiences.

Flintshire County Council is fully committed to the Charter, renewing its pledge and reassurance to our young people in fulfilling these obligations. Work is currently underway to produce and promote the new strategy with full implementation in the autumn of 2025

### Direct Payments - Local, Regional and National Developments

Flintshire County Council continues to actively contribute to direct payments policy development in Wales, supporting and influencing the design and development of direct payments schemes across Wales and England.



The Direct Payments (DP) Support Service continues to develop its local services in response to statutory responsibilities and is recognised as a leading example in Wales. The DP team has developed mapping software to help supported individuals connect, reduce sole support, improve relationships, and create financial benefits. This approach enables people to pool funding, improve outcomes, increase efficiency, prevent decline, and build resilience.

We have made significant progress in the development of the personal assistant workforce locally. Each week, personal assistants deliver around 4,000 support hours, offering highly person-centred, relationship-based support with many positive outcomes.

Development of direct payments resources is ongoing, which are available for other UK local authorities to use. The Personal Assistant Recruitment Portal, unique in Wales, is being extended to other authorities and approval has been given for Chester & Cheshire West Council to adopt Flintshire's animated film in exchange for a British Sign Language version.

The DP Team Manager has been re-elected as Vice Chair of the All-Wales Direct Payments Forum and continues to support Welsh Government to develop direct payments for health care. The new legislation, expected in early 2026, will enable DP recipients to transfer self-directed care to health funding, improving circumstances for individuals and local authorities across Wales. Support also continues with Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB) in their transition to direct payments for healthcare, involving significant changes and the spot purchase of Flintshire's Direct Payments Support Service, creating future revenue opportunities.



## Case Study – Direct Payments

### ***How direct payments have transformed care for my Mum***

*When my mum had a stroke in March 2023, it became clear that she would need personalised care if she stood a chance of living comfortably at home. Direct payments (DP) have been a game-changer in enabling us to achieve this. With the funds allocated, I've been able to employ and manage a team of four personal assistants (PAs), all chosen specifically myself to meet Mum's needs. PAs do not need to have caring experience or qualifications; however, they do receive six hours paid online training. Three of the four PAs were recommended by friends, and another was interviewed and employed via an advert.*

*Initially, the thought of becoming an employer felt overwhelming, but with the support and guidance of the Direct Payments department, it's been surprisingly straightforward. We've now established a smooth routine, and Mum's PAs have become more than just carers, they now feel part of the family.*

*The tailored care that direct payments has enabled Mum to receive has made such a difference, not just to her, but to me too as her primary carer. It's given her the chance to stay in her own home, surrounded by familiar faces and routines.*

To find out more about direct payments please [click here](#).

## Mwy na Geiriau

As a local authority, we are dedicated to promoting and safeguarding the Welsh Language for the benefit of both current and future generations. Providing services equally in Welsh and English to our most vulnerable residents is more than just a matter of language; it fosters a sense of belonging, connection, and trust.

By providing services in Welsh, we ensure that residents feel comfortable and understood. This approach not only honours the cultural heritage of the Welsh-speaking community but also strengthens social cohesion and inclusivity.

Throughout the year Welsh medium schools continue to visit care homes and extra care facilities to sing and perform for residents in Welsh. St David's Day was celebrated with a number of activities throughout the service, such as a quiz about everything Welsh at Plas Yr Ywen Extra Care.

As an employer, we embarked on a project to ensure all employees completed their Language Skills Assessment. We are pleased to report all Social Services staff have now completed their Welsh Language Skills Assessment and staff at Welsh Language skill level 0 are being offered a Welsh Language introduction training session to move their skill level to level 1. We have also launched the Flintshire County Council Welsh Language Skills Strategy. As part of the strategy, we have launched a Welsh Language Hwb, [Hwb Cymraeg](#), to support citizens and staff to make use of the Welsh Language in everyday activity. The strategy has also provided an opportunity for the Council to engage staff as Welsh Language champions in all service areas.



The Workforce Development Team continue to support the 'Mwy na Geiriau' strategic framework by providing bilingual training and resources as needed. Our training materials are available in both languages, and we actively promote the Active Offer.

The Active Offer and 'Mwy na Geiriau' are integrated into our training opportunities, Health & Social Care and Social Work qualifications, and are embedded in meetings with learners, as well as during practice reflections and observations. We offer a variety of resources to help learners understand Welsh culture and language.

## Workforce Development

The team continues to uphold a high standard of learning and development opportunities for our social care workforce, including carers, the voluntary and the independent sector. Throughout this year, our training courses continue to be delivered through both internal and external providers, and the needs of our learners are supported by providing flexible learning options.

We remain committed to working with universities and BCUHB to develop and maintain a steady stream of opportunities for occupational therapy staff, and our Health and Social Care Assessment Team continue to work with Coleg Cambria, City & Guilds and WJEC (Welsh Joint Education Committee).

Between 1st April 2024 and 31st March 2025, the team achieved the following:

- Delivered **383** courses with **4,523** places.
- **3,612** attendees, with **17.5%** from the Independent and Third Sector.
- Received **1,578** evaluation forms.
- **91%** of participants reported enhanced knowledge.
- **98%** met their personal learning objectives.
- **14** learners completed the Health & Social Care Core qualification.
- **31** learners are completing Level 2 Core, Level 2 Practice, or Level 3 Practice.

- Supported **48** social work trainees (Wrexham University and Open University).
- **5** staff are undertaking the OT traineeship (staff who aren't eligible to apply for the traineeship are supported to apply for a foundation course with the university).
- **8** newly qualified Social Workers attended our comprehensive induction programme and will go on to be supported to undertake the Consolidation Award.
- **2** staff are undertaking AMHP, Pre-AMHP courses
- **6** staff are undertaking the Practice Educator Award.

### Implementation of All-Wales Safeguarding Standards

We support the All-Wales Safeguarding Standards by delivering training aligned with the national framework's competency groups. We have programmes in place for Groups A and B, with new resources from Social Care Wales to support the delivery of Group B and plans to develop Group C training. We are collaborating with our education partners and Wrexham Council colleagues to align our course content and delivery for future Group B training, ensuring enhanced quality and consistency.

The Childcare Development Team have delivered Group C training with an external supplier and have met Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) requirements for childcare providers to be trained. This was a fantastic achievement and received excellent evaluation results about the learning experience and the knowledge gained. This will support the safety of children who attend childcare settings and help childcare providers to be aware of their requirements when providing information to parents.

## Supporting Training Needs Identified through Reviews and Inspections

We support the implementation of training and information through the Single Unified Safeguarding Review (SUSR) process and CIW Inspections. Our practice workshops, developed in-house, support practice developments and local/regional priorities. These workshops help our social work teams integrate learning from training, reviews, and CIW Inspections into internal processes and daily practice. One team member is now a Panel Member, and the Manager is a trained Reviewer.



## Supporting the Digital Strategy

We continue to support the Digital Strategy by enhancing the digital skills of our workforce. Collaborating with Digital Communities Wales and [Cwmpas](#), we offer bespoke digital training opportunities and regularly promote Digital Champions sessions. Additionally, we have a laptop loan scheme for staff pursuing Health & Social Care qualifications.

## Regional Collaboration

Our team participate in several regional groups, including the North Wales Social Services Training Officer Group, North Wales Safeguarding Board Training & Development Group, and North Wales Dementia Workforce Group. They also meet sub-regionally with BCUHB partners.

The Team Manager attends national Quality Assurance Framework meetings with BCUHB and other local authority partners and is a member of the North Wales Local Family Justice Board (LFJB) and the national LFJB Learning & Development Group. The Assessor Team and Practice Learning Coordinator attend regional and national meetings on qualifications and social work with Higher Education providers.

The Senior Manager for Safeguarding and Commissioning is the Deputy Chair of the North Wales Workforce Board, a member of the ADSS Cymru Workforce Leadership Group and sits on the Wrexham University Social Work and Occupational Therapy Degree Strategic Group. Helping to shape the future of both degrees and ensure practitioner and local authority feedback is fed into the University's decision-making processes.

## WeCare Wales

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**WeCare**  
**.wales**

We continue to support the [WeCare](#) Campaign and efforts to recruit and retain social care staff. Information about the campaign is included in our annual Training Needs Assessment to aid promotion. In partnership with Coleg Cambria, we offer short placements for students in the 2-year Health & Social Care qualification, providing practical experience in our adult and early years settings and encouraging them to pursue future roles in the sector.

### 2025/26 Priorities

- Roll out strengths-based practice with practice mentor champions to support our collaborative approach to working with people.
- Focus on recruitment, development, retention and succession planning for our workforce.
- Deliver our plans to be 'digital by default' and seek to eliminate paper-based systems and enhance the digital skills of the workforce.
- Investigate how AI (Artificial Intelligence) can support practice and complement care and support.
- Develop the Mosaic client information system.



# Prevention

## Quality Standards

- The need for care and support is minimised and the escalation of need is prevented whilst ensuring that the best outcomes for people are achieved.
- Resilience within communities is promoted and people are supported to fulfil their potential by actively supporting people who need care and/or support including carers to learn develop and participate in society.

## Removing Profit from the Care of Children Looked After

Welsh Government have developed a programme for radically reforming services for children's social care. The policy aim is to ensure that public money invested in accommodation for care experienced children does not lead to profit extracted for individuals and shareholders, but instead any surpluses are reinvested into children's services to deliver better outcomes, service improvement and further professional development. Welsh Government's strategy is to rebalance the market so that the duties on local authorities in relation to looked after children are not contracted out to for-profit companies and remain with public sector or not-for-profit providers. The new Health and Social Care Act (Wales) requires:

- Independent providers to demonstrate a not-for-profit status, based on a new pre-defined definition of non-profit, by 1 April 2026.

- Any current "for-profit" providers will need to transition to, and register with Care Inspectorate Wales, as not-for-profit by 1 April 2030.

Welsh Government's programme aligns to Flintshire's' ambition is to have fewer children in care, and a range of initiatives have been undertaken to support the resilience of families to prevent children entering the care system, where safe and appropriate. These include the development of:

- Multi Systemic Therapy (MST) Standard provides an edge of care service, offering 24/7 support for parents and carers as part of a 6 month intensive programme to enhance parenting capacity and skills.
- Family Group Conference Model which brings family members together to enable them to identify their own approaches to supporting their children, often drawing in wider family and friend networks, removing the need for statutory intervention.
- Parental advocacy which supports parents to access the multi-agency solutions they need to enable them to safely support their children.
- A strengths-based practice model, led by Social Care Wales, which builds on family strengths and enables proportionate positive risk management in keeping children in their family network.
- MST-CAN (Childhood Abuse and Neglect) which supports children and families experiencing neglect and abuse, positively working with parents who are misusing substances and/or have mental health needs, so they can safely care for their children.

The result is that Flintshire's comparative rate of children looked after is low compared to the Welsh average. However, this means that those entering the care system often have complex needs and can need more specialist residential and fostering placements. Nationally the cost of residential care has risen by 300% over the last 5 years. The financial cost for the local authority is unsustainable and increases year on year.

Processes are in place to ensure that there is robust management oversight and governance when an out of county placement is needed. However, maintaining the status quo is not a viable option. We have an ambitious programme to develop our own residential care and expand in house fostering. However, we are not seeking to simply replicate the existing model from a 'commissioned' to an 'in house' provided service. This would not achieve the best outcomes for looked after children or be affordable given the high cost of providing in house residential care.

Having established effective systems to support children and families on the edge of care, our intention is to now focus on reducing the number of children who are supported through out of county arrangements. Our approach is to develop arrangements that: better meet the needs of the child, secure improved outcomes, are more cost effective and reduce the overall number of residential provisions that the local authority would need to develop, to shift from reliance on the 'for-profit' market.

We have identified a local company that provides specialist resources to work with local authorities by providing intensive therapeutic support to children to enable them to safely step down from high cost residential and foster placements. This work sits alongside a bespoke programme to identify and support prospective



carers for children. We will be working collaboratively with the company and have identified an initial 21 looked after children that could benefit from this project.

**maethu  
cymru**

Sir y Fflint

**foster  
wales**

Flintshire



## Fostering

Flintshire County Council continues to grow its in-house fostering service to support more children in care. In 2024/25 four new general carers were approved, providing placements for six children and young people. As a direct result of the support provided by the Mockingbird scheme, three existing general foster carers widened their approval to provide a further three fostering placements, enabling siblings to be kept together and within the local area.

There are currently four general assessments underway and another six applicant families recently completed their skills to foster training in March 2025, and their assessments are allocated to start in mid-April.

Marketing efforts for general foster carers remain active, in partnership with Foster Wales. The current campaign, shared by Deeside Radio, aims to keep children looked after local and raise awareness of the Welsh Government's 'not for profit' bill, reaching approximately 12,000 people. The retention strategy focuses on the well-being of foster carers and the children they care for, with a calendar of activities planned throughout the year.

Additionally, the fostering team have completed forty-one viability assessments on family and friends carers, of which sixteen resulted in temporary foster care approval, with eight connected persons progressing to full connected foster carer approval, keeping the child/children with carers they already know. The other eight concerned either obtained a Legal Order on the child/children in question, or their care was not required to progress to full foster carer approval- for example the child was rehabilitated back to the parent/guardian's care.

## Mockingbird

Mockingbird is a unique foster care model which brings foster carers together in a central hub, providing nurturing support for the whole family. In February 2025, the scheme reached a new milestone celebrating its 5th Anniversary with a party for all the hub families.

To find out more about Fostering please [click here](#).

## Special Guardianship Service

The Special Guardianship Order (SGO) service has been actively involved in assessing children's permanency options from the outset of Children's Services involvement. In 2024/25, 18 children were granted SGOs across 12 applications, with 10 of these children previously being 'Looked After'. Eight families were referred to the SGO service following initial involvement from the Children's First Contact Team (CFCT) or the Early Help Hub, preventing these children from becoming 'Looked After'. This marks a significant improvement since 2019. The service also supported several households with SGOs granted in other areas, completing four reassessment of support plans and transferring two cases to other local authorities.

We are successfully reducing the number of Children Looked After in Flintshire. Our support service is busy, offering advice and guidance through a central inbox. Our new four-week course "Nurturing Attachments and Skills to Care" has seen significant engagement, and attendance at our support groups has improved.

Moving forward, although we have met with Flying Start and Health Visiting Teams to share accurate information about our service improvements, meeting with wider professionals could further

## mockingbird 5 year anniversary party



improve the service. Funding for therapeutic support would further benefit children in SGO families and the ongoing discussion around a no-detriment policy for all local authorities remains a priority.

To find out more about Special Guardianship Orders please [click here](#).

## Early Years and Childcare

### Childcare Development and Capital Programmes



**Gwasanaeth Blynyddoedd  
Cynnar a'r Teulu**

**Early Years and  
Family Service**

For the sixth consecutive year, Flintshire Early Years and Family Service have successfully bid for Welsh Government capital funding. The purpose of the funding is to support the delivery of childcare and early years capital programme. This has enabled further expansion of the childcare sector through a series of phased programmes. These capital programmes positively impact the community, enhancing pathways between childcare and school.

Funding has been granted for two new childcare modular buildings; Croes Atti in Oakenholt creating 40 childcare places, and Cornist Primary School project, creating 40 additional places in Flint.

Flintshire maintains ongoing collaboration with stakeholders and is preparing the 2025-2028 childcare capital programme for consideration and approval by Welsh Government.

Flintshire received £595,000 in Small Capital Grant funding for 2024-2025, which has been fully allocated to local childcare providers to improve the childcare facilities, providing quality childcare which benefits children's learning and development.

Aligned with the 2022 Childcare Sufficiency Report, priorities include accessibility, flexibility, and quality of childcare. Engagement in Welsh Language development training is increasing, with the Welsh Active Offer remaining a focus.

### Childcare Programmes and Expansion

The Flying Start childcare phased expansion has seen 280 children accessing at least one session at a registered childcare setting. Flintshire is committed to achieving the further childcare expansion targets set by the Welsh Government.

The Flintshire Childcare Team delivers the Childcare Offer for 3–4-year-olds in Flintshire, Wrexham, and Denbighshire, collaborating with the Welsh Government on system development and policy. Funding is available to help children with additional needs to attend childcare that meets their needs.

All Welsh Medium providers in Flintshire are approved to offer Flying Start funded childcare places. There is a need to scope and re-design the childcare model to ensure sufficient capacity in areas of deprivation and where childcare is generally not available, or is



limited. The team is planning future Flying Start childcare rollouts for 2025-2026 and beyond, and continues to collaborate with childcare umbrella organisations and stakeholders.

### **Early Years Transformation - National, Regional and Local Approach**

Flintshire Early Years and Family Service leads regional initiatives, ensuring alignment at local, regional, and national levels. Coordinated efforts are crucial for giving children aged 0-7 the best start in life. The North Wales Regional Early Years Integration and Transformation (EYIT) Partnership meets quarterly to advance projects and priorities from the Early Years Pathfinder work. The Welsh Government uses insights from the Pathfinder to shape future policies, with Flintshire actively involved.

Regionally, the Children and Young People's Partnership has prioritised early years with five key actions. Locally, Flintshire has submitted 15 Pathfinder programme evaluations, showing improvements since June 2020. A Project Closure Report is being prepared to sustain effective practices and focus on community needs.

The Early Years Pathfinder has reviewed approaches across services. A presentation to Welsh Government leaders in November 2024 highlighted North Wales' work and future recommendations. Key elements included Parent Champions, Brain Story, data development, and workforce strategy. The Project Closure and Partnership for Flintshire will be finalised by June 2025. Welsh Government's evaluation analysis is expected by October 2025, with Flintshire's summary report due in April 2025. Early Years work remains a priority for the Public Service Board and Regional Programme Board.



### **Oxford Brain Story**

A key focus is the continuation of the 'Brain Story' training, which conveys important brain science concepts through accessible metaphors. Flintshire Early Years and Family Service supports practitioners in recognising the significance of early childhood experiences on health and well-being. This year Flintshire has delivered training to over 100 staff, improving their understanding of the impacts on children and their development into adulthood. The aim is to secure funding for this initiative, as it helps individuals understand the critical role early experiences play in brain development and long-term health outcomes.

Flintshire is working in collaboration with Fleetwood and University of Oxford to further test, pilot and evaluate the programme messages and delivery mechanisms. Ensuring we deliver to the right people and the right people are trained to better understand need, and support children, families and communities.

## Parent Champions

The Parent Champion pilot scheme has improved family access to information, with families feeling better informed and able to access services more easily. Seven volunteers have been recruited, with four currently active. Plans are underway to expand the scheme in schools, childcare settings, and parenting groups.

The Early Years and Family Support Information and Engagement Team trains and supports these volunteers, enabling them to share information with parents and services. A rolling training programme includes guest speakers from partner organisations.

Volunteers participate in community events, specialist parenting groups, and school visits, providing accurate local information and contributing to Early Years and Childcare webpages. International Volunteers Day was celebrated with a “Thank You” event to acknowledge their contributions.



## Volunteer Parenting Programme

All three EPEC (Empowering Parents, Empowering Communities) programmes have been delivered, focusing on areas identified by referral data from BCUHB and Children and Family Services. Six Parent Group Leaders have completed training and are now facilitating groups, increasing capacity for the EPEC autism programme.

Most recently, five programmes were delivered at accessible venues, with transport provided for families in need. Parents report that the groups are welcoming and safe. The core ‘Being a Parent’ programme has supported the growth of the autism programme, doubling its availability since October. Agreement in principle has been achieved with the EPEC national programme for Flintshire to exceed its usual licensed number of programmes to meet the demand for the autism programme.

## Workforce Development Skills Matrix

The Early Years Workforce Skills Matrix has been developed to ensure practitioners are appropriately skilled to support children and their families. It is being considered for expansion to other roles, such as foster carers for babies and young children. This initiative includes a comprehensive development plan, providing evidence-based training to enhance practitioners' roles and support, ensuring effective family support and positive change.

To find out more about Flintshire Early Years and Childcare please [click here](#) or scan the QR code below:



I HOLL blant gael y dechrau gorau mewn bywyd  
For ALL children to have the best start in life



## Case Study: Empowering Parents Empowering Communities

*A is a parent with a child currently awaiting an autism assessment. She was first known to our service through the Flying Start outreach panel with a referral that described how she was struggling to cope with her child's behaviour. During the panel it was identified that the family may benefit from attending one of the EPEC programmes. Following a conversation with the parent it became clear that she lacked confidence and was feeling isolated. To try and support parent A's confidence she was offered the opportunity to attend one of our Being a Parent groups which runs for 8 weeks. The aim was to build her confidence in parenting by attending a group setting, to then lead her onto the Being a Parent autism programme.*

*The parent thrived in the Being a Parent group, with evidence that her confidence was building, and this reflected in her ability to support and communicate with her child. After completing the 8 week programme, she then registered to attend the Being a Parent autism programme. This was over a period of 6 months.*

*Parent A at times found it difficult to attend the programmes due to working full time but she remained committed and completed catch up sessions on a one-to-one basis with the EPEC Family Support Practitioner. Parent A completed both programmes. Parent A has supported her child to become more aware of their emotions and helped them to identify how they are feeling. This has resulted in the household becoming calmer and improving the child's relationship with their sibling.*

*Parent A has gone from strength to strength, not only has she built her own confidence but also confidence in developing a positive approach to her child and their behaviour. She has also started to access other organisations supporting children's neurodiverse needs. Additionally, she benefitted from the peer relationships and networks that the group-based support provides and felt that the shared discussions and similar experiences in the group helped her feel as though she was not alone.*

## The Progression Team – Supporting Independence through a Strengths-Based Approach

The Progression Team provides targeted support to individuals who have identified needs but do not meet eligibility criteria for other commissioned services. Our support is designed specifically for people with learning disabilities, physical disabilities, mental health difficulties, and an increasing number of younger neurodiverse individuals as our team continues to develop.

We continually adapt our services to meet the evolving needs of those we support. This includes addressing emerging needs, such as supporting younger neurodiverse individuals who previously struggled to access services. As we grow, we continue to enhance our collaborative relationships with community resources, services, and networks, to ensure individuals receive holistic and comprehensive support tailored to their personal goals and aspirations.

Our strengths-based approach actively identifies, acknowledges, and builds upon each person's unique strengths and resources. This approach empowers individuals, promotes self-confidence, and encourages them to take control of their own lives. By maintaining this focus on strengths and proactive independence, the Progression Team successfully supports individuals in achieving greater autonomy and significantly reducing their reliance on formal support services.

This case study demonstrates the positive outcomes achievable when support is appropriately tailored and gradually reduced. The individual now confidently manages his day-to-day responsibilities independently, clearly evidencing the effectiveness of strength-based and outcome-focused approaches to care.

### Case Study – Achieving Independence through Targeted Support

*A young male adult, previously residing in a residential setting, was receiving substantial support, with up to three support staff present at any given time. Despite being neurodiverse, he had no formal diagnosis, making it challenging for him to access appropriate support. This lack of formal diagnosis had historically made it difficult for him to receive tailored assistance to meet his unique needs.*

*Recognising this gap, the Progression Team stepped in to support him towards achieving his personal goals. Through careful planning and targeted intervention, the team helped him transition successfully from the residential setting to his own independent property. Support was reduced gradually to just a couple of hours each day, empowering him to take charge of his daily life.*

*The individual's ability and confidence quickly grew as he took responsibility for his daily living tasks and actively engaged in developing new skills. Through this structured, gradual process, he was able to entirely cease all formal commissioned services, demonstrating significant progress in self-sufficiency.*

*Reflecting on his progress, the individual shared:*

*"I am happy."*

*"I have more independence."*

*"I didn't think I could do this for myself, but I have."*

## Progression Model

Flintshire County Council is committed to promoting independence skills and reducing the need for formal, paid support within Disability Services through the Progression Model. This model is applied in every assessment by the team to help individuals achieve their highest level of personal independence. The goal is to enable individuals to meet their desired outcomes without formal paid support, utilising newly appointed support workers and third sector agencies.

The Progression Model has been instrumental in conducting intensive reviews of Supported Living Accommodation Projects. So far, reviews of three external agencies have resulted in a reduction of over 200 hours of weekly support. This approach continues to be applied to all social care assessments and care reviews for individuals referred to the Adult Disability Service.

## Employment Opportunities for Disabled People

### Supported Employment Programme

North Wales Together have now rolled out the Supported Employment Programme for individuals with learning disabilities across North Wales. Funded by the North Wales Health and Social Care Regional Integration Fund, the programme is a partnership between the six local authorities' social care services and specialist support employment services.

In Flintshire, individuals aged 14 and above with a diagnosed learning disability can receive personalised support from a dedicated



job coach provided by Hft. The job coach helps with job searches, applications, interview preparation, travel training, and ongoing support to ensure individuals thrive in their roles. They also assist employers in making necessary adjustments.

This support is accessed through our local Employment Pathway Coordinator (EPC) who is based in Flintshire's Progression Team. The EPC provides information to help individuals make informed decisions about paid employment and offers pre-work support, such as volunteering and educational courses, before referring them to Hft for job placement. The EPC has established connections with social work teams, Careers Wales, and specialist education providers across Flintshire.

In addition, the Transformation Team have developed a performance dashboard which contains details of performance of the EPC which we can use to monitor progress and assess performance.

## Partnership with Deeside Enterprise Forum

Flintshire's partnership with Deeside Enterprise Forum to create employment opportunities for vulnerable individuals within social services has successfully concluded its initial meetings. This collaboration aims to promote the employment of people with disabilities and provide meaningful job opportunities and support for those in need, fostering greater inclusion and independence.

## Project SEARCH

The Project SEARCH scheme in Flintshire continues to be a success with positive outcomes for the individuals involved, and many interns gaining paid employment following the programmes.

Jordan completed the internship program in July 2024 and has since secured a paid position as a clerical assistant with the NHS. During the program, he undertook a work placement at a local surgery, where he performed various administrative tasks, and following graduation Jordan was offered bank hours.

When asked about his experience during the internship and his feelings on securing employment, he said:

*"I was a part of the Project SEARCH programme and now I am a clerical assistant at my local surgery doing bank hours. The bank job has made me feel like I am helping out and learning new techniques to improve my work, it's made me feel good about myself."*

## Accommodation for Young People with Learning Disabilities

Flintshire is committed to meeting the accommodation needs of young people with learning disabilities. The Learning Disability Service

operates an Accommodation Panel that assesses individual needs and collaborates with housing providers to plan for current and future demands. This proactive approach ensures that suitable and supportive living arrangements are available, helping young people achieve greater independence and well-being.

## Carers Services

### Recommissioning Carer Services

The recommissioning process is now complete. All applications were evaluated against the specifications by a panel which included unpaid carers. Contracts have been awarded to [NEWCIS](#), the [Neuro Therapy Centre](#), and DAFFODILS starting on 1st April 2025. This recommissioning allows us to adapt and improve our services to better meet the needs of local carers.

### Increasing Visibility and Community Awareness

NEWCIS is dedicated to identifying and connecting with more carers, enhancing service visibility and accessibility, and raising community awareness. Their new premises on Mold High Street improves their ability to support carers, providing a convenient location for information and services.

The centre's increased visibility helps more carers recognise their roles and seek support. NEWCIS has also recruited members for the Flintshire forum and is planning its first event. Since Carers Rights Day in November, they have gathered feedback and data from carers, informing the recommissioning process and shaping future services and promotional efforts.



### Expanding Creative Respite Solutions

NEWCIS is continually developing respite solutions to meet carers' evolving needs while navigating current care sector challenges. Under the new Flintshire tender, they have expanded respite options, including half-day respite at extra care facilities and pooling resources to support both carers and those they care for. This ensures efficient resource use, serving more carers and achieving better outcomes.

NEWCIS is also utilising their new outdoor lodges to introduce new well-being events and creative upcycling workshops. Inspired by carer feedback, these initiatives offer skill-building opportunities, support organisational sustainability, and provide much-needed breaks for carers. Despite being newly launched, these schemes are already popular, with more opportunities to come as the centre grows.

### Supporting Carers from Ethnic Minority Backgrounds

NEWCIS is actively engaging with community groups to support carers from ethnic minority backgrounds. They are collaborating with Carers Trust on a language and promotion programme to better reach these individuals. Additionally, NEWCIS has secured continued funding to provide refugee carers in Flintshire with short breaks from their caring roles.

### Cost of Living Increase

NEWCIS is actively seeking new resources to support carers facing increased cost of living pressures. They collaborate with partners like Citizens Advice Flintshire and Age Connects, focusing in particular on energy and heating costs. Recently, they held local energy workshops attended by over 20 carers and referred 290 carers to Citizens Advice Flintshire for benefit checks on pension credit and winter fuel payment eligibility.

NEWCIS is also retendering for the Carers Support Fund from Carers Trust. If successful, this will provide financial assistance to carers in Flintshire for another 12 months, helping them manage living costs and financial crises.

### Supporting Young Carers

We are committed to enhancing support services for Young Carers (under 18) through initiatives including:

- Expanding the Young Carer ID Card Scheme.
- Increasing engagement with education colleagues and schools.
- Collaborating with businesses and communities across Flintshire.
- Providing training and education opportunities.

With newly secured funding, [“NEWCIS Young Carers”](#) now have dedicated hours in the team to work directly with Flintshire schools, promoting carer needs and upskilling school staff members. Engagement events have also been held with local businesses to explore practical and educational support for young carers. These efforts were showcased at the new premises' open day in March 2025, with local businesses in attendance.



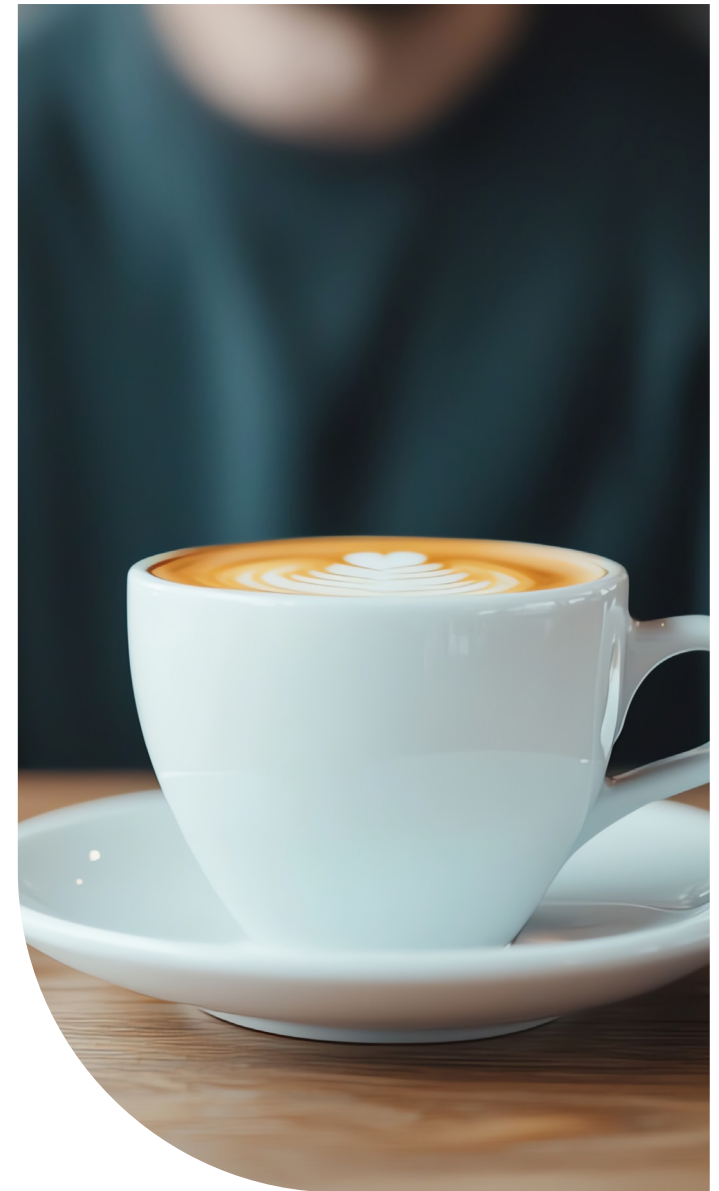
The Young Carer ID Card continues to be a key part of our training programme across Flintshire schools. The card supports young carers to access specialist support and local businesses have joined with us to provide discounts and offers to young carers who show their card.

## Case Study – Carers

*“Having recently taken on a caring role, alongside my father for my terminally ill mother, I have experienced the stress and huge impact it has had on my family. Our roles and responsibilities within the home have changed drastically. At times this has resulted in friction, exhaustion and breakdowns in our relationships. As my mother needs 24hr care, both me and my dad struggle to find quality time together, as it means one of us always has to be home to care for my mum.*

*Before my mum became ill, my dad and I used to spend a lot of time together, doing things we both enjoyed, however this has become increasingly difficult as we can no longer leave my mum. We have found this has become quite detrimental to both of us and our mental health and well-being. At times the relationship between my dad and I has become fractious due to the high stress environment and constant close proximity.*

*With the fantastic support of NEWCIS, we applied for 3 hours support every other week. This is making a huge difference for our family. Knowing that we can enjoy quality time together, knowing my mum is in safe hands, is allowing both me and my dad the time to take a much-needed break from our caring roles and will relieve some of the ongoing stress of daily life as a carer for mum. The quality time we are spending together out of the house is helping to diffuse any tensions and bring us closer together. I truly look forward to once again sharing treasured time together. Without this small amount of support, I really don't know how much longer we could have carried on for. I fear that at the very least mum would have needed carers to come in a number of times a day, but more likely she would have needed to go into a care home. I now feel confident that we can manage and carry on looking after mum ourselves and keep her at home which is where she wanted to be.”*



## 2025/26 Priorities

- Refresh our website to provide clear information and signposting.
- Review and enhance our first response through our SPoA & First Contact & Early Years services, ensuring they provide effective and responsive initial support including Information, Advice and Assistance.
- Promote the use of the 'Oxford Brain Story' and understanding of brain science, adverse and positive experiences on the developing child.
- Work with NEWCIS to maximise timely information, advice, and support to carers.
- Expand our reablement service to increase the number of people that can be supported.
- Support the further development of our in house review and reassessment work, promoting the progression model across all adult services.
- Support young people to move from high-cost residential care and expand in house fostering.
- Pilot the MST-CAN (Multi Systemic Therapy Child Abuse and Neglect) model to secure change where there is neglect and substance misuse, and build family resilience to safely avoid the need to bring children into the care system.



## Partnership and Integration

### Quality Standards

- Effective partnerships are in place to commission and fully deliver fully integrated, high quality sustainable outcomes for people.
- People are encouraged to be involved in the design and delivery of their care and support as equal partners.



### Tŷ Croes Atti

The construction of Flintshire's new multi-million-pound care home in Flint, Tŷ Croes Atti, will be completed by the summer. This £18 million project is funded by Flintshire County Council's capital programme, backed by over £11 million from the Welsh Government's Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF) and Housing with Care Fund (HCF) capital programmes.

The project is a partnership between Flintshire County Council, BCUHB, Willmott Dixon Construction, and Welsh Government, which will relocate and expand an existing care home from 31 to 56 beds. The new facility will provide integrated social and health care services, provided by BCUHB and Flintshire County Council Social Services' teams.

Deputy Leader of Flintshire County Council and Cabinet Member for Social Services and Well-being, Councillor Christine Jones, said: *"The care sector in Flintshire is working within an increasingly challenging environment and therefore as a council we are taking a positive approach to develop care homes that value older people and provide good, quality support that stands us in good stead for the future".*

Minister for Children and Social Care, Dawn Bowden, said: *"It's great to see the immense progress at Tŷ Croes Atti. This important project will help boost our community capacity and is a fantastic example of joint working to deliver for the people in Flintshire. I look forward to seeing the completed project in the near future."*

## Coed-y-Ddraig Integrated Social Services and Health Hub

Construction of the new Coed-y-Ddraig hub at Maes Gwern in Mold has progressed well and is due for completion in summer 2025.

The Coed-y-Ddraig integrated hub will offer a purpose-built facility for individuals with learning disabilities and/or autism support needs. The horticultural service from Tri Ffordd will move to Coed-y-Ddraig, benefiting from improved facilities and more space. This expansion will also enable the development of a bespoke autism support service for individuals with complex needs. Additionally, health services and therapies provided by BCUHB will be available at the hub, including Physiotherapy, Dietetics, Occupational Therapy, Speech and Language Therapy (SALT), and peer-led programmes like the Education Programme for Patients (EPP).



## Micro-Care - A Year of Growth and Achievement

This year, the Micro-Care Project has continued to expand at an impressive rate, surpassing last year's growth. We have established 23 new businesses dedicated to supporting personal care and well-being, benefiting approximately 300 people in Flintshire. These services provide around 1,500 hours of support each month.

Key milestones include the launch of a second day service by a Micro-Care enterprise, the expansion of another Micro-Carer's business to include new employees, and the professional development of a business aiming to become a regulated domiciliary care provider in the next financial year.

We have also seen a significant increase in the number of Micro-Carers completing the Quality Framework due diligence process and signing contracts with the council for commissioning care services. There are now 16 such providers and this has been crucial in filling gaps where traditional domiciliary care agencies have been unable to provide support. For instance, in January, a Micro-Carer stepped in during an emergency when a provider returned a care package, ensuring continuous support until a long-term solution was found.

The project has received external recognition in 2024/25. It has been accredited and featured on the Global Database of Age-Friendly Practices by the World Health Organization. Additionally, the project was a "Highly Commended Finalist" in the 2024 Social Care Accolades, under the "Working in Partnership" category. This accolade highlights the strong and positive partnerships in Flintshire between Micro-Carers, service recipients, professionals, third sector partners, and our project team.

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Flintshire  
**Micro-Care**  
Growing Care in Flintshire

To find out more about Micro-Care please [click here](#).

## Introducing Hear My Voice: Empowering Self-Advocacy

Following the recommissioning of our self-advocacy service, Advance Brighter Futures has taken a dynamic and inclusive approach to redesigning the service. Through a comprehensive co-production process, involving collaboration with service users and stakeholders, the service has been reimagined and renamed Hear My Voice.

The essence of Hear My Voice is to empower individuals by equipping them with essential self-advocacy skills. This initiative aims to foster independence and confidence, enabling people to effectively represent their own interests and needs. By learning and practicing these skills, individuals can reduce their reliance on formal advocacy services, gaining the tools to navigate their lives with greater autonomy.

The transformation of this service underscores our commitment to creating a supportive environment where every voice is heard and valued. Hear My Voice is more than just a name; it represents a movement towards self-empowerment and lasting change.

For more information on the services available, please see the service schedule available on Advance Brighter Futures' website [here](#):

## Social Services' Journey to Net Zero

The Welsh Government has launched a plan to achieve net zero carbon emissions in the social care sector by 2030. The strategy, outlined in the "Decarbonising Social Care in Wales" document, focuses on improving energy efficiency, promoting sustainable practices, and reducing waste.

Flintshire is committed to reducing carbon emissions in social care through the various initiatives listed below, contributing to the broader goal of achieving net zero by 2030.

### Climate Change Strategy

Flintshire County Council adopted its Climate Change Strategy in 2022, incorporating actions to reduce carbon emissions in social care.

### Energy Efficient Facilities

Marleyfield House Care Home in Buckley and Tŷ Croes Atti Care Home in Flint are designed to be net-zero buildings. In addition to our four modern, energy-efficient extra care facilities, which have been developed in collaboration with Registered Social Landlord partners.

### Sustainable Day Services

The new Coed-y-Ddraig development in Mold is designed with sustainability in mind to achieve net zero carbon in operation (NZCiO).

### Sustainable Procurement

Local care providers are supported to deliver quality care within their communities, reducing travel emissions.

### Carbon Reduction Activities

Care providers use 'walking rounds', 'cycling rounds', and car-sharing schemes to reduce travel emissions.

### Spectrum Spatial Analysis (SSA)

This mapping tool enhances the brokerage service by digitally mapping home care allocations, ensuring efficient and carbon-friendly care delivery.

## North Wales Domiciliary Care Framework

The framework emphasises carbon-reducing practices and supports care providers in their carbon reduction efforts.

### Electric Vehicles

The Council has purchased six Renault Zoe electric cars and installed charging infrastructure to support domiciliary care delivery across the area.

For more information on climate change and reducing our carbon footprint please [click here](#).

## National Framework for Commissioning Care and Support

Following the approval of the National Framework for the Commissioning of Care and Support in Wales and the statutory code of practice that came into force in September 2024, Flintshire has prepared an initial self-assessment. This assessment, which involved significant input from officers who regularly undertake commissioning exercises, as well as Service Managers, was conducted against the seven principles and ten standards of the framework. The self-assessment has resulted in an action plan that is currently being implemented.

Notable actions highlighted within the self-assessment include the drafting of an overarching commissioning plan for Social Services, which amalgamates existing priorities and service plans impacting Social Services, and the conclusion of specific strategic commissioning priorities. Additionally, a co-production strategy has been drafted to support the council's approach to co-producing services with those who use them, with the intention of enabling a more inclusive approach to the council's commissioning activities.



## 2025/26 Priorities

- Develop meaningful day opportunities through the opening and development of Coed-y-Ddraig, Health & Social Care Hub.
- Develop in-house residential care:
  - Open Tŷ Croes Atti and reablement beds.
  - Identify development goals for Llys Gwenffrwd.
- Create an in-house residential care home for children.
- Pilot a 'trusted assessor' model to support hospital assessment and discharge processes.
- Create a forecasting model to inform service development, in-house provision and commissioning.
- Integrate net zero carbon omission into commissioning activity.
- Collaborate and support independent sector providers of residential and foster care to move to prescribed Not-for-Profit models.
- Develop a fair price for care using Care Cubed system / methodology.

## Well-being

### Quality Standards

- People are protected and safeguarded from abuse and neglect and any other types of harm.
- People are supported to actively manage their well-being and make their own decisions so that they are able to achieve their full potential and live independently for as long as possible.



### Effective Child Protection Practice Model Implementation and Launch of the NSPCC Neglect-Graded Profile Tool (GCP2)

During 2024/25 significant strides have been made in embedding the Effective Child Protection (ECP) practice model within Children's Services. Key achievements include the completion of Collaborative Communications Mentors training and the ongoing rollout of ECP and Risk 2 training, despite some delays. Initial feedback indicates increased confidence in engaging in child-centred conversations, positively influencing casework and decision-making.

The launch of the NSPCC Neglect-Graded Profile Tool (GCP2) has been delayed due to prioritising the Effective Child Protection (ECP) training. This decision ensures staff have the necessary skills for effective child protection. We remain committed to introducing the GCP2 tool once ECP training is completed. To ensure the continued progress of this important work, we are currently recruiting for a dedicated position to drive our ECP initiatives and the GCP2 tool.



## Empowering Voices: The Impact of Mind of My Own



Mind of My Own is an innovative digital tool designed to empower children and young people by giving them a voice in their care and support. Using the app, children and young people are able to safely and securely express their views, feelings, and experiences, ensuring their voices are heard and considered in decision-making processes.

Over the past year, we have been rolling out this tool across Social Services, providing monthly training sessions for practitioners, foster carers, and special guardianship carers. The positive impact has been evident, with a notable increase in the app's usage. Practitioners are actively using their accounts with the young people, and we are also seeing young people independently using the app to share their voices whenever it suits them, such as in the evenings.

In March 2025, colleagues from Mind of My Own visited various areas to share information and encourage both practitioners and young people to embrace this empowering tool.

## Flintshire Learning for Well-being Programme

The Flintshire Learning for Well-being Programme, is a partnership between Flintshire County Council and a number of other statutory and third sector organisations, offering free courses to anyone over 18 in Flintshire who is struggling with their mental well-being and/or their carers.

The ongoing project, delivered by the Learning Partnership, supports individuals in achieving their mental well-being outcomes through

open access courses that promote personal and community well-being. The current brochure has 71 free courses available and during 2024/25, 374 individuals have attended these courses. Mental Health Support Services continue to actively promote course attendance and provide support to ensure individuals are able to attend.

Here is a testimonial from an individual on how the Learning for Well-being Programme has positively impacted their well-being.

*"The well-being brochure activities help me to feel less isolated, as I am disabled, they allow me to focus on something other than my severe chronic pain. I find I can be distracted from my pain whilst I'm doing a well-being activity and attending them improves my well-being and mental health. Everyone is friendly and welcoming at the groups and the staff support you to feel comfortable."*

To find out more about the Flintshire Learning for Well-being Programme please [click here](#).



## Provider Services

### In-House Residential Homes and Extra Care Schemes

Flintshire County Council operates three residential homes and four extra care schemes, offering high-quality, person-centred care. Their services aim to build emotional and physical resilience, enhance well-being, promote independence, and prevent social isolation.

Throughout the year, various activities and events are organised to promote the well-being of residents and tenants, enhance relationships, and support community involvement. This year, these included charity fundraisers for Welsh Border Transport, Holywell Age/Dementia Café, and Breast Cancer, as well as celebrations for D Day, VE Day, and Remembrance Day. Additionally, there were summer, Christmas, and birthday parties, along with regular activities like gardening, chair-based tennis, carpet bowls, bingo, quizzes, karaoke, and various outings.

Local schools regularly visit the homes and extra care houses to play games, do crafts, and discuss experiences and local history, which everyone enjoys. Bands, singers, and schools perform for residents and tenants throughout the year and Plas Yr Ywen tenants formed a choir that performed carols at Christmas. Staff at Marleyfield undertook a creative project using music and songwriting to improve health and well-being, boost confidence, and promote team building. They collaborated with musicians to record a CD and performed for the residents.

Residents of care homes speak very highly of their own experiences. Here are some quotes from recent engagements:

*“The staff are so knowledgeable, I worry, but they always put my mind at rest.”*

*“I like it here, I didn’t think I would when I moved in, but its ok.”*

*“I would like to get out a bit more, but the home does so much and that helps.”*

*“If all care homes were like the one my mum is at then the world would be a better place.”*

Extra care tenants and families praised the schemes, stating the following:

*“I love having a coffee and a natter with my friends.”*

*“The staff are always here and nothing is too much trouble.”*

*“It helps the family knowing that mum is safe and living in such a wonderful place.”*

*“I had a problem with my invoice and the manager sorted it out straight away, no messing.”*



### **Marleyfield – Cyflawni**

The purpose-built Cyflawni unit was developed specifically as part of the expansion of Marleyfield Care Home to support independence and reablement and implementation of D2RA (Discharge to Recover and Assess). D2RA supports patients on discharge from hospital to receive intensive therapy led support to allow them to maximise their independence before returning home.

Here are some case studies showing the positive work undertaken by the team:

### **Case Study – D2RA**

*Mrs A came to the Cyflawni Unit following a fall resulting in reduced mobility, and after spending a period in hospital, agreed to be discharged to the unit with a view to take part in reablement and assessment. After four weeks of reablement to regain her independence and skills, Mrs A has been able to return home with no care and support.*

*Mrs A has been promoted to re-learn skills such as self-medicating and stair and mobility practice, to enable her to return home safely without the need for care and support.*

### **Case Study – D2RA**

*Mr C came to the Cyflawni Unit following a fall resulting in a fractured hip. He underwent surgery and ended up in ICU very poorly following his operation. Mr C spent some time in hospital participating in reablement and was engaging and eager to progress. Mr C agreed to come to Cyflawni for further reablement and assessment to determine his long-term needs, goals, and outcomes. Mr C went from assistance of two and a sara steady, to returning home with reablement four times a day, and being able to step around transfer and mobilising short distances. Mr C was able to continue his reablement journey.*

## Supported Living

The Supported Living Service assists people with learning disabilities in 17 supported living houses across Flintshire. The team helps individuals promote independence in their daily lives and achieve what matters to them. They also organise activities and day trips, such as visits to Chester Zoo and Christmas parties.

Here are some examples of individuals being supported to achieve their outcomes:

## Homecare

Our in-house homecare service has successfully maintained its capacity throughout the year, despite operating in a very challenging environment. The broader domiciliary care market has been facing recruitment difficulties over the past five years, but by utilising a rolling scheme of recruitment, we have been able to sustain our staffing levels. Enabling our service to continue to effectively support individuals proactively to meet their needs and help them remain independent in their own homes.

### Case Study – Supported Living

*We support one individual who is a lifelong Everton fan who wanted to visit the new stadium. The team supported the individual to go onto the ferry and see the new stadium which is not yet open. The individual has also been supported to go into Liverpool to visit the Everton Shop, as well as his second passion of music to see the Cavern Club and the Beatles.*

### Case Study – Supported Living

*We have individuals who are co-tenants who love to attend the Tattoo in Edinburgh. They attended in August 2024 supported by the team, as well as visiting Edinburgh Zoo, and have booked tickets to attend again in August 2025.*

## Section 5



# Other Information

## Inspections and Reviews

### Croes Atti Residential Care Home

Croes Atti is a Local Authority run residential care home in Flint. The home received an inspection on 21st October 2024.

The inspectors summarised their findings as follows:

People are very happy with the support they receive at Croes Atti. People are supported by kind, caring and knowledgeable staff who know them well. Care staff provide positive reassurance and interaction regularly. People are supported to make choices about their daily lives and personal plans are highly person-centred, detailed, reflect people's needs and are reviewed and changed accordingly. Activities are facilitated by staff within the service.

Staff feel well supported by management and are provided with training to meet people's needs. There are good governance arrangements in place and the Responsible Individual visits the service regularly to oversee its management and gather the opinions of people and relatives to help improve and develop the service. The environment is well-maintained, and the service is operating in line with the statement of purpose.

The full report is available on [CIW website](#).



## Woodlee

Woodlee is a short-term respite care home for adults with learning disabilities in Buckley. Woodlee was inspected on 19th April 2024.

The inspectors summarised their findings as follows:

Woodlee provides a short-term care service, offering respite care for people and their carers. People look forward to their visits, and their relatives can be sure they will be well supported. People can maintain their usual routine during their stay. They can expect a friendly and welcoming environment. Support staff prepare for each individual's visit, ensuring they receive a warm welcome. Care staff know people well and deliver person centred support.

The building is comfortable and homely. It is spacious with plenty of specialist equipment available, this makes it fully accessible for people with mobility issues. There is a comfortable garden which can be accessed through patio doors, and has a planter especially commissioned and made by people who use the service. Management visit regularly to speak with people, support staff and review the service, the Responsible Individual visits the service every three months.

The full report is available on [CIW website](#).

## Marleyfield Care Home

Marleyfield is a Local Authority run residential care home in Buckley. The home received an inspection on 5th February 2025.

The inspectors summarised their findings as follows:

People are happy living in Marleyfield. They value the choices they have over their daily routines, their food, the entertainment and

taking part in the many activities that are arranged. They also praise the staff for their kindness and their willingness to go above and beyond and regard them as close to family.

Care plans focus on what people want to achieve in the home and provide detailed information about who they are and what is important to them, so staff know them well. The original and older part of the home is very comfortable, providing several homely lounges and other communal spaces to sit in. The newer part of the home is spacious so people using mobility equipment can get around more easily. There are large lounges and dining areas so people can socialise and partake in activities with others in the home.

The service is well managed with two assistant managers to support the manager and a team of trained, experienced care staff, many of whom have worked at the home for several years. The RI (responsible individual for the home) visits the service to check it is operating smoothly and that people are happy with the care provided. They know what is working well and where improvements could be made.

The full report is available on [CIW Website](#).

## Hafod

Hafod is a short-term respite care home for adults with learning disabilities in Mold. Hafod was inspected on 3rd March 2025.

The inspectors summarised their findings as follows:

Hafod is a short break service which allows people to enjoy a stay away from home, and carers to have a break from day-to-day care provision. People look forward to staying in the service and carers

told us they are well supported. They have confidence the service meets people's needs, which enables them to have time to relax.

Support staff know people well and enjoy their roles supporting a variety of different people.

They ensure people feel relaxed and comfortable during their stay and get to participate in activities they have chosen. People can be supported to maintain their usual community activities or have a break from their routine. There is an accessible vehicle which is used for trips out.

The manager and deputy manager have systems in place to ensure the service is running smoothly. They complete monthly audit visits to the service, and support staff through regular team meetings. Support staff find them approachable and are confident to voice any worries or concerns.

The full report is available on [CIW Website](#).

### **The Public Services Ombudsman of Wales Own Initiative Investigation into Carers Services**

Over the last 18 months, the Public Services Ombudsman of Wales (PSOW) has been investigating unpaid carers services in Wales under the Public Services Ombudsman (Wales) Act 2019. This allows the PSOW to conduct investigations beyond individual complaints.

The investigation began with an open consultation on carers services, receiving 76 responses, nearly half from unpaid carers. Flintshire, Caerphilly, Ceredigion, and Neath Port Talbot councils participated in the investigation.

The final report, published on 31st October, noted that carers

could express a wide range of support needs and the four councils effectively assessed and identified adult carers' support needs. The report highlighted good practices in Flintshire, aligning with our internal review findings.

Key recommendations for Flintshire include:

- Amending the Carers Needs Assessment form.
- Reviewing the Carers Needs Assessment factsheet and template letter.
- Providing further training for SPOA (Single Point of Access) staff on carers' rights and needs.
- Offering awareness training for wider council staff.
- Reviewing equality data collection for carers.
- Improving collaboration with health services.
- Revisiting direct payments processes for carers.

Most recommendations have been addressed without significant resource implications. The Ombudsman has invited other Welsh local authorities to review their carers services based on this report.

The full report is available on the Ombudsman's [website](#).

### **Adults' and Children's Services Performance Evaluation Inspection**

In October 2023, CIW announced a full, routine Performance Evaluation Inspection (PEI) of Flintshire's Adults' and Children's Services. The purpose of this inspection was to review the local authority's performance in exercising its social services duties and functions in line with legislation, aligned under the principles of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 – (People - voice and control, Prevention, Well-being, Partnerships).

The inspection focused on:

- Evaluation of the experience of adults and children at the point of performance evaluation inspection.
- Evaluation of the experience and outcomes people achieve through their contact with services.
- Evidence of the local authority and partners having learnt lessons from their recent experiences and plans for service developments and improvement.
- Consideration of how the local authority manages opportunity and risk in its planning and delivery of social care at individual, operational and strategic levels.

This was Flintshire's first full inspection in over eight years and provided an opportunity to showcase our creative and innovative practices. The report, published on 22nd February 2024, was largely positive. An action plan was created based on the inspectors' recommendations and significant progress has been made towards achieving the objectives, with many having been completed. The few remaining actions are longer term objectives which are well underway and are on track for completion, including the implementation of a new client information system. The procurement for this is now complete and the replacement system will be implemented in 2026.

## Complaints and Representations

### Complaints and representations between 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

Flintshire Social Services, as endorsed by the Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee, has a robust complaints procedure in place.

We welcome complaints and want to ensure individuals, carers and families are listened to, their views acted upon, and they receive a timely and open response. We work hard to resolve problems as soon as they arise, and advocacy is actively promoted. Individuals are supported to complain via Llais, the Citizen Voice Body for Health and Social Care in Wales.

In 2024/25 we received 68 complaints in Adults' Services and 50 complaints in Children's Services, with a total of seven complaints progressing to stage 2. This increase in complaints reflects the challenges faced across the social care sector and the impact upon individuals and families. We continue to strive to provide the best advice, care and support we can, resolve problems as and when they arise, and rectify any issues where our involvement has fallen below the standards we set ourselves.

Given the range and types of services provided by Social Services, complaints are broad in their themes but can be categorised as follows:

- **Dignity** - Where there are concerns about an individual's personal care and appearance and the possible impacts any shortcomings may have upon that individual.
- **Communication** - The way in which we keep individuals and families involved, informed and updated about our work.
- **Quality of care** - Issues regarding an individual's care, be it residential, domiciliary, respite or foster care.
- **Timeliness** - Our decision making in terms of offering and providing care and support, and the length of time taking to source packages of care.

- **Disagreements** - When individuals and families challenge or appeal our decisions or involvement, or they believe there is a lack of action about issues they are raising.
- **Financial charges** - Disputes involving how we have reached decisions to charge for care and support, and the amounts applied.
- **Process** - Where we haven't adhered to process, or our paperwork may be missing important information.
- **Staff** - Whereby our involvement or interactions have been misperceived or misunderstood, or questions raised about our professional conduct with people.
- **Contact** - Issues regarding child and family contact arrangements as ordered by the Court.

Complaints regarding Adults' Social Services are mainly made by adult siblings of an individual receiving care and support. Whilst complaints regarding Children's Social Services are mainly made by parents whose children are looked after or receive care and support. Complaints are mostly submitted via email. Recorded complaints are not linked to a protected characteristic, as information about the complainant is limited. Our focus is on listening to their experience and what may be going wrong, and putting things right where appropriate in a timely way.

All complaints made are scrutinised and used to improve services as part of a 'lessons learnt' process. In terms of learning we have:

- Reviewed the process for sending bills to individuals in short term care and in future the bills will be sent to the residential home if there is no one identified on our system to look after finances.
- Revised the letter we send to individuals where there are direct

payment issues, so it does not come across as challenging or threatening. We will not send such correspondence to individuals if the contact person concerned is going on leave shortly afterwards.

- Individuals who employ personal assistants will have any unspent direct payments calculated in a different way to ensure all their expenses as an employer are taken into account.
- We are currently working on a process to ensure direct debits/credits to direct payment accounts are ceased with immediate effect if a direct payment is stopped.
- We reminded management and staff that relevant case discussions and decisions must be recorded on the client information system, when discussing possible or potential placement moves for a child/young person.

In terms of the statutory complaints procedure and recommendations made in the Human Rights Commission's report, 'Challenging adult social care decisions in England and Wales':

- Complaints information is available bilingually, including online and hard copy, and adjustments can be made in other formats.
- Complaints information references national and local organisations who can be approached for further advice and assistance.

The Council's annual complaints and compliments reports are submitted to Social & Health Care Overview and Scrutiny Committee in the September following the end of the reporting year. Reports and minutes are available for the public to view on [Flintshire's website](#).

## Referencing Other Sources of Information

### Accessing Further Information and Key Documents

#### **Social Care Legislation & Information Links:**

[The Social Services and Well-being \(Wales\) Act 2014](#)

[Regulation and Inspection of Social Care \(Wales\) Act 2016](#)

[The Well-being of Future Generations](#)

[North Wales Regional Partnership Board](#)

[North Wales Safeguarding Board](#)

[Regulations and National Minimum Standards: Childcare and play services](#)

[The Childcare Act](#)

#### **Flintshire County Council's Key Strategies**

[Flintshire County Council - Council Plan](#)

[Flintshire Public Services Board - Well-Being Plan](#)

[Digital Strategy](#)

[Climate Change Strategy](#)



## Section 6

# Appendices

## Glossary of Terms

### Advocacy

Advocates in social care are independent from the local authority (local council) and the NHS. They are trained to help people understand their rights, express their views and wishes, and help make sure their voice is heard.

### Approved Mental Health Professional (AMHP)

A trained professional who coordinates assessments and decisions regarding the detention of individuals under the Mental Health Act, ensuring legal compliance and considering both medical and social perspectives.

### Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru

The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS) Cymru is the professional and strategic leadership organisation for social care services in Wales. ADSS Cymru represents the collective view of all 22 local authorities' social services departments across Wales.

### Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD)

ASD is the medical name for autism.

### Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (BCUHB)

BCUHB is responsible for the delivery of health care services across the six counties of North Wales (Anglesey, Gwynedd, Conwy, Denbighshire, Flintshire and Wrexham).



## Care Experienced Children

Care experienced is an umbrella term which can mean children / young people who are:

- Looked after at home through a Care Order
- Looked after away from home in a residential children's house, in a foster placement or in a kinship placement (Looked After or Non-Looked After)
- Previously looked after, where at some point in their lives they have had any of the above experiences.

The child / young person may never have been formally looked after.

## Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)

CIW are the independent regulator of social care and childcare in Wales. CIW register, inspect and take action to improve the quality and safety of services for the well-being of the people of Wales.

## Care Leaver

In Wales, care leavers are individuals who have been in the care of the local authority for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and have left care on or after their 16th birthday. The support provided to care leavers is intended to be equivalent to what a child who has not been looked after might reasonably expect from their parents.

## Children Looked After

A child is looked after by a local authority if a court has granted a Care Order to place a child in care, or a council's Children's Services department has cared for the child for more than 24 hours.

## Cwmpas

Cwmpas is a development agency in Wales that works for positive

social and economic change. They focus on creating a fairer, greener economy, advancing social justice, and promoting digital inclusion.

## Direct Payments

Direct payments are money from Flintshire Social Services made available to eligible people to enable them to arrange support and solutions that help meet assessed social care needs and agreed well-being outcomes.

## Discharge to Recover and Assess (D2RA)

D2RA supports patients on discharge from hospital to receive intensive therapy led support to allow them to maximise their independence before returning home.

## Early Years Pathfinder Programme

To ensure all children have the best start in life, work towards seamless pathways that create a joined-up, responsive system that puts the unique needs of each child at its heart.

## Extra Care

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

## [Flintshire Local Voluntary Council \(FLVC\)](#)

The umbrella and support organisation for over 1,200 voluntary and community groups based in Flintshire.

## [Hft](#)

Hft support people with learning disabilities to live with more independence and choice across the Flintshire area. Flintshire County Council have commissioned Hft to deliver day services and work opportunities for people with learning disabilities in the county.

### **Home Care / Domiciliary Care**

Domiciliary care, also known as “care at home”, refers to a broad range of care services provided in a person’s own home. It can include assistance with day-to-day living and certain health care issues.

### **Housing with Care Fund (HCF)**

Capital funding from Welsh Government available to provide housing and accommodation for people with care and support needs.

### **Housing Support Grant (HSG)**

Welsh Government funding to local authorities to spend on projects aimed at preventing homelessness and helping people to live in their own home or supported housing.

### **Integration and Rebalancing Capital Fund (IRCF)**

Health and Social Care’s IRCF is a programme set up to directly support the Programme for Government (PfG) commitments of developing 50 integrated health and social care hubs and to support rebalancing the residential care market.

### **Menter Iaith Fflint a Wrecsam**

Supporting and promoting the Welsh Language in Flintshire and Wrexham.

### **Mwy Na Geiriau**

Mwy Na Geiriau / More than words is a strategy and delivery plan to aim to improve the quality of care for individuals living in a bilingual country.

### **North-East Wales Carers Information Service (NEWCIS)**

NEWCIS is one of the largest providers of carer services in Wales.

### **North-East Wales Community Equipment Service (NEWCES)**

NEWCES provides essential community equipment to support the independence of people with disabilities across North-East Wales.

### **North Wales Learning Disability Transformation Project (NW LD Transformation Project)**

North Wales Together: Seamless Services for People with Learning Disabilities is one of four transformation projects in North Wales and is also known as the LD Transformation Project.

### **Occupational Therapist (OT)**

A professional who supports individuals in improving their ability to live independently through assessments, tailored interventions, environmental adaptations, and collaboration with other care providers.

### **Performance Improvement Framework**

The Performance and Improvement Framework has been designed to support local authorities to evidence their progress against the quality standards, and to inform decisions both for social services and at a corporate, organisational level.

### **Prevention and Early Intervention**

Prevention and early intervention are forms of support aimed at improving outcomes for people or preventing escalating need or risk. They are also sometimes referred to as early help or preventative services.

### **Reablement**

Reablement is a type of care that helps people relearn how to do daily activities, like cooking meals and washing. It is provided by local authorities with the aim of mitigating the need for long term care and support.

### **Regional Integration Fund (RIF)**

Health and Social Care's RIF is a 5-year Welsh Government programme from April 2022 to March 2027 to help integrate health and care services.

### **Regional Partnership Board (RPB)**

The North Wales RPB was established as part of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014, to improve the well-being of the population and improve how health and care services are delivered. The RPB brings together health, social services, housing, the third sector and other partners to co-ordinate the continued transformation and integration of health, social care and well-being services across the region.

### **Residential Care Home / Nursing Home**

A residential care home provides accommodation and 24-hour personal care and support to people who may find it difficult to manage daily life at home. Both a residential care home and nursing home provide care and support 24 hours a day, however the main difference is that a nursing home is able to provide a higher level of care. Nursing homes have qualified nurses on-site around the clock to provide medical care as needed, whereas residential homes help people with personal care and support them to engage in physical activity.

### **Safeguarding**

Safeguarding is about protecting children and adults from abuse or neglect and educating those around them to recognise the signs and dangers.

### **Special Guardianship Order (SGO)**

An SGO grants overriding parental responsibility for a child over a child's parents or others who have parental responsibility.

### **Social Care Wales (SCW)**

SCW is the workforce regulator. As part of this they register and set standards for the care and support workforce and develop the workforce. SCW also has an improvement remit, by which they will share good practice, set priorities for research and provide information for the public and other organisations.

### **Supported Living**

Supported living accommodation is a type of housing that provides personal care, support or supervision to help people live independently. The care and support are separate from the housing contract. The accommodation can be shared or single, depending on the needs and preferences of the occupants.

### **Unpaid Carer**

An unpaid carer is someone who provides care and support to family members, friends, or neighbours who are affected by disability, physical or mental ill-health, frailty, or substance misuse. The carer does not need to be living with the person they care for.

### **Young Carer**

A young carer is an unpaid carer who is up to the age of 18. They may be providing care and support to parents, siblings or other family members.

## Summary of Social Services' Priorities for 2025/26

### People

- Roll out strengths-based practice with practice mentor champions to support our collaborative approach to working with people.
- Focus on recruitment, development, retention and succession planning for our workforce.
- Deliver our plans to be 'digital by default' and seek to eliminate paper-based systems and enhance the digital skills of the workforce.
- Investigate how AI (Artificial Intelligence) can support practice and complement care and support.
- Develop the Mosaic client information system.

### Prevention

- Refresh our website to provide clear information and signposting.
- Review and enhance our first response through our SPoA & First Contact & Early Years services, ensuring they provide effective and responsive initial support including Information, Advice and Assistance.
- Promote the use of the 'Oxford Brain Story' and understanding of brain science, adverse and positive experiences on the developing child.
- Work with NEWCIS to maximise timely information, advice, and support to carers.

- Expand our reablement service to increase the number of people that can be supported.
- Support the further development of our in house review and reassessment work, promoting the progression model across all adult services.
- Support young people to move from high-cost residential care and expand in house fostering.
- Pilot the MST-CAN (Multi Systemic Therapy Child Abuse and Neglect) model to secure change where there is neglect and substance misuse, and build family resilience to safely avoid the need to bring children into the care system.

### Partnership and Integration

- Develop meaningful day opportunities through the opening and development of Coed-y-Ddraig, Health & Social Care Hub.
- Develop in-house residential care:
  - Open Tŷ Croes Atti and reablement beds.
  - Identify development goals for Llys Gwenffrwd.
- Create an in-house residential care home for children.
- Pilot a 'trusted assessor' model to support hospital assessment and discharge processes.
- Create a forecasting model to inform service development, in-house provision and commissioning.

- Integrate net zero carbon omission into commissioning activity.
- Collaborate and support independent sector providers of residential and foster care to move to prescribed Not-for-Profit models.
- Develop a fair price for care using Care Cubed system / methodology.

### **Well-being**

- Implement the 'Effective Child Protection' practice model which centres on working with families on the child protection register to bring about sustained change.
- Implement the 'Graded Care Profile 2' to support families to change to prevent and safely manage and reduce child neglect.
- Rightsize Supported Living projects for people with a learning disability to support people to live independent lives and to promote the progression model.
- Develop meaningful day opportunities through community support for older people.
- Review of Early Years & Family Centres to optimise local authority and community spaces.