

SOCIAL SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting	May 27 th 2021
Report Subject	Arosfa - Service Model.
Portfolio Holder	Cabinet Member for Social Services
Report Author	Chief Officer Social Services
Type of Report	Operational

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Arosfa is a well-established service providing short term breaks/ respite for children with disabilities. The unused left wing at Arosfa has been refurbished to provide two additional places at the facility. These places bring capacity to accommodate up to five children using flexible care and shared care models.

This additional service, two new places, are in addition to the current short break respite provision for up to three children at any one time. Together the plans would enable us support a maximum of five children at any one time.

The provision of an additional two places for shared care respite will form part of our Strategic intent to reduce reliance on expensive out of county placements, and will enable Flintshire to support children and young people within the county. This will increase the current capacity Flintshire has to also offer and more respite care provision within our vision for strategic ambition.

The new placements will be open from the end of April, building work permitting, we are currently on target to open first week of May.

The integrated Care Fund (ICF) money has been identified for first year additional revenue costs for the extended service at Arosfa.

RECOMMENDATIONS	
1	Members recognise the progress made at Arosfa, and support the opportunity to provide additional flexible support for up to five children and their families, with the aim of keeping families together and closer to home.

REPORT DETAILS

1.00	EXPLAINING THE AMENDED USE OF THE NEW RESIDENTIAL FACILITY AT AROSFA
1.01	Background Arosfa is a local Authority owned premises sited in Greenside, Mold. Built in the 70's it's original purpose was a residential home for deaf children who attended the school opposite the building.
1.02	Following Arosfa's closure as a home for the deaf in the early 1990's it has been used for a variety of purposes such as a Children's Home, Pupil Referral Unit and has also stood empty for a period.
1.03	In 2010 it was agreed that it would be refurbished to become a short breaks provision for disabled children. In October 2012 Action for children was awarded the contract to run the service. Prior to this, Action for Children had managed on behalf of Flintshire which was a smaller respite/short breaks service from a small bungalow, (Cornel Clyd) which was based in Connah's Quay, Deeside. This had been operating as a Short Breaks service since 1998.
1.04	Since relocating to Arosfa, Action for Children have used large amounts of Voluntary income to add value to the service. This includes converting the garage into a Sensory room, fitting out the garden with specialist play equipment including nest swing, ground level trampoline and MUGA (multi use games area). There is also an adapted gazebo which is used as an art and crafts space. This has brought in additional income of over £75,000 to upgrade the building.
1.05	In 2010 when the Local Authority refurbished Arosfa, there was not sufficient funds to complete the whole building and as a consequence the left wing of the building consisting of two bedrooms, one bathroom and two living areas was left in disrepair.
1.06	Since 2012 Action for Children have successfully provided a short breaks service for disabled children at Arosfa. Young people who attend the project have a severe learning disability / complex health needs with need for specific procedures such as Gastrostomy, Peg feeding / challenging behaviour / autism / communication issues / physical disability with need to

	<p>have use of specialist equipment. It has three bedrooms; two of which are suitably designed and equipped for wheel chair use. The service can accommodate up to a maximum of three children at any time plus two rooms for staff to use as sleeping in rooms.</p>
1.07	<p>This service meets a wide range of purposes. It gives young people an opportunity to spend time away from home, preparing them for future independent living and it gives them an opportunity to socialise outside of school with friends in a way that disabled children rarely get a chance to do. More importantly, it provides an opportunity for parents and carers to get a much-needed break and spend quality time with other family members, in fact this provision for some families is crucial in keeping families together.</p>
1.08	<p>Action for Children's current contract commenced in April 2017 to deliver a service for three years, with the possibility of an extension up to two years. The contract allows for amendments for increase in service dependent on the outcome of this proposal. Action for Children (AFC) are entering their final year of the contract.</p>
1.09	<p>Original proposal for the residential facility The Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014 brings together health, social services, the third sector and other partners to take forward the effective delivery of integrated services. It requires the local authority to work in partnership with individuals, their families and carers to ensure that services meet the care and support needs identified.</p>
1.10	<p>As a result AFC and Social Services took a partnership approach to explore the development of the unused wing to create additional residential capacity within Arosfa. An original model of provision for the additional two places in the left wing had been agreed with Health, alongside revenue funding secured through the Integrated Care Fund, (ICF). The proposal was to increase the capacity within Arosfa, using ICF, to accommodate two permanent long-term residents. This would be in addition to the current short break, respite provision for up to three children.</p>
1.11	<p>Following approval for this model in 2019/20 and the completion of the capital works in 2020/21, partners have considered the benefits of an alternative approach which seeks to maximise the support it provides to local families:</p>
1.12	<p>Proposed amended residential facility at Arosfa As there are a number of children/young people currently in Flintshire whose place within the family home is a risk due to their complex needs and challenging behaviour associated with their diagnosis, we have therefore considered and traditional and alternative model for the</p>

	residential facility in which a share cared respite service for a maximum of four children/ young people can be delivered.
1.13	This proposal aims to keep up to five young people (at any given time) in the family home by providing a substantial break to the family from their caring role as well as the benefit of person centred interventions. We are seeking to support five families rather than two, although we will remain flexible in relation to meeting of children. If five children can continue to live in the family home, there would be an avoidance of cost to the out of county budget if placement breakdown was to occur.
1.14	Intensive support to address challenging behaviour could be provided by Complex Needs Service (BCUHB) and Action for Children, if and where needed. They would address challenging behaviours, sleep patterns, skill development all of which are identified as reasons for family breakdown; all of which would aim to make these children and families independent over time and free from statutory support.
1.15	Up to five children/young people would be able to retain their current/local place at school. This is better for the child's routine and continuity, also avoiding the cost of expensive educational placements.
1.16	<p>The provision of an additional two places for shared care respite will form part of our Strategic intent to reduce reliance on expensive out of county placements, and will enable Flintshire to support children and young people within the county. This will increase current capacity Flintshire has to also offer more respite care provision within our vision for strategic ambition.</p> <p>The aim of the proposal is to enable the Council to: i) more proactively respond to the identified needs ii) better manage demand for placements and iii) develop the market to be more responsive and affordable. The primary focus will be to secure the most cost effective delivery of positive outcomes for children.</p>
1.17	Action for children and Social Services wish to trial this approach starting on a phased basis, with the service commencing in April 2021 and introducing one child at a time before building up to supporting four children and young people after 12 months; this way it enables us to reflect, learn and possible be flexible in our approach based on the needs of the children/ young people and families. Please see below a breakdown of the estimated operational costs for the service and the proposed funding.
1.18	As a result, Social Services needs to take a strategic partnership approach to this service and following the investment made to date in the development of the service and partnership with AFC we will look to obtain an exemption for this service following the end of the contract, in March

	2022, to continue to develop and trial this approach before the potential disruption of a procurement exercise.
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2.00	RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS
2.01	<p>Social Services has secured ICF funding to the value of £200k toward the total costs of the Arosfa service 21/22. Other grant funding, including BCU health funding such as CHC, will be maximised wherever possible towards the service.</p> <p>We will work within the IFC funding envelope (200k) for the next 12 months and work with Action for Children to establish service cost based on four children/ young people using the service 50% of the time and requiring needs and complexity dependant.</p>
2.02	<p>This new service is required as a result of increasing demand and complexity of support needed for families; Flintshire has worked well with AFC, building on the trust and transparent within the partnership, to satisfy ourselves of the operating costs of the service.</p>
2.03	<p>It is anticipated that the current management arrangements would continue i.e. the present Registered Manager would remain in post with extended responsibility across both elements of the service. A larger staff team would be recruited with all staff being required to work across both units but with staff identified as having a primary link to each child. We are proposing as a minimum that staff would occupy accommodation in both wings overnight therefore ensuring staff are on hand close to the young people.</p>

3.00	IMPACT ASSESSMENT AND RISK MANAGEMENT
3.01	<p>The new service would need to be registered with Care Inspectorate Wales, (CIW), this would be an extension to current registration held by AFC at Arosfa so it will be more straight forward than a new model of provision as originally planned. Discussions with CIW have been held and this variation to the registration is being progressed.</p>
3.02	<p>The support and commitment from seniors in BCUHB is essential to the success of this service. The Complex Needs Service would need to engage extensively at the onset to develop programmes, advice and monitor progress of the children within the service. Discussions are taking place with colleagues in BCUHB regarding this.</p>

4.00	CONSULTATIONS REQUIRED/CARRIED OUT
4.01	N/a – Operational update

5.00	APPENDICES
5.01	N/a

6.00	LIST OF ACCESSIBLE BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS
6.01	N/a

7.00	CONTACT OFFICER DETAILS
7.01	Contact Officer: Susie Lunt Telephone: 01352 701341 E-mail: jo.taylor@flintshire.gov.uk