



REPORT TO:	Conwy and Denbighshire Public Services Board
DATE OF MEETING:	16 th November 2020
PORTFOLIO HOLDER	Cllr Louise Emery, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Services and Leisure, CCBC
LEAD OFFICER:	Claire Lister – Head Of Integrated Adult & Community Services, Head of Service
CONTACT OFFICER:	Erica Roberts - Programme Manager
SUBJECT:	Flexible Funding Programme Update
ELECTORAL DIVISION:	All

1.0 CONTEXT

The Flexible Funding Programme is the latest approach to ensuring that 10 different grants work together with the aim of providing greater local authority autonomy in service delivery, particularly around joint planning and commissioning to better support outcomes. This extra freedom aims to allow for a more strategic approach in delivering early intervention, prevention and support. During 2018/19 Conwy was one of 7 pathfinders testing this way of working. By now all authorities have adopted this approach.

- 1.1 After some deliberation by Welsh Government, it was agreed that 10 grants would be part of the Flexible Funding make up, resulting in the alignment of £10,695,600 of grant funding in Conwy.
- 1.2 However, in October 2018, Cabinet Secretaries and Ministers decided that from 1 April 2019, there would be two integrated grants – or ‘funding pots’ - within Flexible Funding. These are:
 - The Children and Communities Grant (CCG): Flying Start, Families First, Legacy Fund (community resilience), Communities for Work Plus, Promoting Positive Engagement for Young People (Youth Justice), Childcare and Play, and St David’s Day Fund (care leavers):

Total for Conwy - £4,124,140

- The Housing Support Grant (HSG): Supporting People, Homelessness Prevention and Rent Smart Wales Enforcement.

Total for Conwy - £6,571,460

- 1.3 The implication of having two 'funding pots' is a limit to the ability to move or "flex" the funding.
- 1.4 The purpose of both grants is to address the support needs, and the housing and housing related support needs of the most vulnerable children and adults in our communities through the range of early intervention, prevention and support mechanisms. The grants seek to mitigate or remove disadvantage to vulnerable people to enable them to have the same life chances as others, and therefore contribute to a more equal Wales.

2.0 CONWY'S VISION

- 2.1 UK and Welsh Government legislative changes have and will continue to impact on the way the local authority and its partners work with Conwy's citizens. It is widely recognised that a new way of working with our communities is fundamental to the sustainability of future services for those most in need.

Key legislation which encourages this approach includes the Future Generations Act (2015), Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act (2014), Housing (Wales) Act 2014, and the Planning (Wales) Act (2015).

The Welsh Government's Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 has created a set of national outcomes and placed a duty on public bodies to put sustainable development at the heart of decisions.

- 2.2 For Conwy County Borough Council they have been incorporated into the Conwy Corporate Plan. The 7 goals and 5 ways of working are aligned to Conwy's 8 Citizen Outcomes.

Other priority areas which have been taken into consideration include:

- Welsh Government Building Resilient Communities
- Taking Wales Forward
- The Welsh Government's Well-being Objectives (2016-2021)

- 2.3 Our Corporate Plan includes actions which are preventative not reactive, aim to work towards the longer term impact, are integrated in the consideration of how they contribute to the 7 Well-being Goals and are

collaborative in terms of the focus on working closely with communities - so they are involved in owning and working collectively to meet the Citizen Outcomes. The Corporate Plan priorities have been considered by the Conwy & Denbighshire Public Services Board to reflect on where priorities impact on other public organisations and where there are opportunities for collaboration.

- 2.4 Communities were involved in developing the priorities and the Council will continue to involve communities going forward, particularly by connecting local community discussions through the development of place plans. Our cross-cutting themes refer to the importance of assessing our actions and key decisions in order to have a positive impact on tackling poverty, equality and promoting the Welsh language.

- 2.5 As an authority, our Vision is:

Conwy - a progressive County creating opportunity

We are working in a changing and demanding environment. Our vision is to be progressive in managing change and to use it to create opportunities; to safeguard what we have, and to build on this to accommodate change. This vision is a shared endeavor. We want to strengthen our relationship with citizens so that we can work together to improve the county. In all that we do, from educating children, caring for the vulnerable, recycling waste, regulating businesses, to providing leisure facilities and theatre performances to name but a few, we want to be progressive and creative so that we maximise the opportunities available to the communities within Conwy county.

- 2.6 Flexible Funding provides us with an opportunity to achieve increased programme alignment, make more effective use of funding and meet local needs. This greater financial freedom and flexibility is expected to enable Conwy to work differently, giving more scope to design services to support the Government's drive for more preventative, long-term approaches, whilst also working towards our Corporate Plan priorities.

The Funding Flexibility Programme will improve the outcomes of the most vulnerable in our communities through early intervention and prevention approaches which encourage self-reflection and increase motivation. The aim is to remove the barriers that prevent people from achieving positive change by developing innovative approaches which are designed to prevent citizens from becoming more vulnerable in the future.

- 2.7 The Programme will assist in delivering against Conwy's 5 Priorities:

- People in Conwy are Educated and Skilled

- People in Conwy are Safe and feel Safe
- People in Conwy have access to affordable, appropriate good quality accommodation that enhances the quality of their lives
- People in Conwy are Healthy and Active
- People in Conwy live in a county that has a Prosperous economy

3.0 THE PROGRAMME

- 3.1 In order to progress the approach to working flexibly and aligning these 10 grants, we have established five work streams under our Flexible Funding Programme. These are made up of lead and support officers for the various grants, as well as specialist roles across the authority:

Work Stream 1 – Research and Assessment of Need
 Work Stream 2 – Programme and Project Activity
 Work Stream 3 – Commissioning and Partnership
 Work Stream 4 – Programme Monitoring & Administration
 Work Stream 5 – Coproduction

- 3.2 We have also identified 6 themes under which we are structuring our work:

- Parenting
- Childcare & Play
- Young People
- Health & Wellbeing
- Employability
- Homelessness Prevention

- 3.3 One of the aims of the programme is to identify more effective ways of working, identifying both duplication and opportunities to work more closely, in order to ensure our approach to early intervention and prevention is maximised.

- 3.4 In Conwy, these ten grants encompass five Services (Children, Families and Safeguarding; Community Development; Education; Integrated Adult and Community Services; and Regulatory and Housing) and as such a key element of the programme governance is the Delivery Group, which oversees the 5 programme work streams in detail, and brings together the lead officers and service managers for all 10 schemes. This group is pivotal to sharing an understanding of what is being delivered, barriers, and opportunities, establishing commonality and ensuring that areas of collaboration are identified and promoted.

- 3.5 The report will now give examples of how, as a programme, we are working together to share information, consider how we can combine data sets, and

how we are engaging more with our service users to develop and improve our services.

- 3.6 We have completed the Locality Profiles and these will continue to grow and be added to as new information becomes available. They include a diverse range of data including poverty indicators, education, health, and crime information as well as demographic information for each locality area. We are working with colleagues in Health, Public Health Wales and the Police to align different areas of work. These have been presented to the Area Forums.
- 3.7 **Parenting**
 Much of the research phase of this theme was undertaken as part of our Early Intervention and Prevention project which informed our Family Centre model, which brings together both the Families First and the Flying Start grants under one delivery mechanism. We continue to develop this approach and have established close links with other services within the authority, such as the Youth Justice Service, Children’s Duty Desk - Social Care, and the Youth Service, who have restructured to replicate the locality based model. The Family Wellbeing tool is also a finalist for an accolade award, and we have been invited to join the Children’s First Pioneers.
- 3.8 The locality profiles have been shared with several of our Family Centres, and the partner organisations who work closely with the team. Data has focused on child poverty, and key data sets included Free School meals entitlement and take up data, food bank information and housing benefit claimants. We also included SARTH information, looking at how many people were on the housing waiting list, and where their preference for a home was, as well as overcrowding.
- 3.9 We have been considering the suitability of the North Family Centre in terms of current location, facility, and “hub and spoke” model of delivery. A workshop for the North locality was held at the Llandudno Family Centre to seek the input from members. The centre – the hub - is currently established within a densely populated housing area, on the border of Tudno, the most deprived ward in the North locality, and the third most deprived ward in Conwy. The main “spokes” where we also deliver, are Ty Hapus and Ty Llywelyn, both of which are also within Tudno. We have also been consulting with families and partners to seek their opinion, which is almost complete. We have recently also recommissioned a number of contracts including our Domestic Violence Services and Family Relationship Counselling.
- 3.10 Family Support Activity during Covid has included supporting 953 families of which 486 had needs relating to a disability, or had additional needs. The service took the opportunity to use doorstep deliveries and at the same time

carry out socially distanced contacts to check on welfare. The doorstep deliveries included craft packs, donated semi-educational games, and Free School Meals food parcels. 26 specific meetings were held in the community at a social distance with families and 19 families met in family centres. New services developed included castle visits out of hours for vulnerable families in conjunction with CADW, Play spaces scheme – using closed school playgrounds for targeted work with individual families (46 sessions during lockdown period), Let's Get Busy activity on zoom, and WhatsApp parenting. 36 Family items were also sourced and delivered including a cooker, 2 child's beds, 2 chrome books and a calming box. 190 Flying Start Childcare families were supported by telephone/video/call/text/email/letter/doorstep conversations and 94 Flying Start families received weekly activity emails. 17 childcare practitioners from 2 childcare settings accessed virtual speech, language and communication training.

3.11 **Childcare & Play**

In Conwy the Childcare and Play grant is used to

- provide financial assistance towards the cost of childcare to support families in need.
- fund the Childcare Business Development Officer to ensure the quality and sustainability of the 85 Out of School Childcare clubs offering 2,641 childcare places in Conwy
- provide New Places and sustainability grants for Out of School Childcare Clubs.
- provide financial assistance to help cover the cost of additional staff members to enable children with additional or other specific needs, to access and participate fully in the Out of School Childcare Club.
- support the training needs of childcare providers

3.12 We have started to analyse childcare provision against the Flying Start postcode areas as a cluster map, and hope to also develop a cluster map demonstrating Child Birth rates in Conwy to get a better understanding of need and demand.

3.13 During Covid phone and email support have continued to be given to childcare settings in Conwy and this has varied from allaying fears, supporting through guidance, referring them to templates developed which are pandemic specific and signposting and supporting with available funding streams. Training was adapted in order for it to be delivered through an online format. Learners who have been identified as having additional learning needs or those who are struggling with online resources have

received training packs with extra supporting materials delivered to their home.

3.14 **Young People**

We have been analysing the NEET data captured over the last three years by the education service, and as part of our Leisure data analysis we have specifically looked at the use of our Leisure facilities by young people. There are also close links with the Health and Wellbeing theme here, where we have been consulting with young people around out of school activities.

3.15 The St David's Day Fund, which is a fund specifically to support care leavers to access opportunities that will lead them towards independent and successful lives, undertook a consultation with Conwy's care leavers to ask them how they thought the funding should be spent and how beneficial they found the support they received. We had a great response rate at 44%. We also invited them to join our panel to consider applications for the St Davids Day fund.

3.16 During Covid, the fund approved 55 requests including the purchase of 2 mobile phones, both of which are smart phones so young people can have video chats with friends and family and complete any Universal Credit applications; a chrome book and a laptop. The weekly panel continued during lockdown, and since April has included input from a pool of young people whose engagement, insight and research has proved to be invaluable.

3.17 We have a number of projects funded through the Promoting Positive Engagement grant (Conwy and Denbighshire) for young people at risk of offending including

- Enhanced Restorative Justice, where we ensure that the needs of the victims are understood and met or addressed, and that the young people understand the real impact that their behaviour has on others, with the aim of changing their behaviour in the future, and in turn reducing re-offending.
- Integrated Volunteer Programme – where volunteers can take part as referral order panel members, as community representatives as part of the out of court process, and as mentors, where they work one to one with young people, taking part in constructive leisure opportunities
- Improved support and access to Education, Training, Employment - where we support young people with careers advice and with their applications to college or work

- 3.18 During Covid the service has used social media and technology to undertake contact virtually and continue to deliver service provision. Children and young people were identified across the service area and dependent on their risk and vulnerability, the service triaged the medium to high risk individuals to ensure the staff team were in regular contact and when appropriate/possible socially distanced garden visits and/or walks were undertaken. Volunteers have continued to deliver referral order panels throughout the pandemic.
- 3.19 We are currently supporting the service to engage with the young people they support in order to evaluate and improve the services on offer. They are also working closely with the Employability team to develop work experience for young offenders.
- 3.20 **Health and Wellbeing**
We have been seeking user feedback on play opportunities, in line with the recommissioning plans, and to link in with our Health and Wellbeing theme. A survey was shared with all Family Centres, by CVSC, and taken to two youth clubs leisure sessions, two library Storytime sessions, and shared one of the Family Centres.
- 3.21 We have also linked in with Health colleagues and sit on the Immunisation/Childhood Measurement Programme Sub Group which is a group working with Public Health Wales, Betsi Cadwalder Health Board and Conwy Council. Child Obesity and Immunisation information from Public Health Wales has been shared for certain ward areas.
- 3.22 We are also liaising with Foodbanks within Conwy and making links between funding avenues and various teams who refer into the Foodbanks.
- 3.23 We have undertaken several surveys for the Leisure service and undertaken an in-depth analysis of Leisure facility use and membership demographics (pre-Covid). We have also been looking at playgrounds and green spaces within the authority to develop an overall picture of some of the wellbeing opportunities on offer.
- 3.24 **Employability**
We have reviewed the following schemes: TRAC, ADTRAC, Communities for Work (CFW), Communities for Work Plus (CFW+), The Legacy Fund and OPUS, and undertaken analysis in the data sets of CFW, CFW+ and OPUS.

This provided us with intelligence relating to the employability status of many of our participants, their barriers, where they come from, and the outcomes of support. We have also considered how we might improve our

current delivery, in terms of strategy, coordination of referrals, oversight of all schemes, delivery and project support, funding, closer working and data. A number of recommendations were made resulting moving all our employability support to one service area, and the implementation of a new employability structure. This included a Principal Officer for Skills and Employability which now oversees all employability schemes.

- 3.25 Discussions with Social Care have started in respect of employability support for people with learning disabilities. Increased partnership working especially with colleagues in Flying Start and Families First had enabled us to better engage with the community and increase partnership working.
- 3.26 Plans had been established to develop our Sit and Stew project within the Legacy work stream into the five localities and incorporate elements of our Confidently You model aimed at developing confidence and combating isolation, however as this was largely based on group work it has been replaced by a number of projects including support for Self-employment; access to Mental Health support, building mental resilience and toughness; and Digital Inclusion.
- 3.27 During recent months where face to face contact has not been possible the team have been communicating with participants using various approaches, based on the needs of the participants, including video, telephone, email, text etc. They surveyed all participants to determine their preferred method of working as well as skills and access to IT. A closed Facebook group for participants was created to promote job opportunities. A blended approach when working with, and engaging, participants will continue. The service is working closely with the Youth Justice/Ex-Offenders to develop a joint pathways project and with Housing colleagues on a joint project with Supporting People, Creating Enterprise and Communities for Work Plus to support people who are homeless and living in temporary accommodation.
- 3.28 **Homelessness Prevention**
We are currently analysing the Supporting People Outcomes data, in order to understand who we are current supporting, what their needs are, and be able to better predict our future demand for homelessness prevention and housing support services. We have analysed data based on both the Pathway (Housing led projects) and Outcomes Data (all projects funded by the Supporting People Grant including Social Care). We have also started to look at data supplied by Housing Solutions in order to consider trends within the people requiring support from this team.
- 3.29 During Covid all Providers have continued to work over and above their contractual requirements. Our accommodation based projects are all full and some people have moved into move-on projects or into independent

living. Providers are continuing to support clients with contact over the phone and have started increasing face to face contact. The team continue to deliver PPE to our B&B, Temporary Accommodation and HSG Providers.