



Market Position Statement 2020 to 2022

A statement to providers about Child and Family Services explaining the current demand and projected future need for foster, residential and supported accommodation services for children and young people.

Introduction

Swansea has a placement commissioning strategy (PCS) that shapes and informs our service development. This strategy was agreed through data analysis of our looked after population; consultation with stakeholders; research of the process and practices for sourcing appropriate accommodation; and focused decision-making on how to improve outcomes for children who are looked after. The PCS explains that we aim to meet our Sufficiency Duty and promote good matching by:

- shaping our internal services;
- working in partnership with stakeholders, and a range of public and private sector partners;
- working in collaboration with public sector partners across the Regional footprint where this offers identifiable benefits; and
- co-producing accommodation services which are outcomes-focussed.

Having completed the PCS, we are now able to set out our Market Position Statement (MPS) to effectively communicate to the Market our vision for the strategic commissioning of placements. In doing so, we acknowledge that there are a range of different methods for strategic commissioning. We also recognise that there are multiple potential organisations - including co-operatives, charities and commercial partners – who can work with us to find solutions.

Purpose of our Market Position Statement

This Market Position Statement is for fostering providers (referred to as IFA's), providers of children's residential care homes and supported living providers who are; delivering, able to deliver, or are planning to deliver' services in our local area. This document will help to structure engagement between the Council, Childrens Services, our children looked after, their family and friends, carers and providers regarding the future vision of this service.

Our Market Position Statement will:

- act as a starting point for discussions between Child and Family Services and care providers;
- provide data on current placements and forecast demand to inform providers on specific areas of growth or need; and
- identify priority service areas of development where we want to co-produce, collaborate and commission services from providers.

All Children's Services in Wales are required to ensure they have sufficient accommodation in their local area. Where sufficiency cannot, for identifiable reasons, be achieved in the local area, there is a joint commitment to prioritise sufficiency across regional footprints that mirror the Regional Partnership Boards (RPB) footprint. The basis for this commitment is evidence-based, intended to support improved outcomes for looked after children and to maximise use of local resources for local children. Swansea is part of the West Glamorgan Regional Partnership Board with Neath Port Talbot County Borough Council and the Swansea Bay University Health Board.

If any service provider is considering Swansea as a location for a new or expanding service, we would welcome an early conversation. By working together, we strongly feel that we can improve outcomes for children and help partners to make better business decisions.

What Outcomes do we want for our Children?

We will ensure that children are looked after in safe placements that meet their assessed needs, enable them to achieve the best possible outcomes and ultimately fulfil their potential. Under the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014 this is now articulated through the concept of well-being.

Carer Skill Set & Training

In Swansea we are pursuing an approach to social work practice which is strengths-based and focused on relationships - a systemic approach. This ambition is supported by the Signs of Safety practice framework. Our practitioners are being helped to develop their understanding and skills of working in a trauma informed manner and we use the Dyadic-Developmental Psychotherapy and PACE to respond to children with poor attachment styles. It would therefore be advantageous if foster carers and staff are recruited, trained and supported to work in a manner which is consistent with our social work teams. As a Council, we will consider proposals whereby providers participate in our training where this is mutually beneficial.

Resources

Like most Welsh Local Authorities, we operate within the context of reduced funding and increasing demand pressures. Swansea Council has been asked to save £24m next year and a further £60m in the next 3 years. During 2018-19:-

- Child and Family Services commissioned an average of 106 external foster care placements.
- Child and Family Services commissioned 32 external residential placements over the course of the year.

We are more likely to commission services that have clear aims and objectives, target resources in response to need and provide strong evidence of impact of value for money. Having a model of care that is understood and embedded across the whole organisation is a development that we welcome. Research evidences that models setting clear expectations with a consistent approach build staff confidence. They improve the quality of assessment, intervention, and direct work with children and their families and ultimately improve outcomes for children. We are committed to work with providers to support service developments and welcome contact from you to discuss any service developments.

Our best hope would be for the models to replicate or be in keeping with our internal practice as detailed above. However, we are keen to work with providers who use other models/tools provided they are proactive and effective at addressing need. We are particularly interested in models which can support our Safe LAC reduction strategy by facilitating step-downs to parents, family or the transition from residential care to foster placements.

Fostering

Where we are now

Foster Swansea has 136 foster carers supporting 262 placements. During 2018-19 Foster Swansea approved 18 foster carers. Foster Swansea plans to continue to grow and develop its range of placements.

Recently the placement demand has been for complex needs, siblings groups, 'step down' from residential and Parent & Child (P&C) placements.

There is a demand for placements for babies but Foster Swansea is usually able to respond to the need (provided it is not a P&C placement).

Our ethos is to keep siblings together when possible, but this is often difficult to achieve especially when there are 3 children or more children.

We aim to place children and young people within 20 miles of Swansea.

As an attachment-based service, in-house foster carers and staff receive core training centred around PACE, secure base and Theraplay.

Key Statistics:-

- We typically have between 100 and 110 IFA placements at any point in time.
- 73 new IFA placements were commissioned in 2018-19
- 63% of IFA placements were for children under 11.
- Last year we had 12 Parent and Child Foster Placements
- In 2018-19 there were 14 referrals for siblings groups of 3 or more
- In December 2019 there are 6 When I'm ready placements with an IFA and 9 with Foster Swansea

What we don't need

Placements for babies and very young children.

Foster Swansea has a successful Short Break Service offering breaks for children still primarily living with their parents.

Respite for children with a disability is largely met via our Family Link Service.

Where we want to be

We want to:-

Recruit a range of foster carers to Foster Swansea and from a diverse background.

Increase the number of 'When I'm Ready' placements for young people in long term placements.

See an increase in capacity for independent agencies to support sibling groups, adolescents and those with complex needs.

Develop a strategy around 'step down' from residential care in the next 12 months. We would be keen to explore partnership working.

Review how we provide long-term placements for children with disabilities and we would welcome opportunities to explore partnership working.

Explore opportunities to work with independent agencies to maximise use of placements in Swansea and neighbouring authorities.

Foster Swansea have a campaign to increase PAC placement options but, such is the demand, that we are also keen to work with providers to increase the pool of available carers. We also want to see outreach support in place for P&C placements when they end.

Who we need

Foster Carers who have training and are skilled in supporting children who have difficulties associated with **attachment** and **trauma**.

Residential

Where we are now

We currently have between 25 and 30 residential placements. We have one internal residential service, which is designed to provide emergency and short-term placements for up to 3 children and young people. Our other residential placements are commissioned from external providers.

We have a multi-faceted plan to prevent needs escalating to the point where residential care is the best option.

The children and young people we are placing in residential care are increasingly complex and present with multiple risks / needs: for example, substance misuse, violence and aggression, absconding, self-harm; sexually harmful behaviour, exploitation etc.

We often have to place children out of area due to a lack of specialist services (therapeutically informed) locally to meet needs.

We frequently need residential provision to have education included.

Key Statistics:-

- In 2018-19, 65% of children in residential care received education from the registered residential placement.
- In 2018-19 the average number of placements was 31.
- Males aged 12-14 are mostly likely to require a residential placement

What we don't need

There is not much demand for emergency placements for children coming from the community as this tends to be met by our in-house provision.

There is no demand for standard residential care and residential care without education: there is more than enough local provision to meet demand.

While we aim to reduce demand overall, we do need to see a growth in capacity of therapeutic informed services which can effectively support children with the most complex needs.

There is little demand for residential family assessment centres.

We already have local provision for short breaks for children with disabilities.

We are developing an 'edge of care' residential service which will provide short breaks for other children living at home in the community.

Where we want to be

We do not require an increased capacity locally.

We would encourage local residential provision to develop and embed clear models of specialisms which enable them to support children with the most complex needs: often referred to as the alternative to secure. This includes the capacity to deliver registered education to children placed in their care.

We are prepared to explore opportunities to work in partnership with providers who are interested.

Who we need

Services that are:

- Therapeutically informed
- Specialist
- Innovative

Supported transitions

Where we are now

We work in partnership with Barnardos to provide the BAYS+ service for care leavers and young people in need of support.

Supported accommodation for young people is accessed and managed via a regular meeting of local authority officers and providers: the Supported Accommodation Pathway (SAP).

Swansea already has a reasonably good level of supported accommodation which can offer different levels of support for a range of young people. However, we are aware there is increasing demand for services which are able to manage the most complex young people.

We are in process of developing a small number of training flats for young people to provide young people with a period to gain and practice the skills required for an independent and successful adulthood.

Key Statistics:-

Over the course of a year we pay for or contribute financially to the accommodation support of around 120 young people who are category 2-4 care leavers.

We have up to 10 young people not open to Child and Family Services who present as in need of accommodation in a month.

What we don't need

We have a contract for supported lodging arrangements in place

The training flats are in development and we are keen to enable young people to build independent living skills with the right support around them.

There is a local Housing First model emerging to support with young people presenting as homeless.

Where we want to be

We are keen to work in partnership with local providers to develop a flexible and more tailored response to the needs of young people who present as risky or complex. Every year we have a small number of young people (typically around 5-8 per year) who struggle to live in projects alongside others.

We are also interested in exploring how we can work with providers to reduce the number of placement breakdowns for complex and risky young people.

We will be undertaking a procurement exercise in the course of 2020/21 where we will be re-tendering a range of floating and fixed accommodation support services that are commissioned via the Housing Support Grant (the Supporting People Programme).

Who we need

Providers who are flexible and adaptable to young people's needs even when risky.
Providers who are able to supporting the young person to make choices and prepare them to live independently

How we will commission services

We will continue to use the All Wales Local Authority Frameworks to commission individual placements across a range of placement types. These frameworks deliver strategic level partnerships with providers in fostering and residential services. The frameworks are used where either the Local Authority's Sufficiency Duty necessitates external commissioning or where best quality, outcome delivery and value for money is achieved through external commissioning rather than internal service delivery. The All Wales Frameworks are managed by the 4C's.

The vehicle we use for e-tendering external fostering and residential placements is the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) which offers transparent and outcomes focussed placement commissioning for both Framework and Non-Framework regulated placements and allows compliance with the relevant procurement guidance and regulation that underpins our commissioning. We want our market providers to be registered on CCSR to respond to tenders that are published (<http://www.smartsurvey.co.uk/s/CCSRreg/>)

For bespoke or larger tenders we use Sell 2 Wales and actively require our market providers to be registered on this site to respond to tenders that are published (<https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales>).

Support we will offer in service development

We want to work collaboratively with good quality providers to co-produce development of services that we need. In specific areas, a co-production approach with shared resource components between us and providers that work in an integrated way may be identified as the best approach. Opportunities for discussions on partnership working will be publicised across the market.

We take a relationship based approach to commissioning underpinned by compliant procurement processes. We believe that use of e-procurement systems are an effective tool that can complement relationship commissioning rather than transactional commissioning, with a positive ethos adopted by partners.

We will meet with existing and potential providers on a regular basis.

We will use forums and events at regional and national level to engage with providers, these may be facilitated by 4Cs or RPBs and we encourage providers to attend these events which are valuable to information sharing and networking.

We will ensure the voice of the child is heard by continuing to support children who are looked after to influence our commissioning decisions and will always consult with them to shape the services that they want.

This MPS is a live document and will be updated bi-annually or whenever there are key changes that you need to know about. (www.swansea.gov.uk)

Contact us

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