



Report of the Head of Child and Family Services

Social Care and Tackling Poverty Service Transformation Committee – 4 December 2023

When I'm Ready

Purpose:	This report presents the development of our services in relation to young people living in When I'm Ready arrangements.
Policy Framework:	Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act
Consultation:	Legal, Finance and Access to Service
Recommendation(s):	It is recommended that: 1) The Social Care and Tackling Poverty Services Transformation is invited to consider the report and give their views on the updated When I'm Ready policy.
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This report outlines the commitment, vision, and ambitions we have for our support services for children, young people, and families in When I'm Ready arrangements. It also outlines how we intend to ensure that the needs of our service users inform our practice, and how we will develop and adapt our service if or when these needs change.
- 1.2 When I'm Ready is a scheme developed by the Welsh government in partnership with local government and key third-party sector partners to enable care leavers to continue to live with their former foster carers after the age of eighteen. A When I'm Ready (often referred to as 'WHEN I'M READY') arrangement can continue until the young person reaches their

twenty-first birthday, or completes their agreed programme of education or training after their twenty-first birthday, if they have been continuously living in the arrangement since their eighteenth birthday.

2. Background

2.1 Section 108(3) of the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act places a duty on Local Authorities to provide support for young people and foster carers who wish to remain in 'post-eighteen living arrangements'. As an adult, a young person in a When I'm Ready arrangement is no longer legally 'in care' or 'looked after' and the arrangement therefore differs from a foster placement. More information about the legislative background of When I'm Ready along with guidance for practitioners working in the area, please see the When I'm Ready: Good Practice Guide, which was produced by Welsh government: [When I'm Ready Good Practice Guide](#).

2.2 The main aim of When I'm Ready is to improve the outcomes for looked after children by helping them to develop independent living skills, provide them with stability and continuity, and giving them increased opportunities to exercise voice and control over their lives, i.e., a greater sense of autonomy when it comes to making decisions about their futures.

2.3 When I'm Ready arrangements can bring a lot of potential benefits to the lives of young adults who are no longer in care. These benefits include:

- Development of independent living skills.
- Stability and continuity.
- Improved life chances.
- Increased opportunities to exercise voice and control over their lives.
- A good base from which young people can pursue training, education, or work opportunities.
- On-going support from the provider and their Young Person's Advisor.

2.4 When I'm Ready is aimed at care leavers who require an extended period with their former foster carers in order to prepare themselves for independent living and/or to complete their education or training. When I'm Ready is transitional, and the expectation is that the young person will move on to more independent living arrangements. The criteria for a When I'm Ready arrangement is:

- The young person was a 'looked after child' immediately prior to their eighteenth birthday and was living with a foster carer in a placement arranged by the local authority.
- The carers were acting as approved foster carers for the young person immediately prior to their eighteenth birthday.

- The young person is deemed under current legislation to be an eligible child within the meaning of the Children Act 1989 immediately before they reached eighteen (category 1 young people under the 'Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014).
- The local authority is satisfied that such an arrangement is not inconsistent with the young person's well-being.
- A proportion of the allowance paid to the When I'm Ready carer will be paid for by the local authority.

2.5 As long as the young person fits the above criteria, a When I'm Ready arrangement can be made regardless of whether they are in full or part time education, or training, or employment, or none of these activities. However, there will be an expectation that any young person accessing When I'm Ready will commit to undertaking skills development for the future.

3. Our When I'm Ready ambition

3.1 We believe that every young person has the right to a stable, loving family to care for them and to promote and support their physical, intellectual, and emotional development so that they can achieve their full potential. This ethos informs all our work within Child and Family Services. We are committed to providing high quality support for each child and their family, considering a wide range of options to reach positive outcomes for them. In our When I'm Ready work, this means that we provide as much support as we can to both the young person and their provider within a When I'm Ready arrangement, to ensure their needs are met, and to help to ensure that these arrangements are a success.

4. Developing our When I'm Ready practice

4.1 We are committed to the ongoing service analysis and development of our When I'm Ready offer. We will continue to work with, listen and respond to the views and feedback of young people, families and When I'm Ready providers to ensure that we are meeting their needs. As part of this commitment, in order to set and manage the expectations of those entering, or thinking about entering, into When I'm Ready arrangements, we will aim provide total clarity in relation to what these arrangements involve. This would mean covering the following areas of When I'm Ready arrangements:

- What is expected of young people and their When I'm Ready providers as part of their When I'm Ready arrangements. We need to clearly outline the level of care that the provider is expected to provide to the young person, as well as the increased and continually increasing level of independence that is expected of the young person. By outlining the role of each party involved in the When I'm Ready arrangement, we will help each party to

understand what to expect from the arrangement, and this will in turn help them to understand how a When I'm Ready arrangement differs from a foster placement.

- The financial arrangements of When I'm Ready and how these are different to that of a foster placement. A robust financial policy is vital for achieving this, along with clear and consistent messaging being provided to prospective stakeholders prior to them using the service.
- The support that is available for young people with additional needs and/or looking to access transition services.
- The outlining of clear engagement pathways to ensure that young people are given a voice within When I'm Ready, and that all stakeholders will feel assured that their views and feedback will be appreciated and responded to in an understanding, empathetic manner.
- As well as addressing these points, we will also need to monitor and maintain a good method of data recording around When I'm Ready to ensure that we understand how well our current processes and measures are working, and where they can be improved, and to help us to establish new, better measures as we look to continually improve our service.

5. Integrated Assessment Implications

5.1 The Council is subject to the Equality Act (Public Sector Equality Duty and the socio-economic duty), the Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 and the Welsh Language (Wales) Measure, and must in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Acts.
- Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
- Deliver better outcomes for those people who experience socio-economic disadvantage.
- Consider opportunities for people to use the Welsh language.
- Treat the Welsh language no less favourably than English.
- Ensure that the needs of the present are met without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

5.2 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 mandates that public bodies in Wales must carry out sustainable development. Sustainable development means the process of improving the economic, social, environmental and cultural well-being of Wales by taking action, in accordance with the sustainable development principle, aimed at achieving the 'well-being goals'.

5.3 Our Integrated Impact Assessment (IIA) process ensures we have paid due regard to the above. It also takes into account other key issues and priorities, such as poverty and social exclusion, community cohesion, carers, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC) and Welsh language.

5.4 An IIA Screening Form has been completed with the agreed outcome that a full IIA report was not required. The IIA screening process outlined there is no reputational risk to the council or any negative impact on any protected characteristics. The impacts are positive. (Appendix B – Integrated Impact Assessment Screening).

6. Legal Implications

6.1 There are no legal implications.

7. Financial Implications

7.1 There are no financial implications.

Background papers: None.

Appendices:

Appendix A – When I'm Ready Policy 2023 (draft)

Appendix B – IIA Screening Form.