



## Report of the Cabinet Member for Care Services

### Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel – 1 November 2022

#### RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES

<b>Purpose</b>	To provide an overview of the plans to develop in-house residential care services for children, along with an update on Ty Nant.
<b>Content</b>	<p>This report provides an overview on the development of a vision and a strategy for the expansion of Children’s Residential Care Services</p> <p>It outlines a definition of a ‘placement’ and highlights the drivers for change and how they align to local, regional and national priorities with clear local service aims.</p> <p>It will provide a brief overview of the current homes in our portfolio and will address how we intend to develop these provisions in line with the CIW Regulation and Inspection of Social Care Wales Act (RISCA).</p> <p>The report will highlight challenges and proposed next steps in the development of the service and also provide an overview of the continued progress of Ty Nant and recent feedback from one of the young people who currently resides there.</p>
<b>Councillors are being asked to</b>	Consider the report as part of their routine review of performance and improvement in Child and Family Services.
<b>Lead Councillor(s)</b>	Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services
<b>Lead Officer(s)</b>	Dave Howes – Director of Social Services Julie Davies – Head of Child and Family
<b>Report Author</b>	<a href="mailto:Chris.griffiths@swansea.gov.uk">Chris.griffiths@swansea.gov.uk</a>

## **The Development of Residential Children's in-house Care**

### **1. Context**

- 1.1 A 'placement' is the term used to describe an arrangement by which the Council places a child or young person in a suitable home environment in order to safeguard and promote their well-being. For the context of this report a 'placement' will refer purely to residential childcare home for children and young people.
- 1.2 In deciding how best to accommodate a child, the Council must always be guided by its principal duty to safeguard and promote the child's well-being (section 78 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act).
- 1.3 In some situations, the particular needs of a child or young person will require a residential placement. This must always be seen as a positive choice and not simply as a fall-back if searches for a foster placement are unsuccessful.
- 1.4 Such placements are most likely to be suitable for an older child, and the child's wishes and feelings, together with a thorough assessment of the child's needs, are likely to identify those for whom this will be the best choice. In most situations the preference is to work proactively to achieve a successful return to a family/foster placement within appropriate timescales.
- 1.5 High-quality placements promote the child's sense of belonging by offering a consistent parenting style that combines clear guidance and boundary setting with emotional warmth, nurturing and good physical care. This should be the standard for all our placements whether they are provided in-house or externally.
- 1.6 Feedback from children and young people suggests they have strong feelings about being cared for by privately owned organisations that make a profit from their experience of being in care. The Welsh Government does not believe there should be a market for care for children, or that profits should be made from caring for children facing particular challenges in their lives and intends to bring forward legislation to end this.

### **2. Local & National Drivers**

- 2.1 Section 75 of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act 2014 ("the Act") imposes a general duty upon the Council to secure sufficient placements in its area in order to meet the needs of the children it looks after, in so far as is reasonably practicable. In pursuit of this duty, the Council must consider the number and range of accommodation providers in the area that is thought to be sufficient

The Part 6 Code of Practice (Looked After and Accommodated Children) states that local authorities must consider the benefits of having a number of providers, offering a range of accommodation to meet different needs.

## 2.2 Welsh Government's Programme for Government

One of the Welsh Government's priorities is to eliminate profit from children's residential care. This is being driven at pace with the Welsh Government consultation document expecting responses by 7<sup>th</sup> November. This is having an immediate impact on an already challenging placement market with some providers making the decision to pause planned developments and/or withdraw from offering placements to Welsh children.

## 2.3 West Glamorgan Transformation Programme - Safe Accommodation Strategy sets out;

(a). To create a regional strategic approach to supporting children and young people with complex needs to live well in safe and secure accommodation that meets their needs, one that is focused on prevention and early intervention.

(b). To develop proposals for our long-term accommodation profile across the region that ensures the appropriate capacity to provide secure accommodation for children and young people with complex needs (feeding proposals into the regional capital investment plan where appropriate).

## 2.4 Local Strategies that are relevant include Swansea's Strategy to Support Children and Young People to Remain Living Safely at Home (formerly called Safe LAC reduction strategy) and our Placement Commissioning Strategy.

### 3. Children's Residential Service Aims

- Provide, safe, stable and suitable living accommodation to meet a wide range of wellbeing needs
- Improve wellbeing and stability and support in a trauma informed environment
- To live close to home (where safe to do so), also to reduce out of county placements, unregulated provision and escalation of need and risk.
- Improve longer term outcomes for children and young people in adulthood

### 4. Current Home Portfolio – see slide show presentation

#### 4.1 **Home 1**, is a CIW Registered home, in a semi-rural location with 3 bedrooms. Currently in its Statement of Purpose (SoP) it is registered as 'Short-term' (up to 3 months) placement. We are frequently having

to extend some placement move-ons due to the lack of suitable placements. Over the last 6 months we have had 2 young people that have exceeded the 12 week timescale – which we will be reviewing during our next SoP consultation. We currently have 2 older teenagers residing with us at this home.

- 4.2 **Home 2**, is in the Initial stages of Registration with CIW. It is situated in an urban area. It is a 3-bedroom property, however due to the requirements (minimum bedroom sizes) within RISCA, we are only able to provide a 1 bedroom offer. The home will provide a short to medium term placement (up to 6 months) and is perfectly suited to support semi-independent living and/or as a transition into supported accommodation. There is currently an older teenager residing at this property.
- 4.3 **Home 3**, is one of our new properties, we received the keys in late June. The property is in a semi-rural area and is a 3 bedroom semi-detached property, which is currently adjoined to home 4, with internal access. The plan for this home, after adaptations, is for it to provide a 1 bed, semi-secure offer. The property will support step up/step down from secure accommodation, meeting the requirements of children and young people who have more complex needs. This is likely to be over a medium term offer (up to 6 months). An initial brief has been submitted and is currently with our surveying team.
- 4.4 **Home 4**, is the adjoining semi-detached property. This is also a 3 bedroom home. The plan for this home is to support emergency/crisis placements for children and young people. In these situations, the placement move is not likely to be as planned as we would expect and usually needs to be available, with appropriately trained and the right number of staffing levels, to support the children and young people in very short time scales. This home would provide a 2-bedroom offer, over a short term period.
- 4.5 As we develop our in-house offer – portfolio growth and vision - we will be reviewing all of the statement of purposes for all of the homes. This will be done in consultation with children, young people, families and with all professional partners and stakeholders.

## 5. Challenges

- 5.1 Eliminate Profit – Welsh Government – explained above (2.2)
- 5.2 Break-down and Complexity of Need  
Increased awareness as well as a higher complexity in the presentation of children, young people and family's wellbeing needs, impacts significantly on safety. The rise in parent's having from poor mental health, domestic violence and substance misuse, significantly impacts on their ability to parent safely and, in turn, impacts on the safety and

wellbeing of children and young people who are in these environments and witness these behaviours.

The increased risk in child and adolescent trauma and child exploitation is significant in the rise of children and young people self-harming and/or having suicidal ideation and / or substance misuse. These are some of the contributing factors in families and foster parents, feeling they are unable to meet the needs of the ones they care for. This can result in family and placement breakdowns.

5.3 When considering which placement is in the child's best interests, the Council must have regard to all the circumstances, including:

- if it meets the needs of the child as set out in their care and support plan, and (for young people aged 16 and over) the outcomes set out in the pathway plan;
- does not disrupt the child's education or training (in line with the Council's duty under section 78(2) to promote the child's educational achievement);
- enables the child to live together with any siblings who are also being looked after by the Council;
- provides accommodation which is suitable to the child's needs if the child is disabled;
- the views, wishes and feelings of the child (in accordance with the child's age and understanding);
- the views, wishes and feelings of parents or other person with parental responsibility (as appropriate);
- the child's religious persuasion, racial origin, and cultural and linguistic background
- the child's sexuality and gender identity;
- any disability or sensory impairment, including any emotional, behavioural and mental health needs;
- contact arrangement with family; and
- arrangements to spend time with friends and maintain sporting, social and leisure pursuits.

The Council has a duty to ensure the placement is made within its own boundaries (section 81(9) of the Act), unless it is not reasonably practical to do so or there are over-riding reasons for placing a child out of area.

5.4 There has been significant increase in the demand for emergency/crisis children's residential placements over the last 12 months. There are many different reasons for these requests (some outlined 5.2) but with demand outstripping supply, children's care homes are a seller's market and this impacts on the prices charged to local authorities. The availability and choice of placement that genuinely meets the needs of children aged 11 and over with complex needs is particularly difficult.

- 5.5 The process of sourcing, purchasing and the development of potential residential children's homes is complex and takes time. There are many interdependencies that can create delays and blockages. All of which impact on the growth of an in-house offer
- 5.6 Recruitment into Residential Child Care Officer (RCCO) roles has also been a challenge. In order to effectively drive forward the development of in-house residential provision, we have to increase our RCCO staffing capacity to meet the required need. An additional 15 fixed term contract (12 month) posts (to compliment the current 15 existing RCCO posts) were approved in March 2022. Since that date we have had a rolling, external advert, in an attempt, to recruit into these positions. The recruitment drive has not been successful, and, to date, we have only employed 4 staff into the RCCO posts.
- 5.7 Due to staff shortages we have utilised external agency staff to ensure safety and staffing ratios are adequate. As well as this additional cost, the pay difference between agency and our staff (£3-4 p/h) is a concern, as it impacts on staff morale and wellbeing. It is also a contributory factor in the poor uptake of our recruitment drive, as the RCCO salary is not competitive in the current job market.

## **6. Next Steps**

- Regrading and new Recruitment drive for the RCCOs
- Recruiting and implementing a management structure to support team and service growth
- Sign-off of partner and stakeholder communication plan
- Development of opportunities for care experienced children and young people to have their input into each of the development stages
- Integrated Impact Assessment, involving the local community and stakeholders
- Planning and development of buildings and identifying an additional property

## **7. Ty Nant – Areas for continued development,**

- 7.1 CIW visited Ty Nant during June 2022 as part of their annual inspection and follow up programme. They highlighted the following areas for further development and recognised the improvements made since the full inspection in May 2021
- Impact assessment and matching process
  - Admission paperwork
  - Staff supervision and training
  - Employment, education and training offer for young people
  - Activity and food offer
  - Review of the 'Statement of Purpose'

- 7.2 As a result, these areas were added to a comprehensive action plan, which was produced by the management team and has been the main focus of their development work. We anticipate a full inspection in December 2022.
- 7.3 As part of our Regulation 73 requirements, we are required to internally review our regulated provisions, at least every 3 months. During these reviews, feedback is requested from all of the children, young people, families, partners and stakeholders. A sample of the feedback from one of young people at Ty Nant from the last visit;

*AA (anonymised)*

*"I am happy staying at ty nant. The staff are looking after me. They nag me to try different foods."*

*"I have a busy timetable, but I don't attend it all."*

*"I can't wake up sometimes when they knock my door in the mornings"*

*"I go to down2earth and the man said 'I was a natural'. I was using all of the tools. I did a test at the end and got them all right as well"*

*"We need a trampoline, one that's in the ground, and somewhere to sit out the back garden. It's boggy now 'cos it's raining'.*

AA talked about her off road driving experiences and how much she was enjoying them. AA has another one booked in for next week. AA also said she was enjoying down2earth (D2E) and described the tools and experiences she has had over the past few weeks. The instructor at D2E was so impressed by her that he gave her a test at the end of her session. AA got all of the answers correct and was visibly proud of this. The test can be used as part of a unit towards a qualification (Health and Safety) and AA was really pleased about this.

AA takes part in a variety of planned sessions throughout her week which include weekly life skills sessions, direct work in line with their plan and goals, physical activities, direct sessions with support services, volunteering at a greyhound sanctuary, family time and free time. They have a session on a Sunday whereby they plan their timetable for the week ahead.

Staff report that there is about a 70-75% success rate with engagement with their timetable over the weeks, with free time always being taken up (100%) and direct work and life skills work estimated 2 out of 4, over the week (50%).

- 7.4 Following the next full inspection (expected in December 2022) a report can be brought back to a future Scrutiny Panel meeting.