



Report of the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel –
2nd August 2023

RESIDENTIAL CARE SERVICES

Purpose	To provide an overview of the plans to develop in-house residential care services for children, along with an update on Ty Nant.
Content	<p>This report provides an overview on the development of Children’s Residential Care Services</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 provide an overview of the continued progress of Ty Nant and recent feedback from children/young people, families, stakeholders and Inspection visits</p>
Councillors are being asked to	Consider the report as part of their routine review of performance and improvement in Child and Family Services.
Lead Councillor(s)	Cllr Louise Gibbard, Cabinet Member for Care Services
Lead Officer(s)	Dave Howes – Director of Social Services Julie Davies – Head of Child and Family
Report Author	Chris.griffiths@swansea.gov.uk

The Development of Residential Children's In-House Care

1. Children's Residential Service Aims

- Provide, safe, stable and suitable living accommodation to meet a wide range of needs
- Improve wellbeing and stability for children and young people and support them using trauma informed approaches.
- 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.

2. Current Home Portfolio

2.1 **Home 1** is a Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Registered home, in a semi-rural location with 3 bedrooms. We have recently revised the Statement of Purpose, so it more accurately reflects the care and support we provide for the children and young people in our care. The building is in the middle of having a cosmetic upgrade. We currently have 3 older teenagers residing with us at this home.

- Proposed development of 2 bungalows on site at Home 1.
- To prepare young people from the ages of 16 and above, who are care experienced and who are supported by Swansea local authority, to transition into independent living.
- Move-on bungalows allow young people to safely progress into independence and have the added benefit of a staffing compliment on site, if they need any further support and guidance.
- Young people will have continued access to a range of support.
- Learning and employment/training/education
- Contact with family/significant others when safe to do so.
- Decision-making skills
- An understanding of actions and consequences to encourage behavioural change.
- Citizenship and importance of having 'your say'
- Self-worth and confidence building

2.2 **Home 2** is in the final stages of registration with CIW. It is situated in an urban area. It is a 3-bedroom property. The home will provide a medium to long term placement 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.

Proposed rear extension to accommodate recommendations by Care Inspectorate Wales registration team. This would include a new office space and bathroom. This is in the initial design stage and if agreed, would increase our bedroom offer. (Registration is not dependant on the plan to extend)

- 2.3 **Home 3** remains in the planning stages after multiple reworkings. 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. Community meetings have taken place and have supported further understanding. These meetings are on-going.
- 2.4 **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.
- 2.5 **Home 5** Proposed 4 - 5 bed (unit) offer in a semi-rural location in Swansea. To support children and young people aged from 12 to 18 years old, from the local area and surrounding region.

The home will support children and young people who have experienced trauma linked to some form of abuse and or neglect. The child/young person(s) may have experienced very little stability in their life and a number of placements moves. The impact of the child/young person's experiences may contribute to increased anxiety levels, confused identity, and a lack of self-confidence.

To best meet these needs, **Home 5** will provide long term accommodation, utilising a therapeutic approach. Parent And Child (PAC) key workers (Internal Therapeutic Service - ITS) will work alongside the children, young people and staff to embed therapeutic approaches and will provide advice, guidance and identify further training needs, where appropriate. The PAC workers will have clinical supervision from their supervising clinical psychologist.

Residential childcare officers will offer support in all aspects of the child/young person's care in all of the homes.

Support includes:

- Participation in recreational or educational activities

- Emotional support
- Support to manage and understand behaviours
- Support to attend medical appointments and to manage any ongoing health conditions.
- Support with food preparation and nutrition
- Managing finances
- Assistance with medical needs and medication
- Maintaining and developing relationships
- Support to make positive choices.
- Readyng children/young people for their next placement, in accordance to their Care and Support Plan, so they can enjoy permanence.
- Support with engaging children/young people in learning to support their future needs.

2.6 As we develop our in-house offer, we will continue to review 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.

3. **Challenges**

3.1 Eliminate Profit – Welsh Government.

Welsh Government have developed a clear commitment to ‘eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after’ as a key component of a radical agenda for children’s social services. The aim is to ensure that public money invested in the care of children looked after does not profit individuals or corporate entities, but instead is spent on children’s services to deliver better experiences and outcomes for children and young people, addressing service development and improvement, and further professional development. As of April 1st, 2026, any new residential homes in Wales will only be able to register as ‘not-for-profit’. 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.

3.2 Emergency Bespoke Placements.

This programme of change takes place within the context of placement and system pressures which feature the development of bespoke placement arrangements for children and young people that operate without Regulation and Inspection Social Care Act (RISCA) registration.

There continues to be an increase in the demand for these types of provisions. There are many different reasons for these requests and again demand continues to outstrip 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. Children and young people's experience in these placements are varied. They are typically supported by our in-house staff relief pool and social care agency staff. Children and young people can often be moved two or three times while in this type of provision and have multiple different adults supporting them.

3.4 Purchase and development.

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 the speed of growth for our in-house offer.

3.5 Recruitment

The staffing levels have again improved since the last report. We have employed a new Manager at Ty Nant, and a new Assistant Manager to support Home 2. We have increased the number of Residential Childcare Officers (RCCO) employing 5 full time and 5 part time posts. However, recruitment is still very slow. We see a high number of applicants, but very few, an average of 17%, that meet the minimum criteria for interview. As planned RCCO post was regraded and implemented in January 2023. The regrading, it was hoped, would make the role more competitive in the current job market, but as stated, the number of quality applicants remains a concern. We still have agency staff supporting the rota, as well as relief staff, however, this has reduced, and will continue to reduce, with the introduction of new employees.

4. **Next Steps**

- Continue recruitment drive for the RCCO posts.
- Continue recruitment to support management structure.
- Planning and development of current homes
- Identifying and purchasing additional properties
- Continue to develop 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.
- Continue work with CIW on OWRs
- Continue to raise quality assurance and improve children and young people's experiences while in OWR provisions.

5. Ty Nant – Overview & Updates

5.1 The average age of the young people is fifteen and they ranged between fourteen and seventeen. The proximity of ages is a positive

and an indicator that young people of very different ages have not been placed alongside one another inappropriately.

- 5.2 Five young people have been white, British young people and one young person was Afghan. The five young people spoke English as their preferred language. One spoke Dari, however, was able to speak limited English, and was supported through a translator. None of them had a disability and none were practicing a religion.
- 5.3 The average placement duration is 14.6 weeks (102 days). However, it is important that placements last as long as they remain in the best interests of the young person, and they should not be curtailed because of targets or notional ideas about the right placement duration. Nevertheless, it is important that placement duration is monitored closely, and clear care and support plans are in place.
- 5.4 Every young person is now allocated three keyworkers when they enter Ty Nant. These members of staff have additional responsibilities to ensure the Personal Plan is taken forward and the young people are involved in the process and their views are captured. Keyworkers now have more of a coordination role as well as an engagement role. They look to identify the appropriate direct work and plan who should complete it with the young person and when.
- 5.6 Young people continue to have a full range of activities to choose from which support their wellbeing development and fit around their other commitments, such as contact time and direct session work. The options are divided into daily activities, which are then sub divided into sessions that support their education, health, fitness, life-skills etc.
- 5.7 Young people's feedback

"I feel staff can be too 'parental' in some situations. They feel they need to 'mother' us."

"Yes, staff make me feel very safe."

"My key workers are S and R. They help me with direct work and life-skills. My relationship with key workers are okay. My number 1 and number 2 are J and C as they are very funny, talkative, supportive and are interested in me."

*** recently took part in our childcare officer interviews. They interviewed 7 applicants. They commented that they enjoyed the process and met new friendly faces.

"I found it helpful as I now know the process for council interviews". When asked if he would be interested in working in residential care and

would he apply for a childcare officer role in the future, he replied *“definitely not. I couldn’t put up with the kids.”*

5.8 Family Feedback

*“We are extremely happy in the way that ** is cared for and looked after. We feel she’s really, really well supported and cared for. We feel we’re in a safe cocoon, in a really good place. We know she’s being taken care of, it’s been massive for us. We’ve been able to live a normal life alongside her, supporting her with the team. It’s been huge for us. We are so, so grateful.”*

“There is 100% commitment. We always feel the same level of security and interest and cooperation with all the staff. I just think it’s an amazing place.”

*“I know ** feels safe and she knows she is cared for.”*

“We have never felt judged at all. Never felt awkward, which can easily happen in our circumstance. We have never felt anything negative.”

5.9 Stakeholder Feedback

“I’m kept up to date and views are passed on to me (Social Worker) so his voice is being heard. Trying to prepare him with independence. Realistic wellbeing goals. It is evident that key workers want to do the best for him. Key workers are responsive and nurturing in their approach.”

*“It’s been calm and welcoming. Staff are warm and friendly and approachable and always talk positively to **. Any sensitive matters are discussed with me in private before we speak to **.”*

5.10 Staff feedback

“I only started here in November, and I was really made to feel welcome. All the staff team are amazing and always there to answer any questions I may have. I feel totally supported in my job by staff and management.”

“Now that the teams are established with a manager and ATL in each home I feel that we can all start to work in a more cohesive way with clear leadership.”

6 Ty Nant – Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Inspection feedback and areas for continued development

6.1 CIW completed their focussed re-inspection in November 2022

- 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'

6.2 They found that the home had made '*significant improvements*' from when they visited in June 2022. Extracts from the report include:

At the last inspection four Priority Action (non-compliance) Notices (PANs) were issued to the service. All PANs have been addressed but a new area for improvement has been identified in relation to provider assessments. The service has developed comprehensive impact assessments to consider matching and compatibility of young people. Personal plans have significantly improved, they are co-produced and provide guidance for care staff, to enable them to keep young people safe, promote their well-being and ensure positive outcomes. The quality of supervision has also improved and ensures care staff have the support, guidance, and training to meet the complex needs of young people.

Young people's personal development and outcomes are supported by their personal plans and progress towards achieving outcomes is measured. The service provider has developed and improved their personal plans, they are concise, clear and contain relevant information required by regulation.

Young people told us they are "happy" in Ty Nant, they "love" the care staff, they are "understanding" and "do their best to keep us safe". One young person told us "It's been terrible anywhere else I've been, I'm making progress, it's (Ty Nant) the only place I've ever liked". Young people told us the home rules have become firmer, but they know they are fair and good for them. Young people are valued and treated with care and respect.