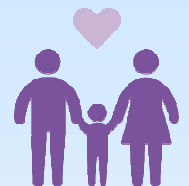


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1. Foreword

“This Children Looked After Strategic Framework outlines the vision, aims and principles to support the children and young people who are looked after by Powys County Council. We want to ensure the best possible outcomes for children and their families; by working in partnership we can deliver the services children and young people need to live safe, happy, healthy and successful lives” – **County Councillor Rachel Powell, Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture**





2. Introduction

“We will have the child at the heart of everything we do and every decision we make”



The purpose of this strategic framework is to bring together all partners with a role in improving outcomes for children looked after. We are proud of our achievements over recent years however recognise there remain a number of key challenges and areas for improvements.

For our children looked after we strive to be excellent Corporate Parents, working with them to raise their aspirations to achieve their potential and ensure their voice is heard throughout the duration of their journey through care. We will do this by ensuring that our children looked after have all the opportunities we would give to our own children through good access to high quality education, health, play and leisure, and social care services.

The decision to look after any child or young person is one that we take very seriously, and one taken only after all appropriate options for children to be cared for within their own families has been exhausted.

We know that transition into adulthood is not always easy and for care leavers the transition can be more complex. We know how important it is that our children looked after are supported into adulthood in a seamless manner and provided with progressive and ongoing interventions. We want our care leavers to be confident and be able to access support and ensure that a majority are engaged in education, employment or training and have the opportunity to live successful adult lives.



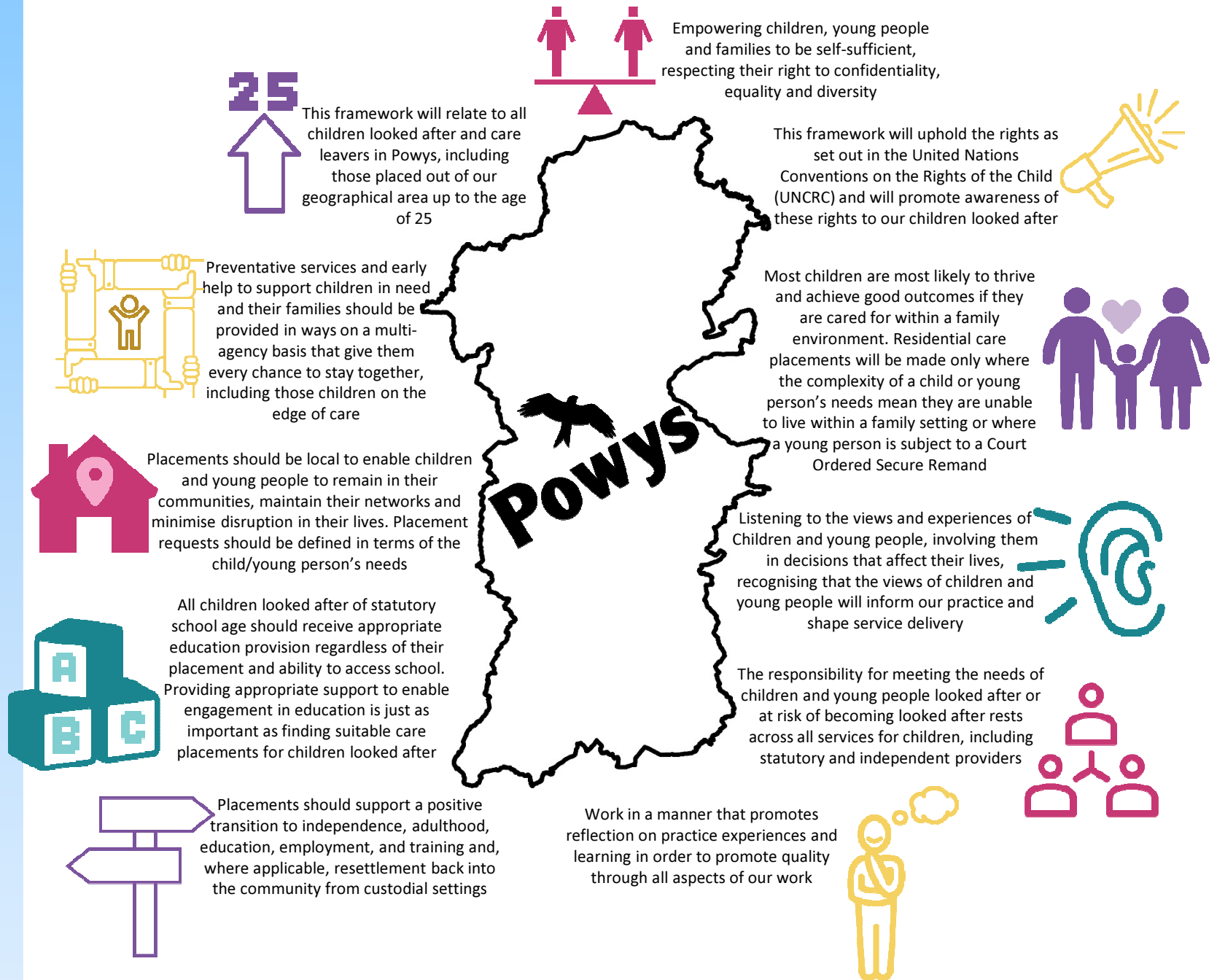
3. Powys Pledge to our Children Looked After

Powys' pledge to children looked after has been developed collaboratively with Powys Youth Forum, engagement with children looked after and foster carers, as well as professionals across Powys County Council and the Corporate Parenting Board.





4. Principles



4. Signs of Safety Principles

Signs of Safety is the underpinning strengths-based approach adopted in our work with children and families at Powys County Council. It supports our aspiration to achieve permanency through its emphasis on working collaboratively and transparently with families and can act as the catalyst that initiates behaviour change by families.



Principles – Underpinning the Approach

Working relationships are fundamental, with families and other professionals

Relationships must be forged and maintained in the face of the coercive nature of child protection intervention, biases towards pre-judgment of families and different perspectives of professionals.

Stance of critical inquiry – always being prepared to admit you may have it wrong

As Eileen Munro observes, “the major source of error in child protection is not being prepared to admit you may have it wrong”. Child protection investigations need to take a questioning approach and remain open minded. They cannot be the formulation of a hypothesis and fitting the evidence to support that hypothesis.

Landing grand aspirations in everyday practice

Families and front line practitioners are the arbiters of whether practice works. This “practice led evidence” has informed the development of *Signs of Safety* and continues to be the engine of learning for practitioners and to drive innovation and evolution of the approach.

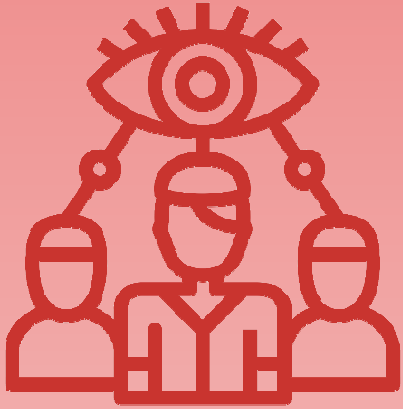
Disciplines – guiding workers’ behaviour and application of the approach

Clear distinction between past harm (the harm that has actually occurred, not what we are frightened about), ***future danger*** (on the basis of the past harm, what child protection authorities are worried could occur if there is no change in the families’ behaviour), ***and complicating factors*** (the circumstances of the family that lie behind the neglect or abuse, most commonly such as mental health issues, drug and alcohol abuse and family violence).

Clear distinction between strengths (positive aspects of the family such as their love for the children) ***and protection*** (actual behaviours that demonstrate a capacity to protect the children, such as removing dangerous adults from the household, or occasions when the parents felt as if they could but did not harm the child).

Plain language that can be readily understood by families, in all verbal and written communication.

Statements focusing on specific observable behaviours, avoiding meaning laden, imprecise and poorly understood labels and diagnostic descriptors.



5. Vision and Strategic Aims



“Working together to ensure that children and young people in Powys are safe, healthy, resilient, learning, fulfilled and have their voices heard, valued and acted on.”



To ensure that the overall Children Looked After Strategic Framework remains coherent and relevant, it is aligned to the core aims developed within Childrens Services and the Improvement Programme:

1. **To support families to stay together** and reduce the need for children to be looked after, by focusing on services which provide timely help, build on family’s strengths and prevent greater problems arising.
2. **To manage risk confidently and effectively when providing support to families where children and young people need to be safeguarded or they are judged to be on the ‘edge of care’** by making sure that their needs are accurately assessed and met effectively, with positive outcomes for them. This includes supporting families to avoid children becoming accommodated unnecessarily and by making private arrangements within their wider family networks so that children become looked after by the Council only where this is clearly in their best interests.
3. **To provide and commission a flexible and affordable mix of high quality placements for children who are looked after** to meet the diverse range of their needs and circumstances.
4. **To give children and young people clearly planned journeys through care and into adulthood** which remain focused on achieving care and support plans, prevent drift, enable them to be reunited with family and friends where possible, have stable placements.



6. National Context



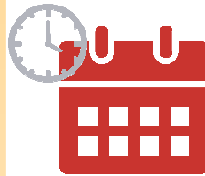
3 in 10 children in Wales are living in poverty



1 in 10 children in Wales will have a diagnosable mental health condition



Around **1 in 5** children in Wales have been exposed to domestic abuse



Every 4 hours a child or young person was brought into care in Wales last year



15% increase in children looked after in Wales since 2010, with a 5% increase on last year



149% increase in the number of court applications in Wales to remove children into care over the last nine years



12% increase in children on the Child Protection Register in Wales between 2010 - 2016

Fig 1.1 shows the projected population increase in the 0-17 age group across Wales over the next 20 years. Though we expect to see an initial sharp increase in this age group followed by a plateau, we can then expect to see a significant decline in the 0-17 population from 2028 to 2033, before reaching a further steady decline. Due to the initial sharp increase and the decrease to follow, the trend line remains fairly static with a marginal increase over the next 20 years.

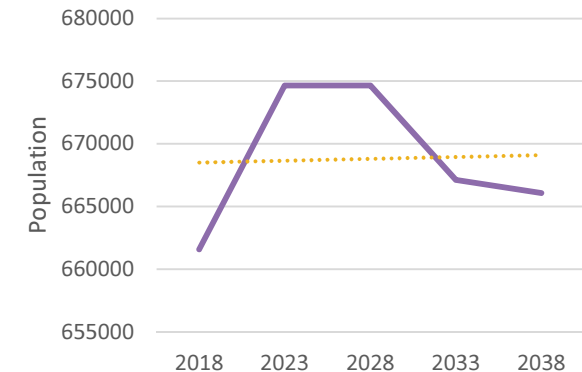


Fig 1.1: 0-17 population projections in Wales 2018 - 2038

Fig 1.2 demonstrates that in 2016-17, there were 5665 children looked after in Wales, an increase of 0.09% from 2015-16 where there were 5615. In 2016, there were 18,990 children in need in Wales, a 6.08% decrease from 2014. The overall 0-17 population in Wales decreased by 0.06% from 629,609 in 2014 to 625,556 in 2016.

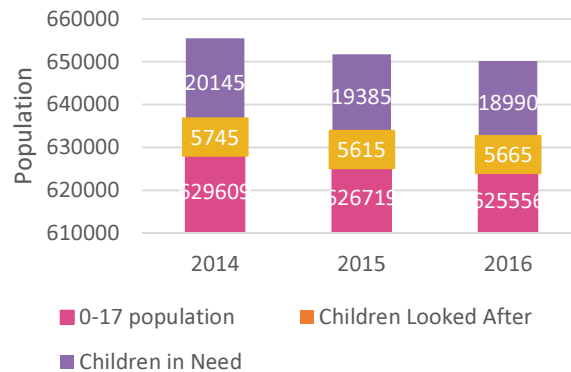


Fig 1.2: 0-17 population projections in Wales, children looked after in Wales, and children in need in Wales



There are around 630,000 children and young people living in Wales. This includes:

- Nearly 16,000 children receiving care and support from Welsh Councils
- Just under 6,000 who are looked after by Welsh Councils



7. Local Context

5197 square kilometres is the size of Powys, covering a quarter of Wales

23,990 people aged 3+ can speak, read and write Welsh

16% of households are thought to be in fuel poverty

85% of children in need in Powys have up to date dental checks (age 5+)

24,000 children and young people under the age of 18 live in Powys

17% of children in need in Powys have up to date immunisations

11% of pupils in full-time compulsory education are entitled to free school meals, compared with the Wales average of 17%

85% of children in need Powys have up to date child health surveillance checks (age 0-5)

210 children looked after in Powys as at 31/03/2018

22% of children in need in Powys are open to the Youth Offending Team

13 authorities border Powys, both in England and Wales

7 children in every school class of **30** will be experiencing poverty

5% of children in need in Powys have substance misuse problems

There is only **1** town with a population of over **10,000** in Powys

132,515 people living in Powys, **4.2%** of the Welsh total

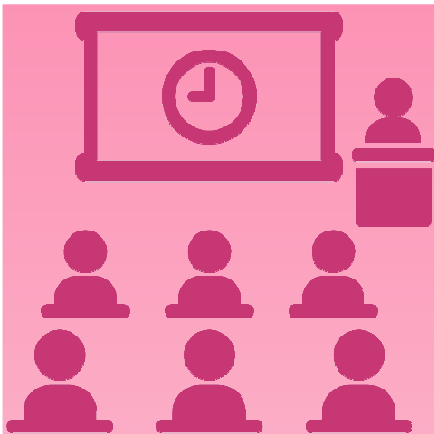
21.47% of children in Powys are considered to be living in poverty

11% of children in need in Powys have mental health problems

13% of children in need in Powys have an autistic spectrum disorder

This Children Looked After /Strategic Framework sits within a national and local context, is determined and driven by legislation and guidance, together with other strategies and plans of our partner agencies. We all have a statutory responsibility for achieving better outcomes for our children looked after. The geography and demography of Powys presents particular challenges in delivering services to our children looked after. Due to the vast area that Powys covers, children can be placed within county borders however this could be more than 50 miles away from a child's home; alternatively a child could be placed 5 miles away from home yet this could be in another county or country from the child's home community. The geography of Powys also poses challenges for workers undertaking statutory visits and reviews for our children looked after due to some of the long distances needing to be travelled.





7.1 Educational Attainment

The negative impact of poor educational attainment of children who are looked after can, and often does, result in these children failing to take advantage of opportunities to progress to post-16 education, training and meaningful employment. The majority of children who have spent time in the care system are from families who are unable to provide a level of care that meets their emotional and wellbeing needs. The life of a child looked after is often characterised by trauma and stress in their home life. The continuum of learning is often interrupted by foster placement changes and time out of school. This lack of continuity is why all relevant parts of the system must act in a coordinated and coherent way to ensure significant changes in the life of the child are minimised and managed sensitively, always with the child at the centre of decision making.

There is a clear link between lower educational achievement and general wellbeing. If learners are unhappy, anxious or have difficulty forming relationships they are unlikely to perform well and are likely to achieve poor outcomes. The most recent data in respect of educational attainment for our children looked after in Powys is detailed below, compared with all children across Powys from 2014 – 2017. It is concerning to see the stark difference between educational attainment figures for children looked after compared to all children in Powys.

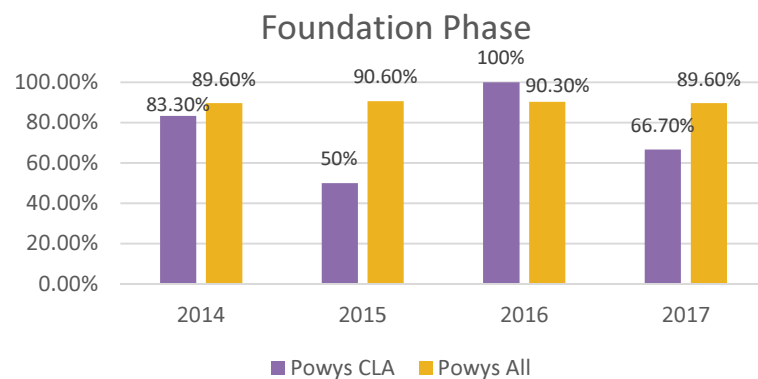


Fig 1.9: Children Looked After in Powys educational attainment compared with all Powys Children for Foundation Phase

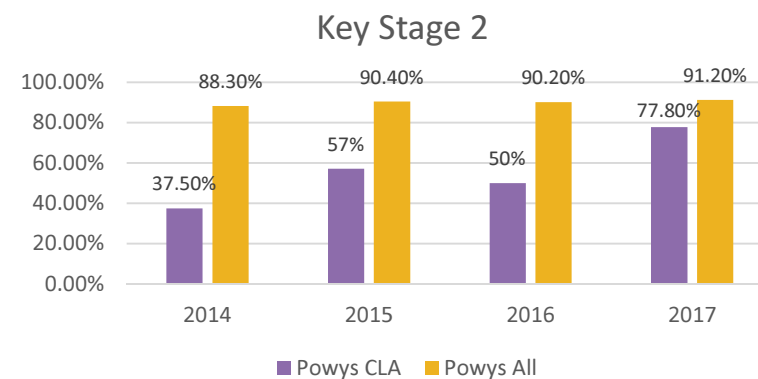


Fig 1.9: Children Looked After in Powys educational attainment compared with all Powys Children for Key Stage 2

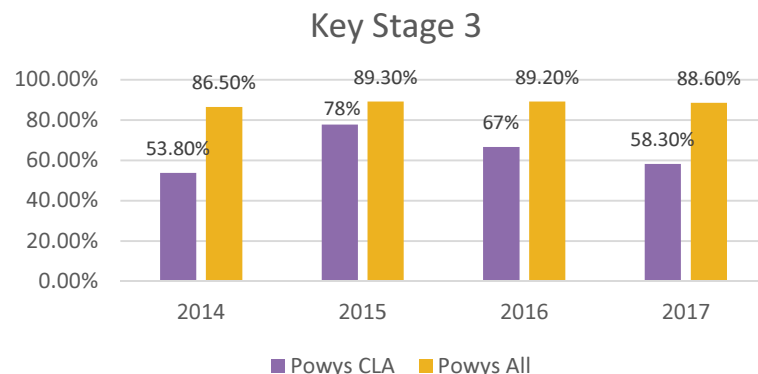


Fig 1.9: Children Looked After in Powys educational attainment compared with all Powys Children for Key Stage 3

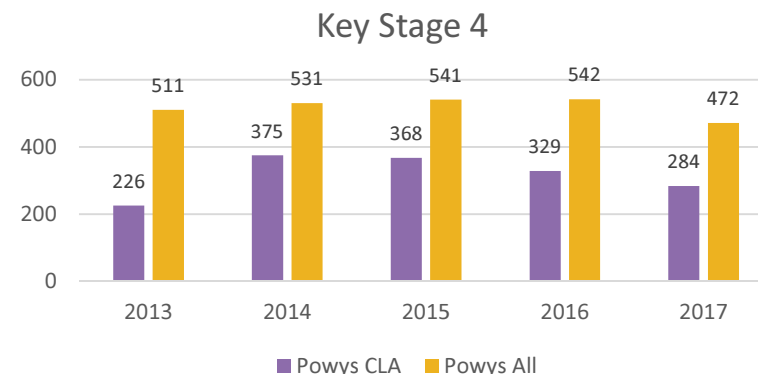


Fig 1.9: Children Looked After in Powys educational attainment compared with all Powys Children for Key Stage 4



7.2 Inspection of Powys Children's Services by Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)



Arolygiaeth Gofal
Cymru
Care Inspectorate
Wales



An inspection of Powys by the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) in July 2017 looked at the quality and effectiveness of Children's Services. It examined how children and families access help, care and support services and how well care and support is provided to meet their needs and keep children safe. The inspection also considered the quality of leadership, management and governance arrangements to develop and support services for children and young people.

In their report, CIW expressed serious concerns about leadership, management and practice in Powys Children's Services. The grounds for these concerns included:

The quality of professional practice

Staffing capacity and competence in front-line Children's Services teams

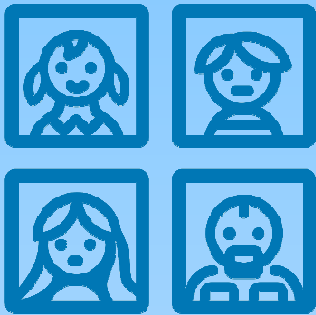
Lack of stability in management arrangements

Failings in corporate leadership

The Inspectorate concluded that, as a consequence, children were being placed at risk. The inspection report contained 29 recommendations (prioritised over one year) in respect of case management, staffing, leadership, assurance, workforce, and interagency/partnership working.

This children looked after Strategic Framework has been developed in response to the findings and recommendations of the CIW Inspection Report and form part of the actions within the corresponding Improvement Plan.





8. Profile of Children Looked After in Powys



Accurate management information and analysis underpins strategic development. We know a great deal about our looked after population, with the data detailed below as at 31st March 2018.

The reasons for children becoming looked after in Powys as at 31st March 2018 are categorised as:

- 150** abuse or neglect
- 4** disability or illness
- 9** parental disability or illness
- 23** family in acute stress
- 19** family dysfunction
- 1** socially unacceptable behaviour
- 1** absent parenting
- 3** adoption disruption

There are 210 children looked after in Powys. As shown in fig 1.4, the majority of those children come from the main towns in Powys where there are larger clusters of population; Welshpool, Newtown, Llandrindod Wells, Brecon and Ystradgynlais. There are 2 children with no fixed abode and therefore not come from any specific location within Powys. It is important to note that 42.58% of these children looked after are placed out of county.

Fig 1.5 below details the distance travelled per looked after child, from home postcode to placement postcode. The maximum distance a child is placed from home currently stands at 117 miles, with 71 children looked after placed 30 miles or more from home.

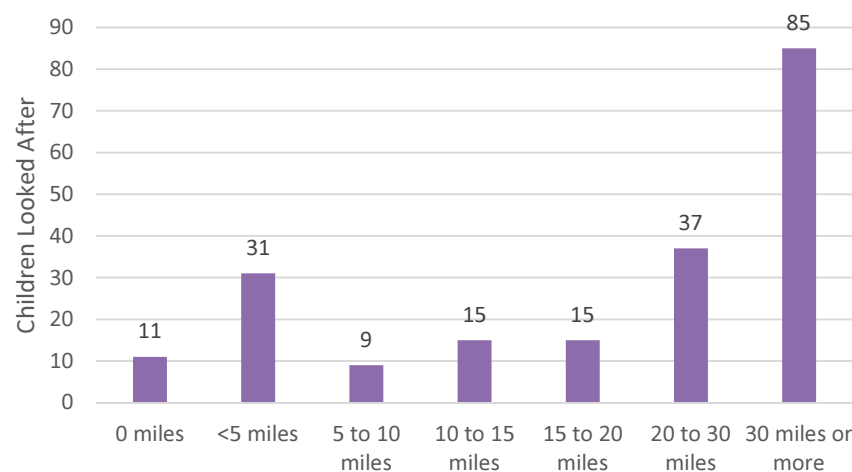


Fig 1.5 Distance travelled from home to placement

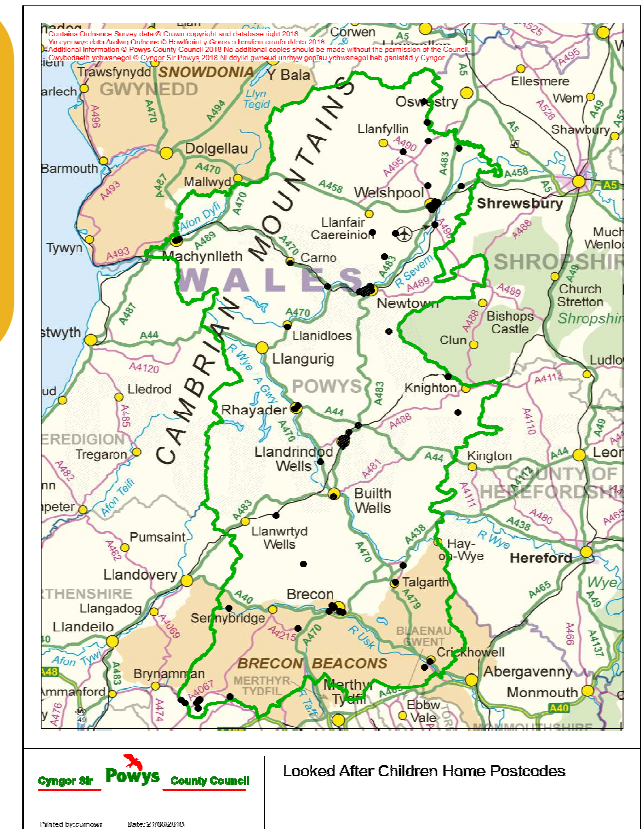


Fig 1.4 Powys Children Looked After home postcodes

8. Profile of Children Looked After in Powys

From our analysis in fig 1.6, we know that the numbers of children looked after in Powys have remained consistently higher than our comparator authorities for a number of years, with the exception of Carmarthenshire. When exploring the numbers of looked after children in Powys per 10,000 population in fig 1.7, it is still evident that Powys has less children looked after than the Wales average, however has increased more rapidly per 10,000 population over the last 5 years than our comparator authorities. Despite this, fig 1.8 demonstrates that there has been a sharp increase in children looked after during the last financial year 2017-18. There has been an increase of 33% from 153 children looked after in 2012-13 to 210 in 2017-18. Additionally, this number has continued to increase significantly more recently, with 231 open children looked after cases as at 13th September 2018.

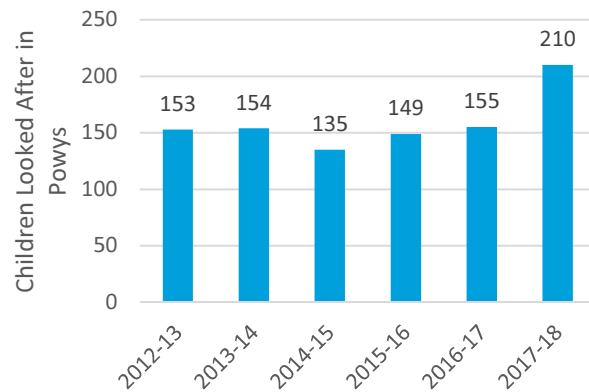


Fig 1.8: Total number of children looked after in Powys 2013-2018

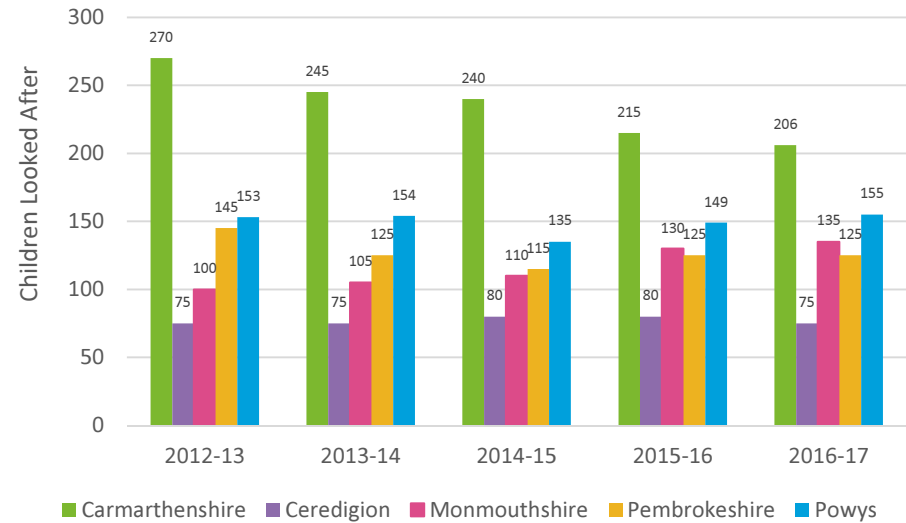


Fig 1.6: Children Looked After numbers in Powys and comparator authorities 2013-2017

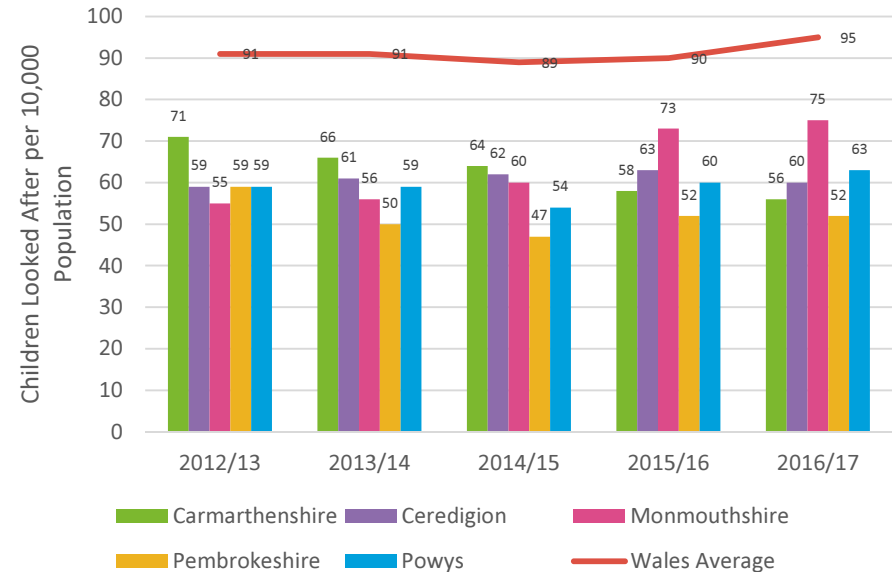


Fig 1.7: Children Looked After per 10,000 population in Powys and comparator authorities 2013-2017

8. Profile of Children Looked After in Powys

Fig 1.9 demonstrates the significant increase particularly in children looked after in the 0-4 and 10-15 age categories. There has been a 77% increase in children looked after aged 10-15 from 47 in 2012-13 to 83 in 2017-18. The children looked after aged 0-4 has seen a 1000% increase from 4 in 2012-13 to 44 in 2017-18.

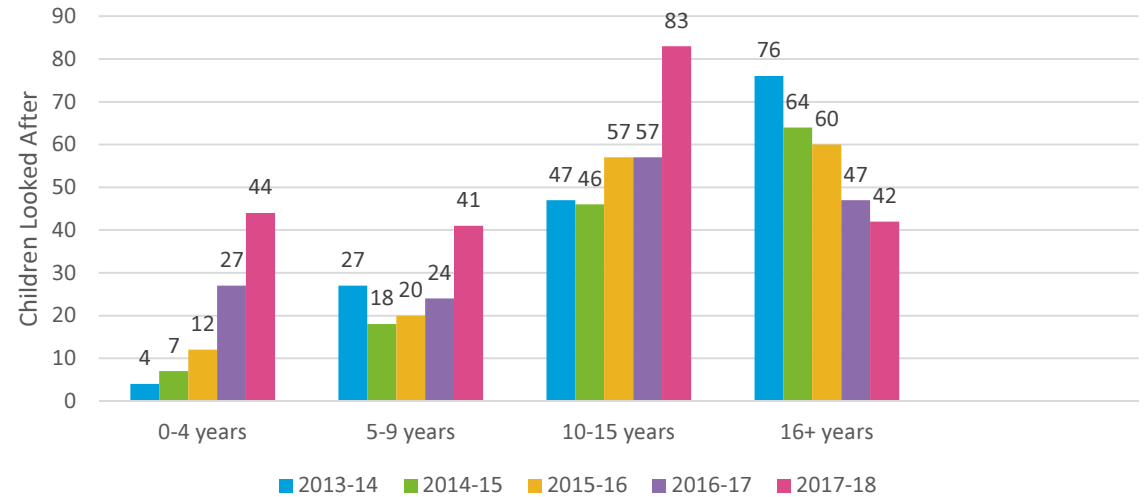


Fig 1.9: Children Looked After in Powys by age group 2014 - 2018

There is a concerning trend in respect of stability of placements for our children looked after within Powys. Fig 2.0 below shows a significant increase in the number of children looked after who have experienced 3 or more placement moves within 12 months, highlighting the requirement for more permanent and robust provision options within Powys. The average length of current placements for children looked after in Powys is _____ days. Fig 2.1 shows that 160 (76%) of children looked after were on the Child Protection Register prior to becoming looked after.

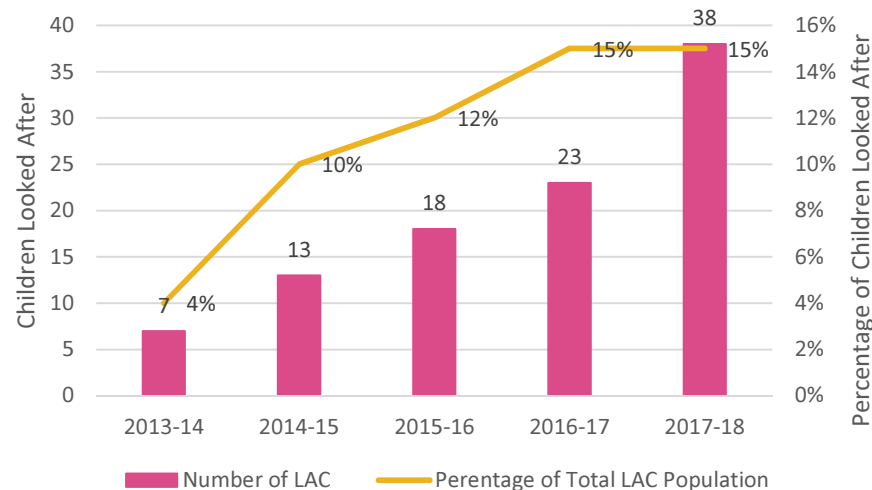


Fig .2.0 Children Looked After who have more than 3 placement moves per year 2014 - 2018

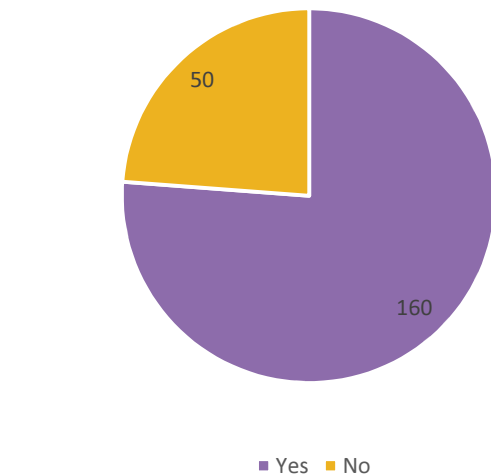


Fig 2.1 Children Looked After who have been on the Child Protection Register prior to becoming looked after

8. Profile of Children Looked After in Powys

Table 1 shows that:

- In 2020 we can expect to see a reduction in 15-17 year olds
- In 2025 we can expect to see an increase in those aged 13-17, but a sharp reduction in those aged 18
- In 2030 we can expect to see a general increase all ages but a sharp reduction in those aged 18
- In 2035 we can expect to see a reduction in those aged 16 – 18
- In 2039 we can expect to see a sharp increase in those aged up to 16, and then a reduction in those aged 16-18

Age	2020	2025	2030	2035	2039
0	1191	1165	1074	992	950
1	1195	1186	1101	1015	967
2	1212	1215	1139	1051	997
3	1230	1239	1176	1086	1026
4	1243	1252	1207	1116	1051
5	1256	1264	1237	1147	1080
6	1275	1269	1258	1173	1104
7	1327	1274	1276	1200	1128
8	1334	1280	1287	1224	1151
9	1406	1282	1292	1228	1173
10	1373	1284	1293	1265	1194
11	1375	1296	1290	1279	1212
12	1466	1349	1297	1298	1240
13	1371	1357	1296	1303	1258
14	1383	1434	1313	1323	1293
15	1424	1429	1338	1348	1333
16	1422	1438	1359	1353	1350
17	1362	1500	1392	1339	1343
18	1380	1356	1351	1278	1284
Total	27416	54310	80316	105369	129542

Table 1: Powys population projections 2020 – 2039 for children aged 0-18 years

Fig 2.3 and 2.4 demonstrate the age profiles of the biological parents of our children looked after in Powys. Analysis of these profiles tells us that the largest age gap between mother and father is 28 years. 23.3% of fathers to our children looked after are not known.

Fig 2.4 displays the range of ethnicities of our children looked after, with 89% of these White British, which is to be expected as there are minimal ethnic diversities across Powys.

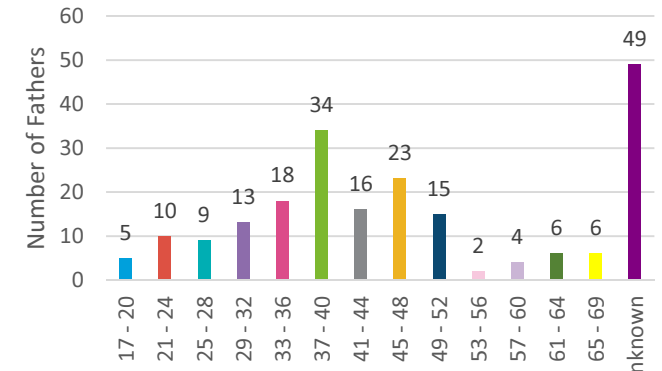


Fig 2.3 Age profile of Children Looked After biological fathers

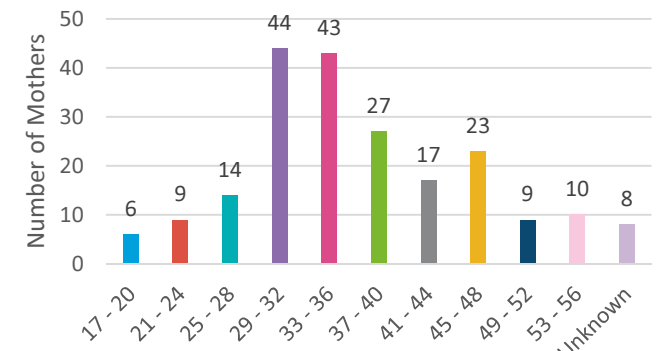
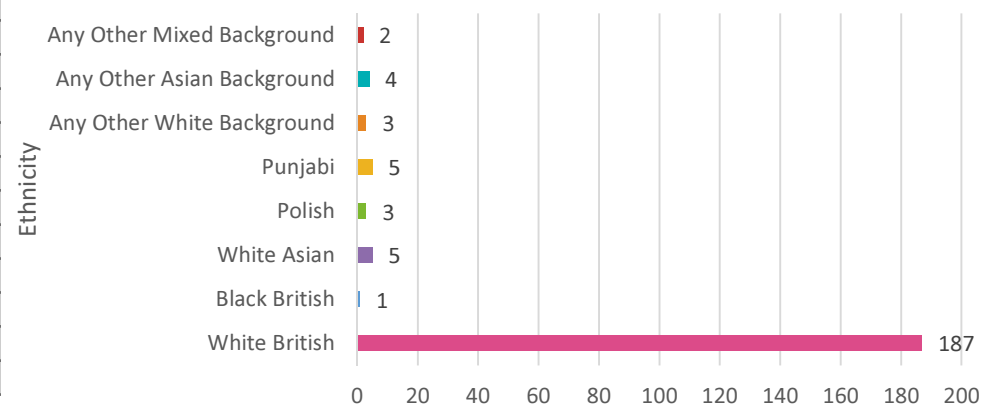
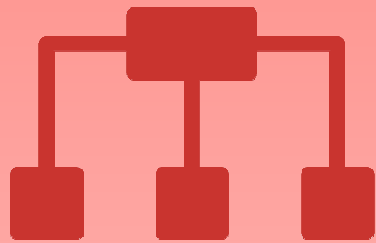


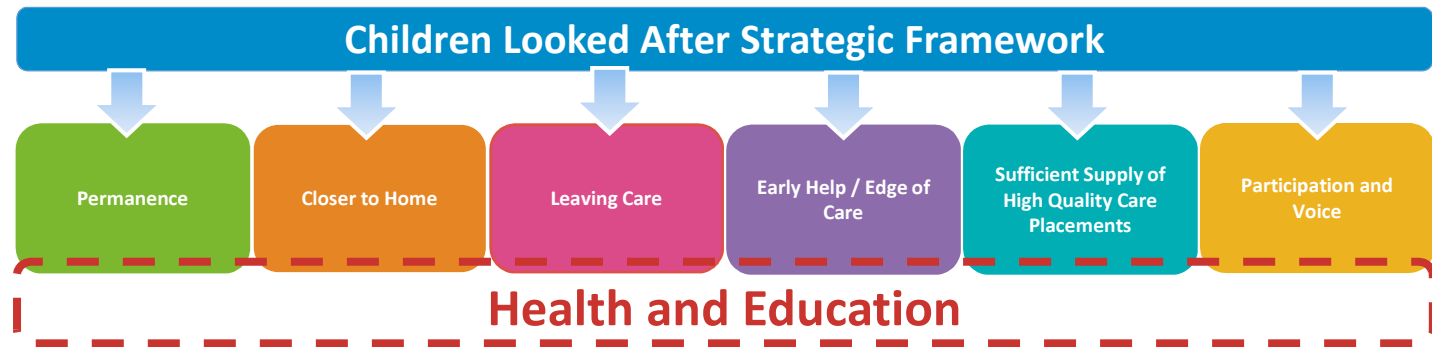
Fig 2.4 Age profile of Children Looked After biological mothers





9. Structure and Approach to the Development of the Children Looked After Strategic Framework

As a Council we strive to do the best for children in need of support and care. The unprecedented increase in the numbers of children being looked after in Powys has been significant over a relatively short period of time and exceeds the national increases in Wales. The implementation of a Children Looked After Strategic Framework will be instrumental in tackling some of the challenges faced by this increase and achieving better outcomes for the children who are placed in our care. Due to the span of work needed to be considered and implemented in relation to children looked after in Powys, we have adopted an approach whereby we will implement an overarching Children Looked After Strategic Framework with seven themed strategies sitting underneath as follows;



For each of the themes we have adopted a signs of safety, strengths based approach to help demonstrate from the outset what is working well in Powys, what we are worried about and what needs to happen moving forward. The themed strategies will specify in detail the priorities and strategies which will be adopted for each area and the detailed measures for each topic. It is envisaged that using this approach will ensure the Powys looked after strategies are aligned to the new model of practice being rolled out across Children's Services and so that they are workable documents, clearly setting out our objectives and understood by all. Effective, meaningful engagement is fundamental to the success of any strategy. Engagement with children and young people in the development of the strategic framework has been undertaken utilising a robust engagement methodology (**appendix A**) so as to ensure that we incorporate what matters to them and that the Strategic Framework helps to meet the needs of Children within Powys. Further focused engagement will be undertaken for each of the themed strategies with stakeholders including children and young people. The themed strategies will be prioritised and developed in the following order:

1. Permanence
2. Closer to Home
3. Leaving Care
4. Early Help / Edge of Care
5. Sufficient Supply of High Quality Care Placements
6. Participation and Voice



9.1 Permanence



What is working well?

- Robust Adoption Support plans being prepared
- Adopters feeling supported by their Social Workers
- Very few Adoption disruptions
- Fostering Panel promotes safe, secure placements through robust operation and rigorous quality assurance
- Robust review process
- Timely decision making
- Court process
- Exploring all options
- Family and friends assessments done in a timely way
- Multi-agency working



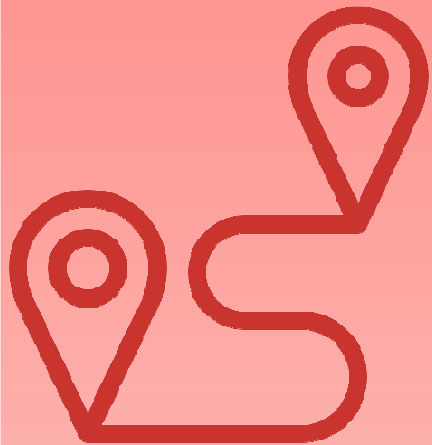
What are we worried about?

- Delay in Children being adopted
- Delay in Life Story work, Later Life letter and Narratives
- Matching of children and foster carers is constrained by limited number of foster carers
- No process for matching children and long term foster placements
- Team manager's knowledge of Adoption processes and practice
- Social Worker's confidence to prepare children for adoption
- Looked after lack of continuity of Social Worker
- 40% drop out of Children referred for Adoption planning to those requiring a Should be Adopted decision.
- Impact of When I Am Ready
- Number of planned breakdowns
- Consistency of social worker
- Stability of the workforce
- Placement sufficiency
- Matching placements
- Emergency placements with no education provision meeting the educational needs of children in care



What needs to happen?

- Develop the skills, knowledge and confidence of front line practitioners and managers in respect of Adoption
- Have Social Workers who specialise and focus on children looked after and care leavers
- Develop and implement a matching process for Long Term Fostering
- Review Special Guardianship policy to ensure it actively supports carers to apply for an SGO, where appropriate, to support permanence
- Life journey work for all children
- Return children home safely where possible
- Develop and strengthen the adoption provision
- Permanency/matching panel
- Promote planned moves
- Place children near their families
- Wider choice of placements
- Explore potential family options
- Multi dimensional approach to children's needs



9.2 Closer to Home



What is working well?

- Implementation of Access to Resource Panel
- Corporate support and commitment to improve services for all our children looked after
- All children placements out of county are being reviewed to ascertain if they can return to their own communities
- Multi Agency Access Panel



What are we worried about?

- Significant number of children placed large distances away from home.
- Availability of Family Support Services for children and their families so as to avoid escalation and the need for children to become looked after
- Our current commissioning, procurement and contract management for placements made outside of the 4C's contract.
- Education provision for children looked after particularly those living out of county.
- Lack of engagement with our children looked after and Care Leavers and no children on or represented on the Corporate Parenting Panel.
- Capacity and support of in house foster carers.
- Underutilising residential provision available in county.
- Financial costs and ensuring value for money.
- Low numbers of referrals to our edge of care



What needs to happen?

- Better commissioning arrangements with private residential sector within Powys so children who need residential care can be nearer home
- Corporate parent panel to appoint young person (children looked after or Care Leaver) as vice chair of panel
- Promote and better use our commissioned edge of care services.
- Develop and commission a range of Family Support Services for children in receipt of care and support
- Develop therapeutic fostering model.
- Increased recruitment and improved support for in house foster carers.
- Support the continued roll out of the reflect project.



9.3 Leaving Care



What is working well?

- Care Leavers usually have a Personal Advisor
- Care Leavers usually have a Pathway Plan
- Personal Advisors understand the Leaving Care legal framework
- Personal Advisors have got significant skills in working with young people



What are we worried about?

- Personal Advisors are often managed by staff who do not understand the legal framework
- We have lost touch with some of our care leavers due to the earlier disbanding of the service
- Personal Advisors are based geographically only and have no sense of leaving care service identity, service principles and standards
- There is no clear statement of the entitlement of Care Leavers in Powys
- The service is inconsistent across the county
- There is no strategic understanding of the cohort of care leavers.
- There are no coherent organised partnerships with relevant stakeholders which means that transition into adulthood arrangements are chaotic and inconsistent.
- Allocation of Personal Advisor process, and Personal Advisor roles and responsibilities
- Unavailability of projections and data in respect of care leavers



What needs to happen?

- The service needs to be managed as a single team with a dedicated manager who understands the legal framework, and therefore shared understanding of tasks and roles.
- Care leavers that we have lost contact with need to be contacted to establish whether they wish to receive a service and what their circumstances are.
- A Care Leavers Pledge needs to be created, consulted upon and agreed.
- We need to know where our care leavers are, what their housing arrangements are, whether they are in education, employment or training, what their support needs are and what their transition needs are.
- Partnership/transition arrangements need to be set up particularly for children with disabilities and mental health difficulties.
- There needs to be a clear agreement about the mechanism by which a young person is allocated a Personal Advisor.
- Introduce improved arrangements for Pathway and Transition Planning with better links to Housing, other accommodation providers and Adult Services.



9.4 Early Help / Edge of Care



What is working well?

- Strong Partnership relationships
- Start Well sign off early help model
- Development of Childrens Rights Pledge
- ICF funds available
- Access to Service Panel



What are we worried about?

- Programme capacity to ensure delivery within timescales
- Children Services restructure taking into account adequate capacity to support early help
- Integrated Disability Service delivery within timescale
- Progress of Intensive Fostering Support
- Apprenticeships for Care leavers
- Team Around the Family Capacity



What needs to happen?

- Implemented Strategic Partnership for Family Support
- Develop and implement integrated Youth Support Model
- Agree and implement children services restructure
- Wellbeing Officers to gain qualification so that they can hold cases
- Early Help Hub
- Multi Agency Co-located teams
- Progress Childrens First
- Increase referrals to edge of care services



9.5 Sufficient Supply of High Quality Care Placements



What is working well?

- No non-compliance notices issued following the last Inspection
- Children looked after are able to enjoy a range of leisure activities and gain new experiences and are often included in Foster Carers family holidays
- Foster Carers are pro-active in ensuring children have their own bank accounts
- The recruitment and assessment of Foster Carers is thorough
- Children are supported to maintain contact with family
- Staff at Bannau/Camlas observed to deliver a high Quality of Care to Young People
- Fostering Panel promotes secure placements through robust operation and rigorous quality assurance
- Most children have been matched with adopters from within the Mid and West Wales Adoption Region.
- Mid and West Wales Adoption Region Recruitment plan is being developed



What are we worried about?

- Commissioning and Monitoring of IFA and Residential Placements
- -Instability of Foster Placements
- Therapeutic Support services available for children in care and their foster carers
- Condition of Building at Bannau/Camlas
- Accurate and timely data recording in relation to children looked after
- Performance in relation to statutory looked after visits within timescale
- Care plans in place within 5 days of when a child becomes looked after
- Robust, timely data in relation to children looked after specifically in relation to educational attainment
- Number of Approved Adopters and Foster Carers (Locally and Nationally)
- Potentially compromised matching due to lack of choice
- Increased cost of Adoptive and Looked After placements outside of the region/Local Authority
- Impact of "When I am Ready" on Foster Carer numbers



What needs to happen?

- Develop and improve Contract Monitoring arrangements.
- Commission a comprehensive flexible and affordable range of placement options capable of meeting the diverse placement needs of children including children with a disability.
- All young people need to have individualised "Safer Care Plans"
- Develop a Therapeutic Model to underpin our Fostering service
- Consider developing capacity at Bannau/Camlas to provide outreach support and emergency support
- Raise awareness and improve uptake of the independent visiting service.
- Increase uptake of the active offer.
- Ensure all children have access to appropriate education provision.
- Ensure all Foster Carers have an up to date Annual Foster Carer Review
- Support the recruitment of Adopters and in house foster carers
- Provide appropriate support to our in house foster carers



9.6 Participation and Voice



What is working well?

- IRO service providing consistency, stability, scrutiny and QA for care planning for Children and young people.
- QA framework to measure what good looks like.
- Auditing of children's files to evidence what good looks like.
- Children can have an advocate from Tros Gynnal Advocacy Service.
- Children are visited by their social worker.
- Children have a voice through all of the above services.
- Health and Education services as well as third sector organisations participate within the Child's journey.
- There is a Corporate Parenting Group which addresses the themes and trends around ensuring that Children's needs are discussed.
- Boo Magazine circulated to all children in care



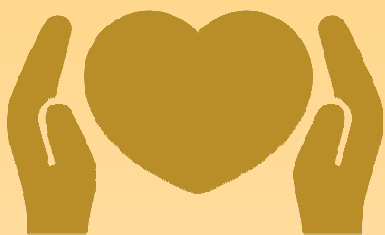
What are we worried about?

- No current forum for service user feedback about service delivery and changes.
- No current Participation Officer in post.
- No current and relevant Participation Strategy.
- No corporate parenting group for children and young people.
- No representative from a young person or child who sits on the Corporate Parenting Group.
- No current voice for Care Leavers



What needs to happen?

- A forum for service user feedback needs to be developed.
- A young person needs to be able to sit on the Corporate Parenting Group with a platform.
- Care Leavers need to have a stronger voice on service development and engagement.



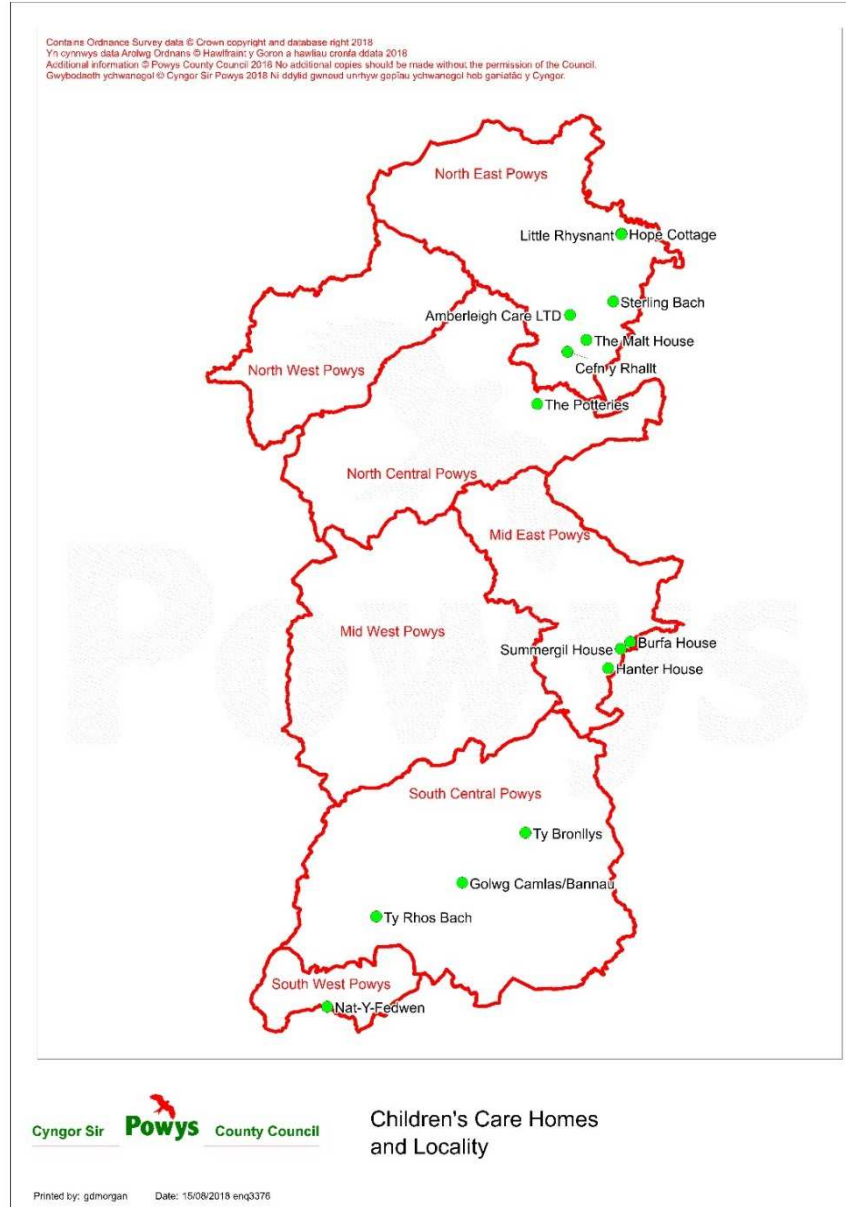
10. Provision

There are 14 children's homes within the county of Powys, one of which is owned and run by Powys County Council (Golwg Bannau/Camlas). Powys County Council do not hold block contracts with any of the independent homes.

With the exception of Golwg Bannau/Camlas, the residential provision within Powys is not utilised at present and currently children are being placed in residential placements as far away as London. There are 17 children placed in residential placements outside of Powys.

Home	Number of Beds	Provision	Areas of Non Compliance Identified at Previous Inspection
Burfa House	3	Complex needs and challenging behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A). This is because less than 80% of staff members hold relevant qualifications. Regulation 4 (1). This is because the statement of purpose does not include all of the information listed in Schedule 1. For instance, it does not include the aims and objectives to be attained with regard to children or the arrangements for dealing with the review of their placement plans Regulation 4 (5) ©. This is because the young person's guide does not include the address and telephone number of the CIW and the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales. It also contains incorrect information that children can telephone CIW in relation to complaints. Regulation 33. This is because a suitable system has not been established to monitor, review and improve the quality of care provided at the home.
Cefn Y Rhallt	2	Challenging behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A). Improvement was needed in relation to the percentage of staff who are qualified.
Goffa Hall, Amberleigh Care Ltd	12	Looked after males who exhibit inappropriate or harmful sexualised behaviours	None
Golwg Bannau/Camlas	9	8-18 year olds with a diagnosis of autism and associated behaviours	
Hanter House	4	Complex care	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A) because only 33% of staff members held relevant qualifications. Regulation 4 (1) because the statement of purpose did not include all of the information listed in Schedule 1. For instance, it does not include the aims and objectives to be attained with regard to children or the arrangements for dealing with the view of their placement plans. Regulation 33 because a suitable system has not been established to monitor, review and improve the quality of care provided at the home.
Hope Cottage	2	Mostly attachment disorder and challenging behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A). Improvement was needed in relation to the percentage of staff who are qualified in order to fully meet legal requirements.
Little Rhysnant	1	Complex needs	None.
The Malt House	2	Challenging behaviour	
Nant Y Fedwen	4	Challenging behaviour and learning disabilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A) because they did not meet the requirement for the number of qualified staff at the home.
The Potteries	4	Social, emotional and behavioural difficulties	
Sterling Bach	2	Emotional and behavioural disorders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A). Improvement was needed in relation to the percentage of staff who are qualified. Improvement needed in relation to Regulation 27 (4) (a) as the registered persons have failed to ensure that staff have received appropriate training to meet the needs of the young people placed.
Summergeil House	18	An independent school, autism and associated difficulties	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Regulation 25 (1A). Improvement was needed in relation to the percentage of staff who are qualified. Regulation 27 (4) (a). Improvement was needed in relation to the frequency of staff supervision.
Ty Bronllys	9	Autism and associated needs	
Ty Rhos Bach	4	Crisis intervention unit for complex care	

10. Provision



The map to the left shows where the homes are placed across Powys, with the majority of homes in the east of the county and minimal provision in the mid and west.

Additional to children's homes, Powys County Council have the following provision available to utilise:

67 generic foster carers (57 within Powys)

28 respite carers (15 within Powys)

14 family and friends carers (9 within Powys)

A further detailed breakdown of which areas of the county have which provision, along with where our children looked after have come from and where they are placed, is available at appendices 1-7.



11. Key Enablers

Applying Robust Commissioning Methodologies

Needs analysis, service design, market development, effective contract monitoring

Models of Investment

By changing our service models, we will invest resources 'upstream' in early help and prevention with a view to supporting families to safely stay together and reduce the need for costly care placements

Workforce Development

We will ensure that the workforce has the appropriate skills, resources and tools they need to be able to demonstrate excellent practice and best support and safeguard our children, young people and families

Engagement, Listening and Co-Production

We will ensure that children, young people and their families have their voices heard and acted on at an individual, service and strategic level

Quality Assurance

An embedded quality assurance framework, audits which identify areas of improvement and providing confidence in the quality of service delivery

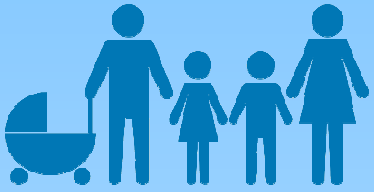
Systems and Process Design

Clear pathways and systems to support effective planning and delivery

Cultural and Practice Change

Outcomes focused care and support planning, multi-agency/partnership working, focus on prevention and early help. Implementation of the Signs of Safety to support a strengths based approach to working with children, young people and families





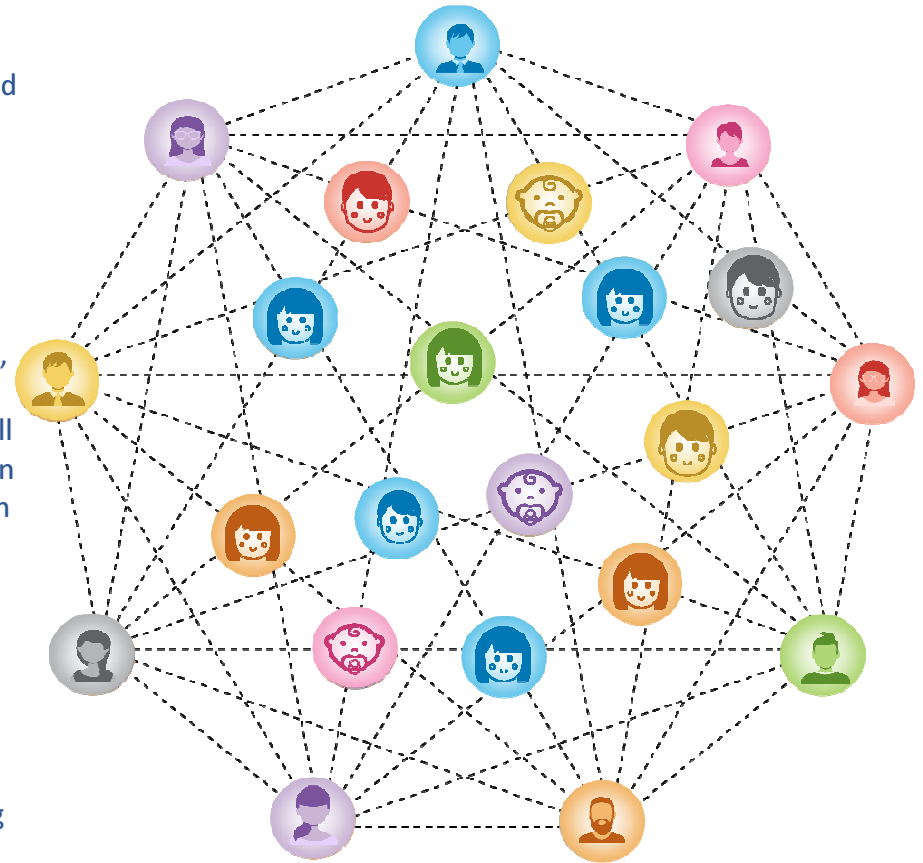
12. Corporate Parenting Duty

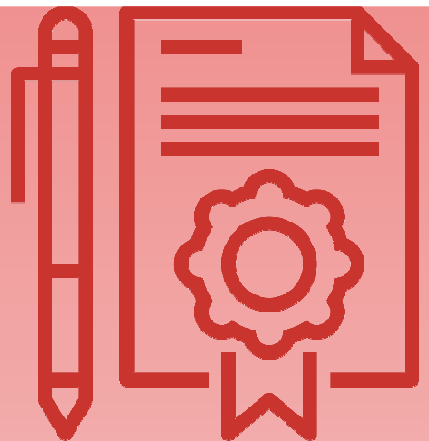
Corporate parenting is the term used to describe the role that local authorities and their partners play in relation to children and young people in and leaving care. The concept was first introduced by Frank Dobson MP in 1998 and has since been enshrined in legislation and statutory guidance, most recently in the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014.

The Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture, the Director of Social Services, as well as the Interim Head of Children's Services hold the overall strategic responsibility for leading improvements in corporate parenting, and for ensuring that children looked after are seen as a priority by the whole authority and its partners. The overall operational responsibility is held by Children's Services, with Social Workers and Carers directly delivering corporate parenting on a day to day basis. Other professionals with responsibilities for delivering services to children and young people also hold responsibility for both safeguarding and improving outcomes for children and young people who are looked after. There needs to be a clear understanding of roles and responsibilities in relation to corporate parenting.

There are various guidance frameworks in place which underpin the requirement for the duty of corporate parenting:

- Towards a Stable Life and a Brighter Future. Welsh Assembly Government, June 2005
- Welsh Local leadership Academy – WLGA Corporate Parenting, July 2012
- Welsh Assembly Government's Circular dated 29th September 2008
- The Welsh Government letter from Gwenda Thomas, Deputy Minister for Children and Social Services dated June 2012 including Annex A & B .





13. Legislation

The legislation which primarily impact on children looked after and children looked after services that have influenced the development of the Strategic Framework are as follows:

- **Children Act (1989)** – the Act sets out many of the duties, powers and responsibilities local authorities hold in respect of their children looked after and care leavers. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1989/41/contents)
- **Children (Leaving Care) 2000** – Sets out duties local authorities have to support young people leaving care from 16 to 21 years of age. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/35/contents)
- **Adoption and Children Act 2002** – This Act updated the legal framework for domestic and inter-county adoption, and places a duty on local authorities to maintain an adoption service and provide adoption support services. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2002/38/contents)
- **Children and Adoption Act 2006** – This Act gives courts more flexible powers to facilitate child contact and enforce contact orders when separated parents are in dispute. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/20/contents)
- **Children and Young Persons Act 2008** – Legislates for the recommendations in the Department for Education and Skill's 2007 Care Matters white paper to provide high quality care and services for children in care. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2008/23/contents)
- **Children and Families Act 2014** – Encourages 'fostering for adoption' which allows approved adopters to foster children while they wait for court approval to adopt. Introduces a 26 week time limit for the courts to decide whether or not a child should be taken into care. In some cases, this limit may be extended by eight weeks. Introduces 'staying put' arrangements which allow children in care to stay with their foster families until the age of 21 years old. This is provided that both the young person and the foster family are happy to do so. (www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2014/6/contents/enacted)
- **Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014** – Implemented in April 2016, Part 6 covers Welsh local authorities' duties to children in their care. (www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2014/4/contents/enacted)
- **Regulation and Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016** – Makes provision for the registration and regulation of providers of social care including adoption and fostering services and advocacy services. (www.legislation.gov.uk/anaw/2016/2/contents/enacted)
- **The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC)** – In 2011 the Welsh Government made the UNCRC law in Wales, with the Rights of the Child and Young Persons (Wales) Measure 2011.



14. Outcomes

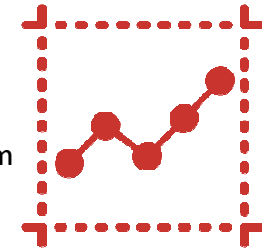
Success should be directly measured against the outcomes for children looked after. This is what good will look like:



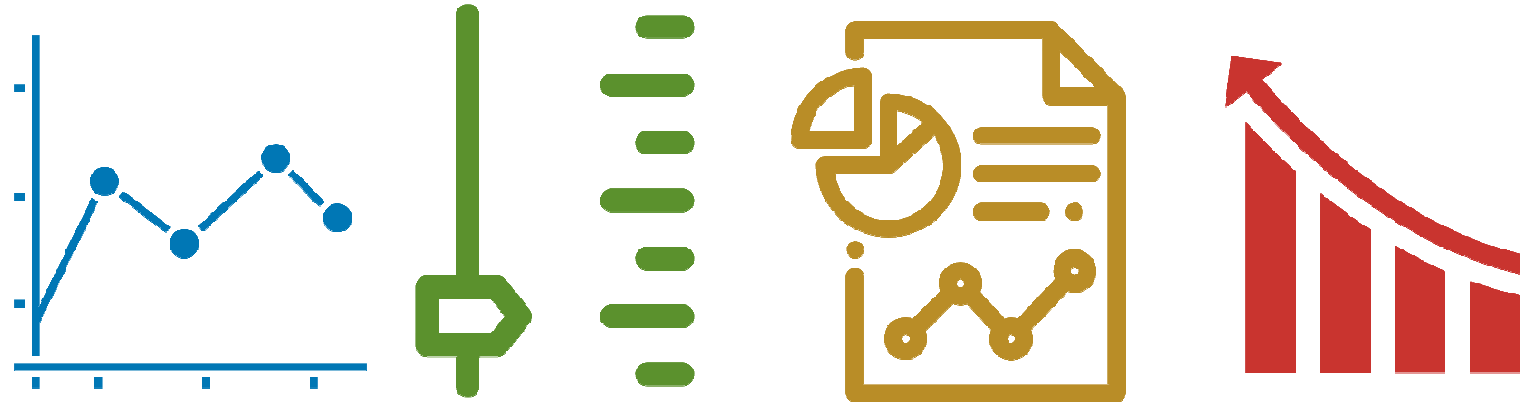
- We need to listen to children to find out how they feel about the care they are receiving
- Children and young people should always be involved in decisions about them and should feel listened to
- Children know about their rights under the UNCRC and are able to access them all to be healthy, happy and safe
- Social workers and independent reviewing officers should always ask themselves whether children know what is happening and have had the chance to have their say.

Our indicators of success will be:

- Children live with their families as long as this is safe and right for them
- Children tell us that they feel safe where they are living
- Children are healthy - physically and emotionally
- Children who need extra help to feel healthy and safe can access services that meet their needs
- Any services we commission for our children are high quality and available locally where possible
- All children and young people receive an Active Offer of advocacy support at appropriate times for them
- Teenagers have help and support with relationships and resilience, to prevent them needing to be in care wherever possible
- All of our children are supported to build the skills they need to live independently when the time is right for them
- Foster carers and family/friends carers have the right training, help and support to look after our children
- Social workers will meet children looked after regularly
- Each child has someone to speak to who they feel they can trust
- Independent visitors are available to anyone who needs them and routinely offered
- We do not want our young people to end up in the youth justice system
- Children and young people are encouraged to be the best that they can be and pursue any interests that they may have, in education and after school
- Carers and social workers actively encourage and support children to achieve their ambitions

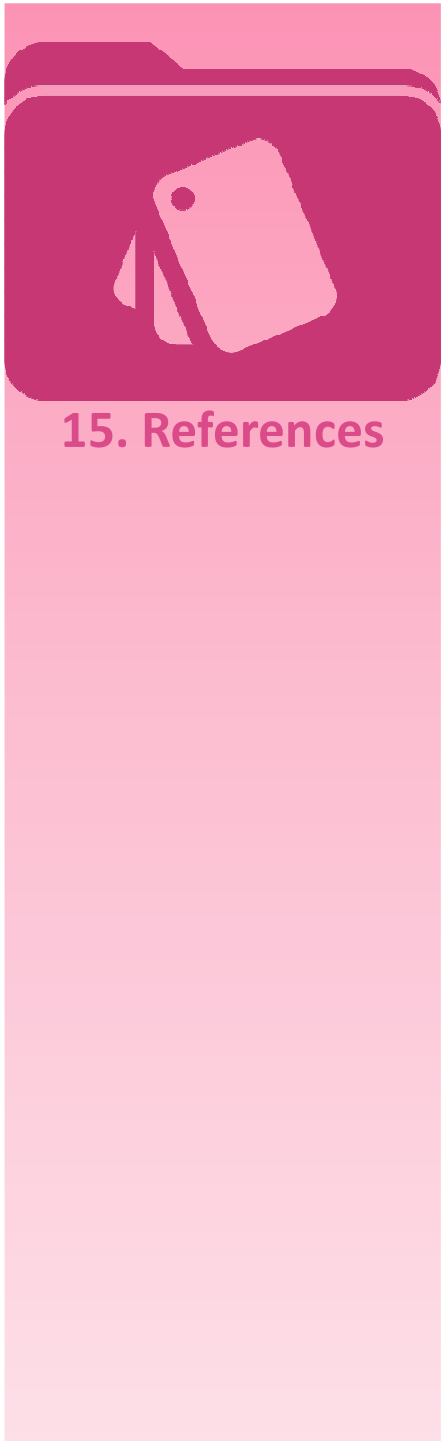


14.1 Measuring Activity to Improve Outcomes



Key Performance Indicators:

- A growth in our in-house placements and a reduction of Independent Fostering Agency placements
- An increase in the number of children diverted from care through the provision of family support packages
- An increase in the numbers of children and young people reunified back to family safely
- A reduction in the numbers of children looked after that are placed more than 20 miles away from their homes
- Improvements in the quality and timeliness looked after statutory visits and reviews and a greater number of children attending reviews
- Improved education attainment, training and placement outcomes for children looked after, both in and out of county
- Increased multi agency input to edge of care services
- Greater Placement Stability and reduced number of placement changes leading to a greater number of staying put placements
- Successful transition from leaving care to adulthood
- Increased engagement and feedback from children looked after
- Active Young person's corporate parenting group
- Increased uptake in Advocacy Active Offer for children looked after



15. References

Appendix one: North West Powys

North West Powys - Machynlleth



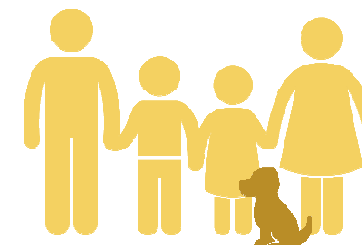
0 friends and
family carers



0 children's homes



0 respite
carers



1 generic
foster carer
(1.49%)



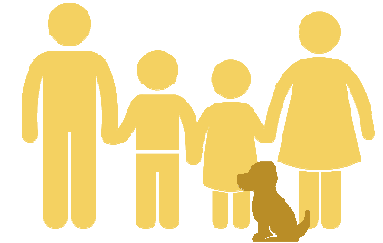
4 children
looked after
from this area
(1.91%)



1 looked after
child placed in
this area (0.48%)

Appendix two: North Central Powys

North Central Powys –
Newtown, Llanfair Caereinion,
Llanidloes

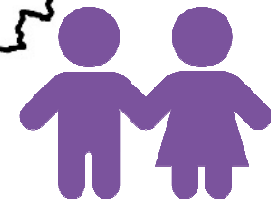
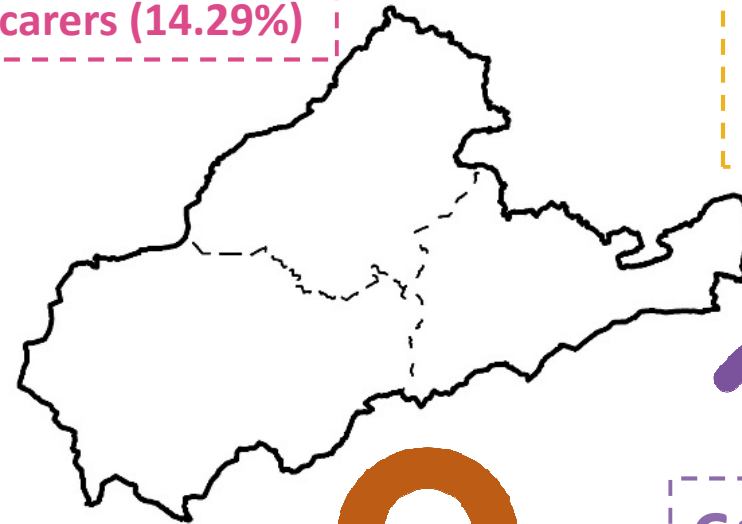


3 respite
carers (14.29%)

6 generic
foster carers
(8.96%)



3 friends and
family carers
(21.43%)



61 children
looked after
from this area
(29.19%)



1 children's home
with 4 beds



20 children
looked after
placed in this
area (9.57%)

Appendix three: North East Powys

North East Powys – Llanfyllin,
Welshpool,



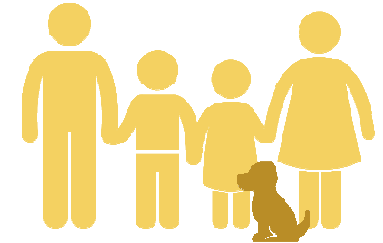
2 friends and
family carers
(14.29%)



7 children's homes,
with a total of 21
beds.



2 respite
carers (9.52%)



6 generic
foster carers
(8.96%)



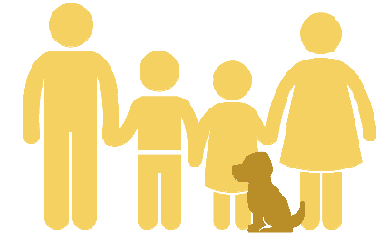
15 children
looked after
placed in this
area (7.28%)



48 children
looked after
from this area
(22.97%)

Appendix four: Mid West Powys

Mid West Powys –
Llandrindod Wells, Rhayader,
Builth Wells, Llanwrtyd Wells

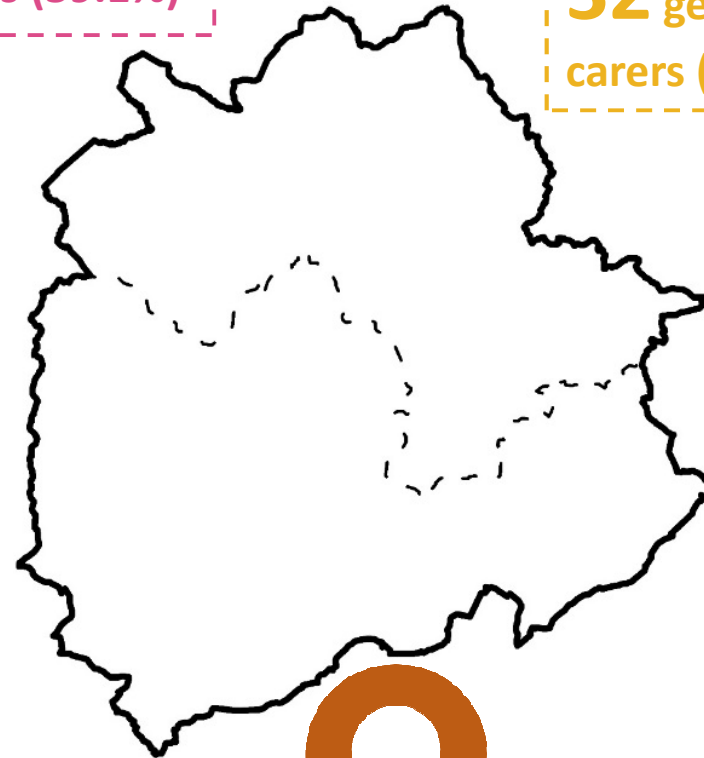


8 respite carers (39.1%)

32 generic foster
carers (47.76%)



0 friends and
family carers



44 children
looked after
from this area
(21.05%)



0 children's homes



46 children looked after placed in this area (22.01%)

Data accurate as at 31/03/2018

Appendix five: Mid East Powys

Mid East Powys – Knighton, Presteigne



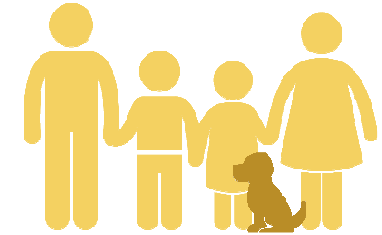
0 friends and family carers



3 children's homes, with a total of 25 beds.



0 respite carers



2 generic foster carers (2.99%)



2 children looked after placed in this area (0.96%)



5 children looked after from this area (2.39%)

Appendix six: South Central Powys

South Central Powys – Brecon, Hay on Wye,
Talgarth, Crickhowell

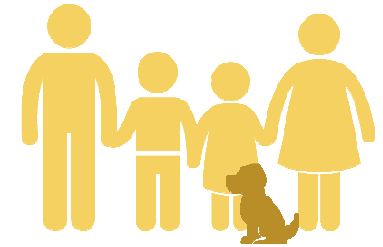


3 friends and
family carers
(21.43%)



3 children's homes,
with a total of 22
beds.

0 respite carers



8 generic foster
carers (11.94%)



26 children
looked after
from this area
(12.44%)

26 children looked after placed in this area (12.44%)

Data accurate as at 31/03/2018

Appendix seven:
South West
Powys

South West Powys – Ystradgynlais



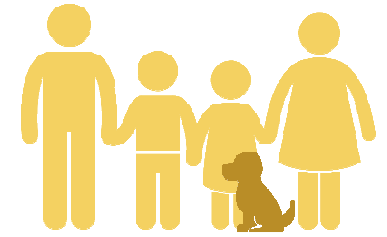
1 friends and family carer (7.14%)



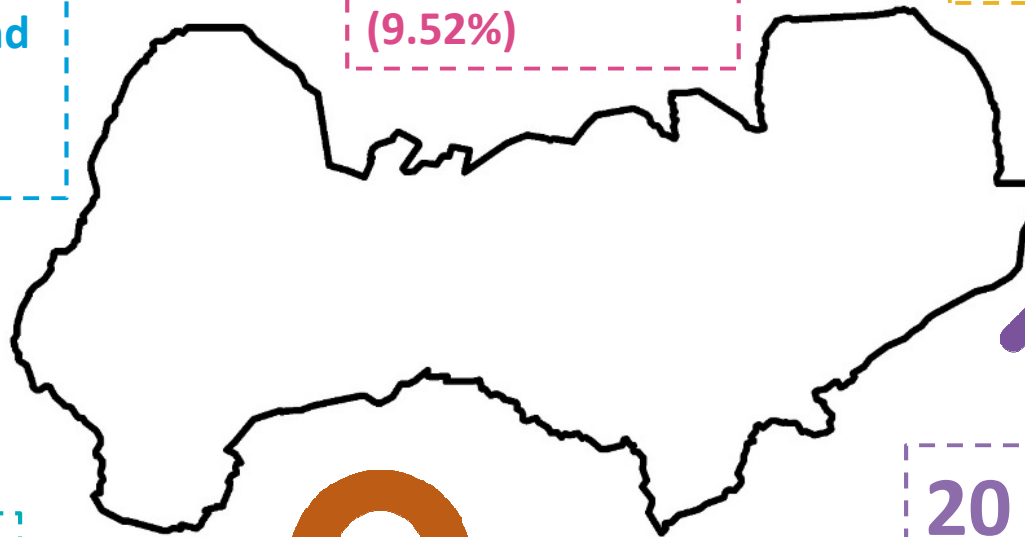
1 children's home with 4 beds



2 respite carers (9.52%)



2 generic foster carers (2.99%)



5 children looked after placed in this area (2.39%)



20 children looked after from this area (9.57%)

Powys Children's Services Looked After Children Strategy – Engagement Methodology



July / August 2018

The Approach

The work is based on using 1:1 interviews with looked after children, where a number of questions and images are presented to explore preferences for, and expectations of, participants' journey through the care system and what matters to them.

Ensuring that our offer for looked after children is achievable, robust and incorporates the voice of the child is vital to implementing a successful strategy.

All too often, methods of public and service user engagement reinforce existing patterns of service provision, rather than exploring the kinds of services (existing or to be developed) that looked after children would themselves wish for to achieve the outcomes and fulfilled life that they seek.

Powys County Council would like to engage with children who are currently looked after, who are not necessarily part of any formal consultation mechanism or group but who are still representative of a broad cross-section of the local LAC population.

Powys County Council would like to hold 1:1 interviews with a representative of the Powys LAC population in terms of ethnicity, level of disability, social class, age and gender.

Each interview will:

- Firstly ask the looked after child about themselves, a section on their favourite animal, colour, television show, sport etc. to break the ice and make them feel comfortable and at ease;
- Ask the child what has worked well for them during their journey through the care system, what hasn't worked so well, and what they would improve from their perspective (using the Signs of Safety three houses approach);
- Explore the important social and security networks in the life of the looked after child, using a diagram for them to plot on to;
- Explore the feelings of the child using a series of diagrams to represent happy, sad, scared and angry, and what causes them to feel each of these emotions;
- Explore the hopes and wishes of the child (in respect of what Powys County Council can offer to them) to inform our pledge to looked after children.

Engaging with Children: Ethics, Safety and Consent

Any engagement with children must balance the aims of the research with the safety and wellbeing of the participants. By providing the right support and knowing when to take appropriate action, we can ensure children feel respected and can participate safely.

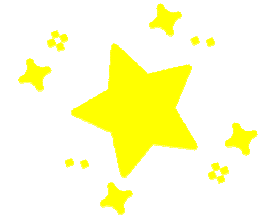
Consent is possibly the largest and most complicated issue in hoping to involve children in engagement. It is best practice to ensure that all participants fully understand the purpose of the interview so that they can give their permission to be part of it (informed consent).

If a child is under 16 then they can't legally give consent themselves and the Senior Manager responsible for undertaking engagement should ask a guardian or foster care for consent. Wherever possible, consent should also be sought from any children involved in the engagement. This is part of engaging children so they have opportunities to make their own decisions as well as ensuring they're willing participants.

Participants **must** be made aware of the following:

- Be assured that all data gathered as part of this evaluation will be treated as confidential;
- No information provided will be attributed to an individual or organisation;
- Only aggregated information will be included in the resultant report;
- Your input into this strategy will be treated as anonymous;
- Your personal information will not be disclosed at any point.

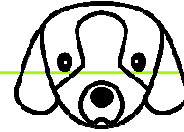
My Best Bits



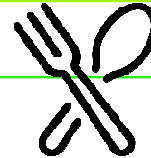
My favourite colour is...



My favourite animal is...



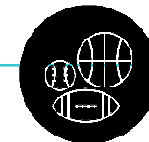
My favourite food is...



My favourite TV show is...



My favourite sport is...



If I was a character from a book, film or TV show I would be...

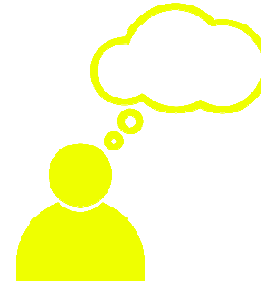
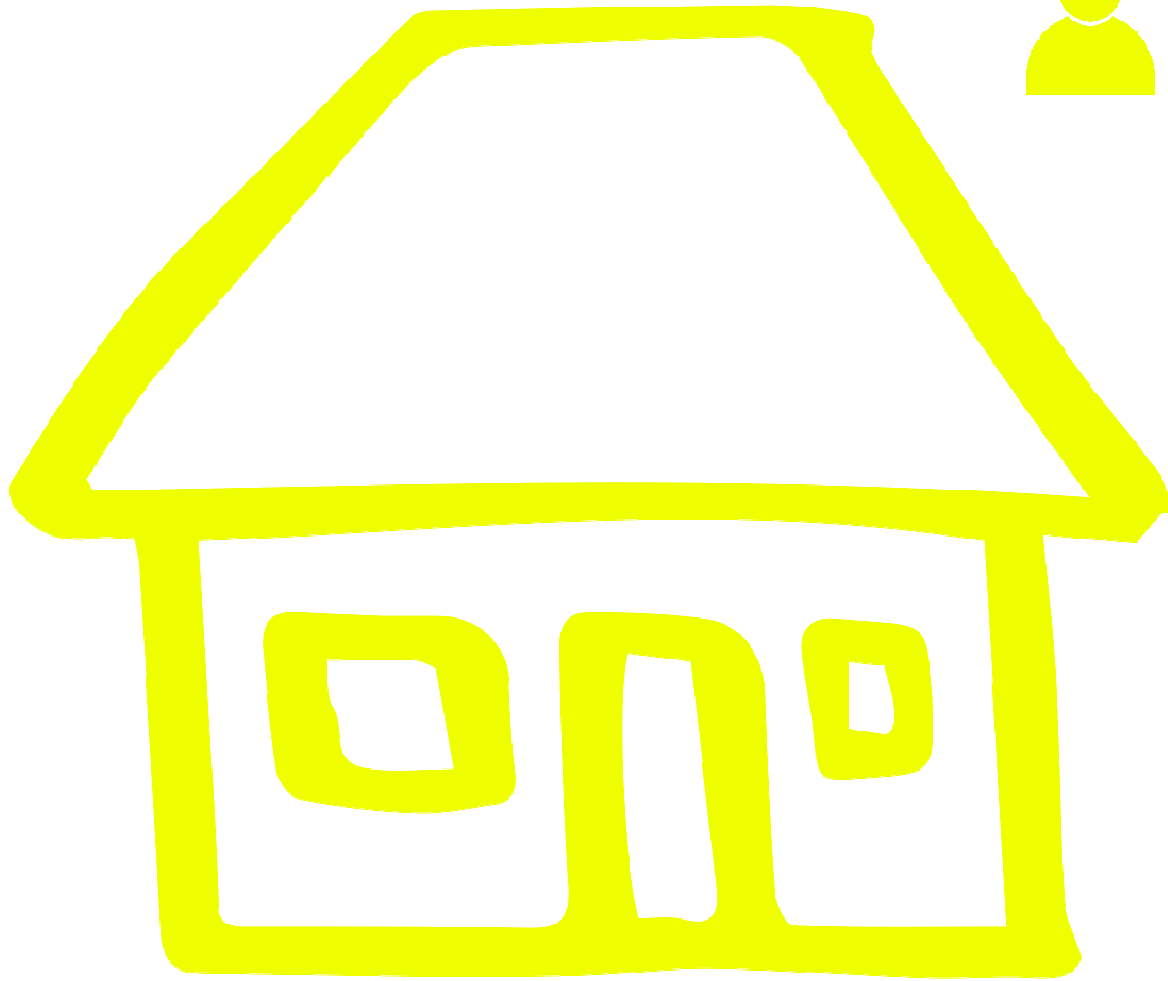




What went well:

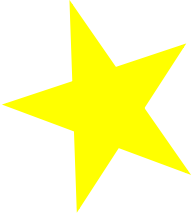


What didn't go well:

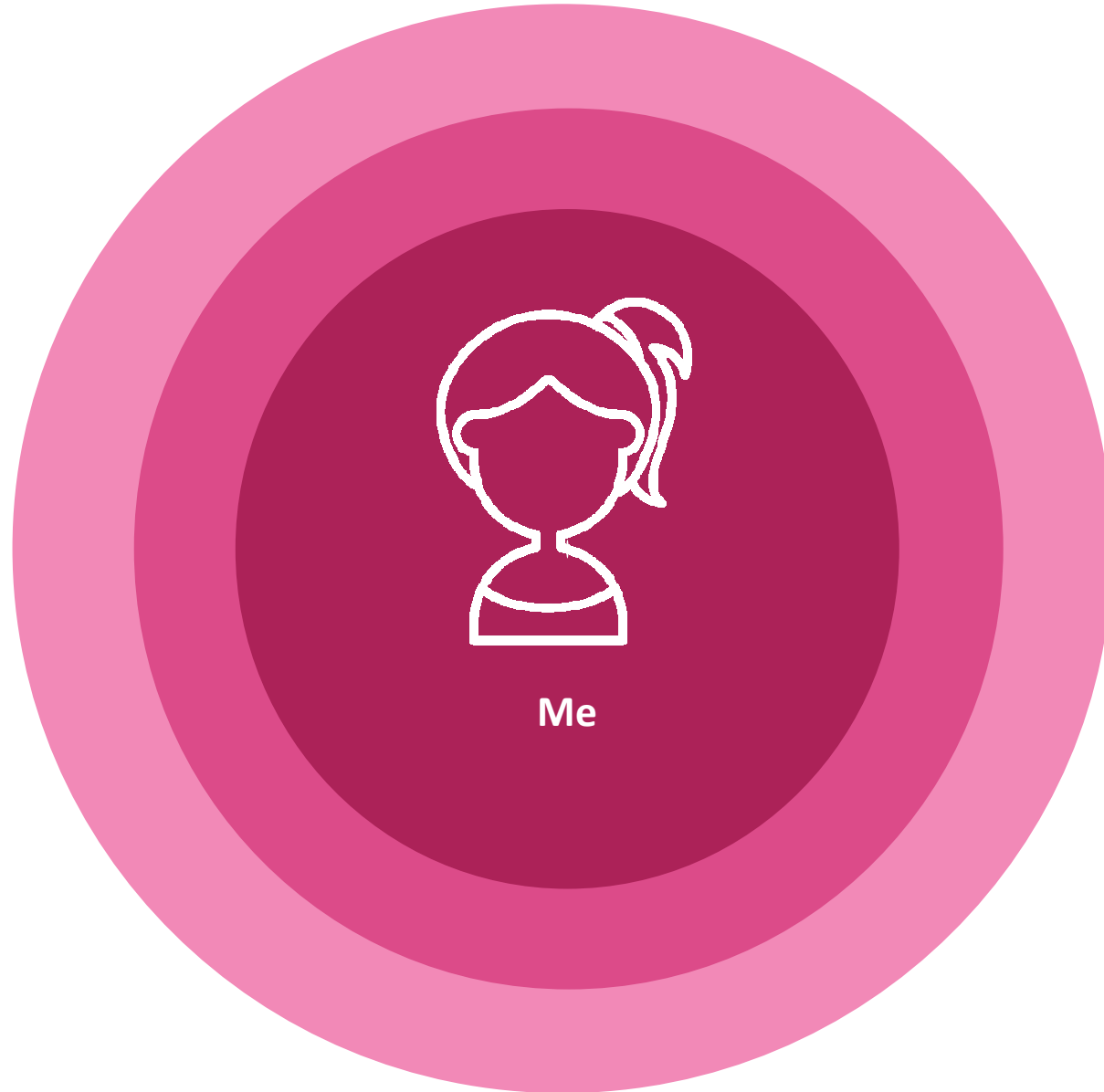


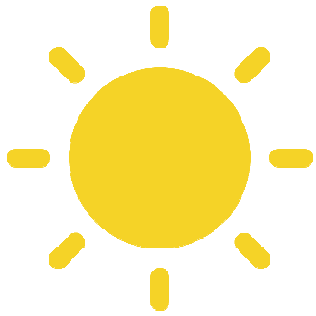
What could be improved:

Important People in my Life



Important People in my Life





**Things that
make me
happy**



**Things that
make me
sad**



**Things that
make me
scared**



**Things that
make me
angry**

My Hopes and Wishes

