

CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL

Health and Care Scrutiny Committee

14 May 2019

REPORT AUTHOR: Jan Coles, Head of Children's Services

SUBJECT: External Placements

REPORT FOR: Information

1. Background

1.1 The Powys Children Looked After Strategic Framework sets out Powys' aspirations, intent and vision for improving outcomes for Children Looked After. For those children in our care we, as Corporate Parents, need to provide positive parenting and specialist support. In Powys, demand is greater than supply for quality placements for our Children Looked After. External placements include:

- Independent Foster Care
- Residential Care
- Semi-Independent Accommodation.

1.2 We look to place children and young people in the following priority list in order to meet their needs:

- Within their home community (within 30 miles from home)
- Within Powys
- Out of county, in Wales
- Out of county, and out of Wales.

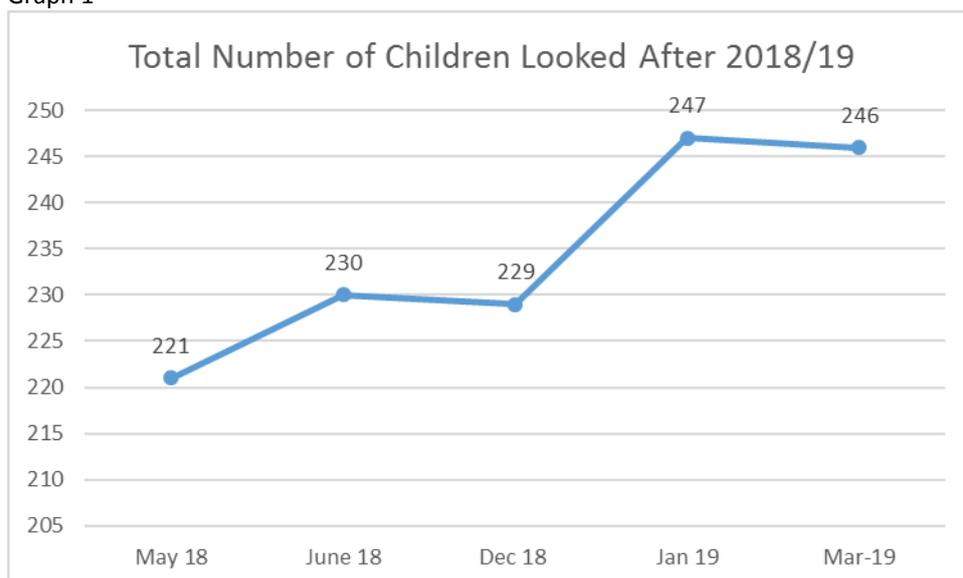
1.3 In placing out of county, the local authority must ensure that, so far as is reasonably practical, the placement:

- Meets the needs of the child as set out in the Care and Support Plan
- Does not disrupt the child's education
- Enables the child to live together with any siblings who are also being looked after by the local authority
- Allows the child to live near home, where appropriate.

2. Children Looked After

2.1 There were 246 Children Looked After in Powys as at 31st March, 2019 as illustrated in Graph 1. The continued challenge is to stem the rise in numbers entering care, particularly those placed in residential care.

Graph 1



2.2 Table 1 shows the age group profile of Powys Children Looked After as at 31st March, 2019.

Table 1

Age Group	Male	Female	Total	%
0 to 4	25	28	53	22%
5 to 9	34	21	55	22%
10 to 15	47	43	90	37%
16 Plus	23	25	48	20%
Total	129	117	246	
Gender Split	52%	48%		

2.3 The number of these Children Looked After in a range of placements is detailed in Table 2.

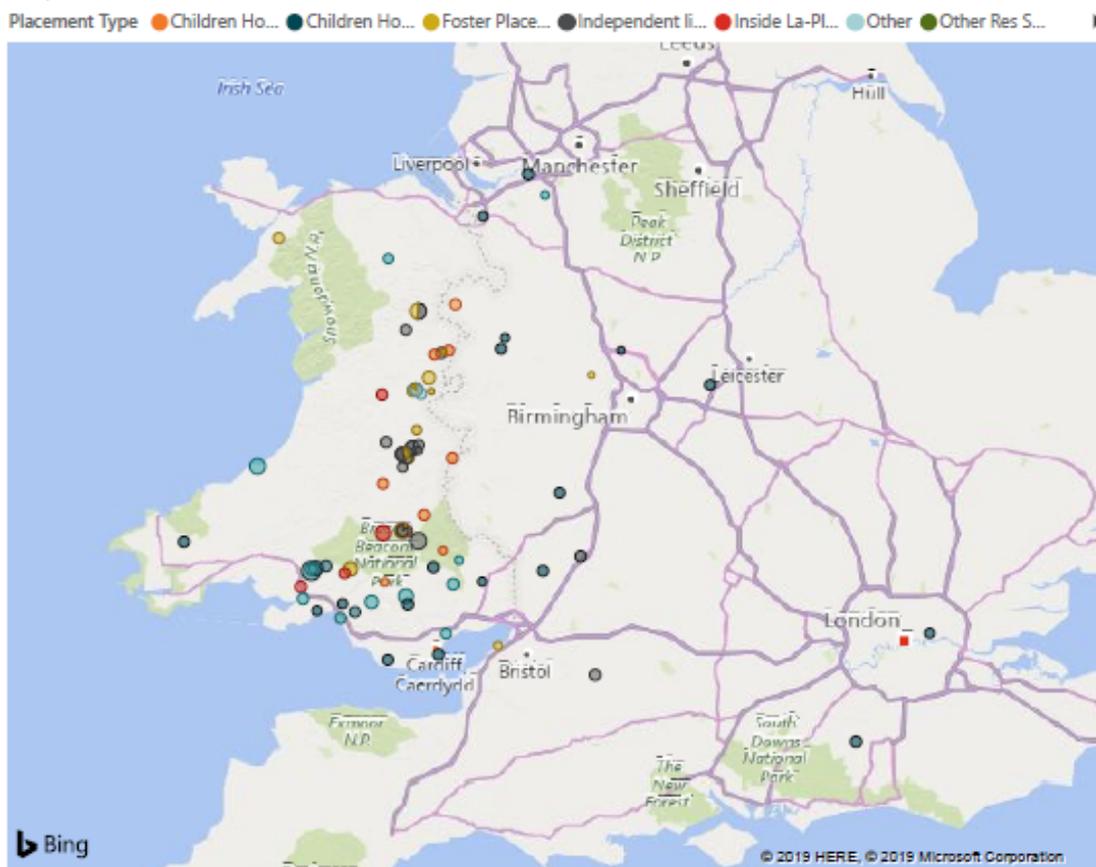
Table 2

Placement	Adoptive Placement	In County	Out of County	Placed with Parents	Total
Independent Foster Agency		11	30		41
Connected Persons		22	15		37
Placed for Adoption	13				13

Powys Foster Carer		83	10		93
Placed with Parents				20	20
Family Assessment Unit			1		1
Residential		6	24		30
Powys Residential		4			4
Independent Living		7			7
Total	13	133	80	20	246

2.4 Map 1 below shows the location of our Children Looked After. As the map works in dots, if there are multiple children in the same location, it only shows one dot. It should be noted that some Children Looked After placement addresses are classified as “confidential” on WCCIS therefore are not included in the map. Children’s Services Leadership Team are aware and are addressing so that the map will include all children who are looked after.

Map 1



- 2.5 Powys Children's Services are undertaking a Foster Carer Recruitment Campaign to attract greater numbers of in-house foster carers. The campaign is showing early signs of success with nine new fostering households due to come onboard by end of August, 2019. As at 31st March, 2019 Powys had 71 generic carers offering 135 beds and 22 connected persons. However, there are 42 vacant beds due to matching, solo and on hold issues. These figures do not include respite and short-break carers.
- 2.6 We have reviewed future in-house provision for children with disabilities and produced a Project Plan, including a Short-Break Scheme. We have gained capital investment to redevelop, upgrade and enhance Golwg-y-Bannau and Camlas building and are changing the registration criteria of both Golwg-y-Bannau and Camlas to better utilise the provision and offer a combination of 39/52 week placements for children and young people with autism and/or complex needs and short-breaks. This would give consistent and continued arrangements for existing families and provision for additional families due to a change in registration criteria. Some existing 52 week external care and education placements outside of Powys would cease as children and young people would be able to access this in-house provision. Two houses offered by Housing could be utilised for short-breaks.

3. Resource Panel

3.1 The Access to Resources Panel:

- helps families to receive the right resources that meet their needs effectively
- commission best value placement and support interventions appropriate to need
- develop agreements with partner agencies (Health and Education) via Multi-Agency Approval Panel (MAAP) to ensure greater responsibility and better accountability for our children placed out of county
- consider and authorise appropriate packages of support which cost £2,000 or more
- promotes innovation and creative practice
- have oversight of all requests for support and resources so will identify any themes or gaps in service provision. This will be fed into future commissioning to mould and shape future services so that they meet the needs of children and families in Powys.

3.2 The Children's Resource Panel considered residential placements during December, 2018 and IFA placements during February, 2019. This review involved the allocated Social Worker, Team Manager and Independent Reviewing Officer. A number of Panel recommendations have been progressed in relation to external placements.

- 3.3 It is important to note that there are costs associated with the alternative placements and support packages for these children and young people. Known costs are included below therefore not all residential/IFA cost reductions can be attributed to savings.
- 3.4 IFA review outcomes have also recommended operational exploration of Special Guardianship Orders for some of our children and young people with their current independent foster carers. This transfer from IFA to SGO would result in a reduction in placement costs and operational costs whilst providing real permanence for individual children and young people.
- 3.5 Table 3 shows the step-down approach taken for external residential and IFA placements for Children Looked After.

Table 3

Placement	Quarter 3 2018/19	Quarter 4 2018/19	Planned Quarter 1 2019/20	Total
Residential to IFA	0	1	0	1
Residential to Foster Care	0	0	2	2
Residential to Semi-Independent Living	0	2	0	2
Residential to Home	2	2	1	5
Residential to Adult Services	0	0	1	1
IFA to Home	1	1	1	3
IFA to Adoption	0	0	4	4
Semi-Independent Living to Home	0	0	2	2
Total	3	6	11	20

- 3.6 New placements in quarter 4 2018/19 and quarter 1 2019/20 are detailed in table 4.

Table 4

Placement	Quarter 4 2018/19	Planned Quarter 1 2019/20	Total
Home to Residential	3	0	3
Hospital to Residential	1	0	1

IFA to Residential	2	0	2
Home to Semi-Independent Living	1	0	1
Foster Care to IFA	1	1	2
Foster Care to Family Assessment Unit	0	1	1
Total	8	2	10

3.7 Joint funded placements are pursued and agreed with Schools Service and Powys Teaching Health Board. These contributions include payments towards education, transport, Continuing Health Care, clinical and therapeutic interventions.

4. Commissioning Arrangements

- 4.1 The Placement Team is now part of Children's Commissioning Unit. Protocols for placement search and contract monitoring have been developed and there is a significant increase in the number of pre-placement and placement compliance monitoring visits undertaken by the Commissioning Team.
- 4.2 Children's Services are working closer with the 4Cs Framework. The Strategic Commissioning Manager attends the 4C's Board (on behalf of Head of Children's Services) and the Commissioning Team attend Workshops to input into future developments for models of care, "This is Me" template, Outcomes Focussed Commissioning and "Single Referral and Matching" template. The Commissioning Unit will liaise with ICT to update WCCIS electronic templates, as required.
- 4.3 Each placement request, whether IFA or residential is put onto the 4Cs Framework Placement Search on CCSR. A tender is opened on CCSR containing the Placement Request Proforma and current Care Plan for the child or young person. Referrals are also forwarded to monthly Regional Matching Panels. These are an opportunity to identify potential foster/residential placements for children and young people who have specific needs that may be complex to match to.
- 4.4 There will be a transition period between the 2016 Residential Framework and the 2019 Framework for 1 year until 30th April, 2020. Both Frameworks are visible on CCSR. Many tenders or placement searches will still go through the 2016 Framework at this stage but this will reduce gradually as new lots "go live" on the new Framework. Lot A went live on 1st April, 2019 and is targeted at models of care that can meet the needs of children and young people displaying multiple high risk behaviours, who have experienced significant trauma, who will likely be in crisis and who have experienced placement disruption. It is targeted at children and young people who are at the top end of the

continuum of need. A skilled and resilient staff group working to a clear model of care will be required to effectively meet their wellbeing needs.

- 4.5 Placement choice is improving through better commissioning arrangements. Whilst the Placement Team have significantly increased use of the 4Cs Framework, placement search response has been mixed and the Placement Team continue to work with our trusted providers, where required. Individual meetings with independent care and educational providers in Powys are continuing and meetings are taking place with Housing Associations to explore wider placement and support options within Powys.

5. Future Plans

- 5.1 Future plans include to:

- continue to monitor external residential/IFA placements on a regular basis via Children's Resource Panel.
- ensure progress with those residential placements already identified.
- ensure progress with those IFA placements already identified.
- consider 16+ Leaving Care pathways and future accommodation needs and ensure progress identified.
- establish the Children's Admission to Care Panel to secure and deploy edge of care services so as to keep children safely at home reducing the need for placements.
- continue individual follow-up meetings/visits with Powys Providers.
- continue residential pre-placement visits.
- continue ad-hoc and implement rolling programme for residential contract monitoring visits.
- scope housing for in-house residential units for mainstream children and young people.

- 5.2 Powys will endeavour to keep children as close to home as possible to enable them to remain part of their communities and retain their childhood connections. The closer to home a child is living, the more likely it is that direct support from home services could be offered or sustained, leading to more positive outcomes for the child or young person.

6. Next Steps

- Establish our Edge of Care provision to safely reduce our numbers of Children Looked After coming in to care.
- Continue to vigorously review all residential and IFA placements and ensure Operational Managers follow up on plans agreed to return children and young people home as agreed by Panel.

Recommendation:	Reason for Recommendation:
It is recommended that Members and Officers note the contents of this report.	To keep updated on Children's Services Children Looked After, external placements, Resource Panel and commissioning arrangements, including future plans and next steps .

Relevant Policy (ies):	Strategic Framework for Children Looked After Sufficient Supply of High Quality Care Placements Strategy		
Within Policy:	Y	Within Budget:	Children's Services budget

Relevant Local Member(s):	
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Person(s) To Implement Decision:			
Date By When Decision To Be Implemented:			
Is a review of the impact of the decision required?	Y / N		
If yes, date of review			
Person responsible for the review			
Date review to be presented to Portfolio Holder/ Cabinet for information or further action			

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Background Papers used to prepare Report:

- Children Looked After Placement Team Data