

**CYNGOR SIR POWYS COUNTY COUNCIL**

**HEALTH AND CARE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE**

**2<sup>nd</sup> November 2020**

**REPORT AUTHOR: County Councillor Rachel Powell  
Portfolio Holder for Young People and Culture**

**REPORT TITLE: Safe Accommodation for Children and Young People  
with Complex Needs in Powys**

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**REPORT FOR: Decision**

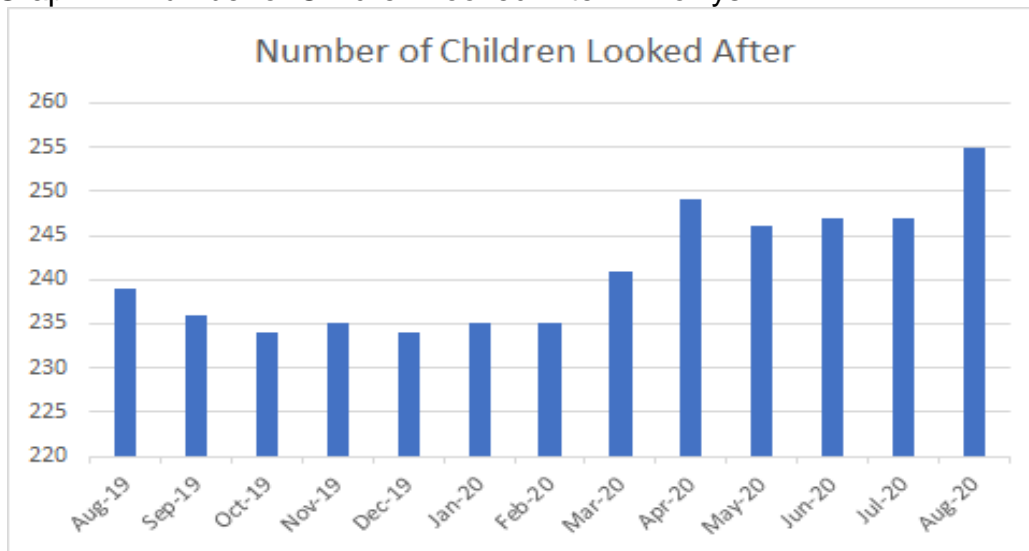
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**1.0 Purpose**

- 1.1** This report is provided to update on the current position regarding the need and funding of safe accommodation for children with complex needs in Powys. It provides detail on the deficit and demand for such provision, options, and resource implications. Safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys will provide a multi-agency therapeutic provision to children and young people, their families, and carers at different stages of their journey over a period of time to provide continuity of care and support in county and achieve the best possible outcomes for them.
- 1.2** Powys Children Looked After population is increasing and as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020 there were 255 Children Looked After in Powys.
- 1.3** Powys Children's Services have experienced five requests for secure accommodation within the last 12 months. The need for secure accommodation has become necessary partly due to a lack of provision of therapeutic residential placements for children and young people with severe emotional and behavioural needs either in Powys or Wales. Following their period in secure, again there has been insufficient therapeutic residential placements for these children and young people to step-down to. Despite endless searches via the 4Cs Framework, including presentation of children and young people to the 4Cs Independent Provider Meetings and non-Framework providers within Powys, Wales, England and Scotland, options, if any, are limited. This is not a unique problem to Powys but is reflective of the national context and the current difficulty in finding suitable placements and safe accommodation for children looked after with complex needs.
- 1.4** The number of children in placements outside of Powys and outside of Wales is also increasing, with 18 children and young people placed in residential care placements outside of Powys as at 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020. We currently have 9 young people with complex behavioural and emotional needs placed out-of-county. Independent residential homes within Powys were unable to offer a therapeutic placement due to complexity of needs, capacity, matching or lack of solo provision.

**1.5** Welsh Government Capital and Revenue Bids were submitted in Autumn, 2019 following the Regional Partnership Board process and ICF Capital Funding of £225,000 has been made available towards a multi-agency provision. Agreement from the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and RPB partners is required in order to proceed with the development of multi-agency safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys in order to commit to and draw down necessary funding.

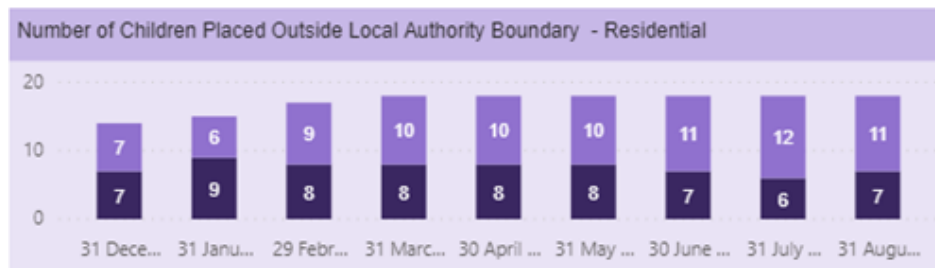
Graph 1 - Number of Children Looked After in Powys.



Graph 2 - Number of Children Looked After (in range of placements i.e. in-house foster care, independent foster carer, residential care, connected person) outside local authority boundary.



Graph 3 – Number of Children Looked After in residential care placed outside local authority boundary.



## 2.0 **Background**

- 2.1** The Powys Children Looked After Strategic Framework sets out Powys' aspirations, intent, and vision for improving outcomes for Children Looked After. For those children and young people in our care we, as Corporate Parents, need to provide positive parenting and specialist support. In Powys, current demand is greater than supply for quality placements for our Children Looked After. We look to place children and young people in the following priority list, in line with Powys Closer to Home Strategy and in order to meet their needs and achieve better outcomes for our Children Looked After: within their home community (within 30 miles from home); within Powys, out of county in Wales; and out of county, and out of Wales.
- 2.2** Relationships have been strengthened between Children's Commissioning Team and the external care providers in Powys and have improved significantly during the last 12 months, particularly during Covid-19. However, the number of available beds and specialised provision for the needs of our children with complex needs with Powys external providers are limited due to the models of care/statement of purposes and size of these homes.
- 2.3** Children's Services presented a report to Cabinet in January 2020 proposing a new Children's Services model for placements and accommodation and a suite of care homes and semi-independent accommodation in Powys for Powys Children Looked After closer to home. This included the provision of a multi-agency Children's Therapeutic Residential Home as an alternative to secure accommodation for some of our most complex children and young people, as at that time, three children had been placed in secure accommodation in the previous six months, two being in Scotland and one for a child under 13. Whilst the children and young people posed considerable challenges and the risks were high, arguably, had there been suitable alternative accommodation available this would have been a very different experience and would have met the needs of these young people in a more productive means.
- 2.4** As requested by Welsh Government, capital and revenue bids were submitted to Welsh Government via the RPB process to establish and run safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs within Powys, as an alternative to secure accommodation, and for those children and young people whose needs are so complex that securing alternative provision is either exceptionally challenging or simply not possible. A capital bid was also submitted to the Integrated Care Fund for a mainstream Children's Residential Home.

- 2.5** Bids were submitted via the RPB as the Welsh Government's stated purpose of requiring local authorities and health boards to establish Regional Partnership Boards is to manage and develop services to secure strategic planning and partnership working between local authorities and local health boards and to ensure effective services, care and support are in place to best meet the needs of their respective population.
- 2.6** Until February 2020, the Social Services and Well-being Act and its accompanying Part 9 statutory guidance did not offer a definition of what is meant by 'children with complex needs'. The definition offered by the amended guidance is:
- Children with disabilities and/or illness
  - Children who are care experienced
  - Children who are in need of care and support
  - Children who are at risk of becoming looked after
  - Children with emotional and behavioural needs.
- 2.7** In relation specifically to children with complex needs, the (recently revised) Part 9 statutory guidance of the Social Services and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014 states that there should be a focus on both preventative services for children and families, and care and support services for those children and young people that require it. There should be an integrated approach to delivering services for children with complex needs who require them, including transition arrangements from children's to adult services. Children and young people should receive a multi-disciplinary response which wraps around their needs, regardless of whether they have a formal diagnosis (such as a mental health or neurodevelopmental disorder). Too often, children are expected to fit into the boxes of either health or social care services, when an individual's needs rarely do fit neatly into one box or the other.
- 2.8** National Commissioning Board Wales (2018) Guidance for Regional Partnership Boards - Integrated Commissioning of Services for Families, Children and Young People with Complex Needs includes the following understanding of complex needs:
- Complex due to the display of risky, challenging and/or harmful behaviours
  - Complex due to mental ill health
  - Complex due to learning disability and/or autism
  - Complex due to context (e.g. abuse, neglect, growing up with domestic violence, growing up as a refugee/asylum seeker). The circumstances of some young people will become complex because in addition to their original needs they have also become involved in the youth justice system.
- 2.9** In the "No Wrong Door, Bringing Services Together to Meet Children's Needs" report, June 2020, the Commissioner for Wales has encouraged RPBs to consider how they can provide new residential provision for children and young people with the most complex needs who require mental health and social care input in one place.

**2.10** The report is about how children and their families who seek support for a range of needs often find that they have to navigate a very complex system, may fall through gaps where there are no services to meet their needs, or be on a waiting list for a long time only to be told that they were waiting in the wrong queue, or have been knocking on the wrong door all along. The Commissioner and her team believe that services should wrap around families, rather than them having to fit into what is out there, and that help should be provided as early as possible to prevent more serious problems developing.

**2.11** A ‘no wrong door’ approach means that whatever the reasons for a child being in distress, when they ask for help, they should not be told they have come to the wrong place or feel like they have knocked on the ‘wrong door.’

**2.12** Some of the key messages in relation to children with complex needs from the “No Wrong Door” report are as follows.

- In most areas of Wales, children and young people experiencing distress with mental health, emotional wellbeing and behavioural issues are waiting too long to get the help they need, and are being ‘bounced’ between services who cannot agree who is responsible for their care. We want to see services wrap around children and young people and their families, not for them to have to navigate complicated systems. We should respond on the basis of need, not just diagnoses.
- Regions need to move rapidly towards a ‘no wrong door’ approach in responding to children and young people’s emotional wellbeing and mental health needs. This means that they should not keep being told that they are knocking on the wrong door when trying to access help. This could include panel or hub models to provide timely joined-up help, drop-in centres, multi-disciplinary teams, models to make sure fewer children and young people need to go away from home to receive specialist care, or plans for specialist residential care closer to home.
- There have been recent welcome changes to Welsh Government policy, such as earmarking significant funding specifically for children with complex needs, strengthening the duty on regions for children’s participation in their work, and the publishing of a broader definition of children with complex needs so that regions should be working towards providing integrated services for all children in distress.
- Funding and resources need to be seen as ‘whole-region,’ not just as the property of local authorities or the local health board.

**2.13** Recommendation 5 of the “No Wrong Door” report states that the current Welsh Government review of ‘safe accommodation’ must lead to concrete action being taken to develop new residential provision in Wales for children with complex needs upon reporting.

### **3.0 Advice**

- 3.1** The Start Well Board originally considered this proposal in September 2019. The agreed aim is to work to make available in county provision of safe accommodation for children and young people with severe emotional and behavioural needs and reduce the need for secure accommodation. Following a period in secure, again there has been insufficient safe accommodation for these children and young people to step-down to and to identify a specialist therapeutic model and provision within county, to meet the individual needs of children and young people upon their transition. That is, to support children and young people who have been identified to make the transition to a step-down therapeutic provision before making the transition to in-house children's residential, foster care or families.
- 3.2** The Start Well Board has confirmed that this work is one of its key priorities. There is commitment from Powys Teaching Health Board, Powys County Council, and partners, in principle, in supporting the development of safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys. The care element of the support has been mapped out but the clinical governance and support for this model of provision has not yet been defined or confirmed. Work to complete this is ongoing and is a key priority of the Project Board.
- 3.3 Option 1** – Safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs would strive to ensure that Powys Children's Services vision is delivered for those children and young people in Powys with the most complex emotional and behavioural needs, ensuring they are safe, healthy, learning, fulfilled and have their voices heard and acted upon.
- 3.4** Safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys will provide placements for children looked after by Powys who cannot be appropriately placed in foster care or other residential provision and who may be at risk of moving to secure accommodation. Children may also be stepped down to this accommodation from out of county secure or residential placements when there is a transition plan in place to support them in returning to Powys.
- 3.5** The safe accommodation will be designed to deliver more than just care but in addition provide safe transitional placements for children and young people with very complex needs where education and multi-agency therapeutic support can be provided, on site, where necessary. Specialist assessments and intervention will be provided as part of the package of care until such a time as more community-based core services are appropriate and can be accessed.
- 3.6** The therapeutic children's service will work to enhance placement stability for children and young people already in the care of the local authority and whose placements are at risk of breaking down. Its aim will be to assist in:
- reducing the number of multiple placements moves
  - avoiding the use of placements out of county and out of Wales
  - preventing inappropriate admission of children and young people into secure accommodation.

- 3.7** The safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs will deliver intensive, clinically focused, evidence-based interventions over a specific period with the aim of helping children, young people, parents and carers to achieve the necessary behavioural changes. It will focus upon improving placement stability and parenting capacity to support children and young people to achieve positive outcomes, improve their life chances and social well-being.
- 3.8** The safe accommodation will be able to accommodate two or three young people.
- 3.9** When children and young people are ready to step-down from the safe accommodation in Powys, the psychologist will continue to support the wider system around the child/young person and particularly those who may be caring for them.
- 3.10** The service will provide children and young people with the skills needed for learning and future employment through an alternative curriculum. This will include outdoor adventure activities, arts and creative learning, technology, and play.

### 3.11 Timeline

Table 1

Action	Timescale
To agree on funding streams	October 2020
To identify property	October/November 2020
To engage with professionals on appropriateness of property and consider necessary planning/National Parks and building regulation permissions	November 2020
To undertake a locality assessment of home and community	November 2020
To purchase property	November – January 2021
To complete structural works and refurbish in line with CIW regulation and registration requirements	February/March 2021
To purchase any resources and equipment to furnish property	March 2021
To undertake staff recruitment and induction	March/April 2021
To submit registration application to Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW)	April 2021
To open new safe accommodation provision	May/June 2021

- 3.12 Option 2** - To continue with the current commissioning arrangements via 4Cs Framework / spot purchase from non-Framework providers and rely on external market and placements which are often out of county and country with no access to wrap around/core services within their local communities.

### 3.13 Preferred Option – Option 1

Whilst our preferred option for children and young people would ordinarily be to live and grow up in a family setting (be that their own or a foster family) there are

young people for whom residential care placements are necessary and a positive option for a period/stage in their lives.

Safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs, as outlined in option 1, will enable children and young people to be able to live in Powys amongst their home community and provide good quality local placement choice. The safe accommodation will be commissioned, managed, and monitored via Powys County Council and Powys Teaching Health Board as in-house provision. It is considered that in-house provision will allow Powys greater flexibility and control over admissions, type of provision, number of beds, compatibility of young people, management of risk, co-ordinated, targeted support and critically a reduction in placement breakdowns. Specialist services will be delivered by a wide range of multi-agency partners in Powys.

Option 1, the safe accommodation, will offer the following outcomes:

- Better outcomes for some of our most complex children and young people through enabling them to have their needs met in county and without exposing them to the damaging effects of multiple placement moves and/or being placed in secure environments.
- Safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs suitable as an alternative to secure, that can provide therapeutic specialist multi-agency support to children and young people with very complex needs.
- A reduction in the numbers of children placed out of county and out of country.
- Powys Children Looked After having a more positive care experience leading to improved health and wellbeing and better educational outcomes.
- Powys children and young people able to live in Powys amongst their own communities and provide good quality, local placement choice.
- Powys Children Looked After maintaining networks with education, health, and their communities with greater accessibility for family time and contact with friends.
- Powys Children Looked After will have greater opportunities and be better equipped to move into their adult lives in Powys (including transition planning to Adult Services, where appropriate).

#### **4.0 Resource Implications**

##### **4.1 Capital Available- £525,000**

Monies would be used to purchase, develop, redesign, and refurbish a suitable property which will meet the needs of children and young people and regulatory requirements.

£225k ICF capital funding allocated from Powys RPB.

£300k capital funding allocated from Welsh Government.

Both grants have been confirmed, the money available would be closely managed and the Project Manager within the Commissioning service would



ensure that the costs do not exceed the amounts available. The amount will enable significant development of a property and will ensure its appropriateness and functionality as a therapeutic children’s home.

It is recognised that the timescales are tight and that this is a risk. However, preparatory work is in place, and different sections of the Council are ready to act efficiently when enabled to do so. This type of work has been undertaken successfully previously during the past 12 months.

If the project is not enabled within the timeframe or as Plan A then, in order to mitigate and manage risk of loss of Welsh Government capital monies, a Plan B bid for Powys County Council capital monies (up to £300,000) would be submitted in order for the fallback option to be implemented as set out in 4.3.

The Capital Accountant notes the content of the report and the allocated grant amounts outlined will be added to Powys County Council Capital Programme, following approval of report.

#### **4.2 Revenue Cost – Safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs**

Detailed revenue costings have been costed, including assumptions relating to therapeutic and education elements. The annual revenue cost and weekly cost per bed for a 2 or 3 bedded Therapeutic Children’s Home, if fully occupied, are as follows.

Table 2 – Multi agency revenue costs for safe accommodation

	Total per Year	Total per Week	Based on 2 placements per week per child	Based on 3 placements per week per child
2-bed	£1,138,406	£21,834	£10,917	
3-bed	£1,511,613	£28,991		£9,664

Revenue costs include therapeutic interventions, care and support, staffing, overheads, resources/activities, and equipment/IT. There will be a need for additional monies to cover start-up and transition periods and we are working with Welsh Government and the RPB regarding the funding of the revenue costs for the first year of the project via Transformation and/or ICF revenue grants. This will enable the Council to use savings from the reduction in children being accommodated out of county during the first year and ongoing to fund the Local Authority’s part of the revenue costs.

The figures provided in table 2 are the full multi agency revenue costs which include the accommodation, care and support, therapy, educational and psychology costs. Powys County Council would be accountable for the care and support costs associated with the placements and costs of running the home. These costs will be funded through diverting existing monies attached to current children looked after placed with external providers, out of county/country and/or from monies re-allocated to new children looked after, dependent on demand.

Powys Teaching Health Board would be accountable for the health costs and will need to fund the clinical therapeutic model and therapeutic interventions provided as part of this provision. The clinical model of interventions is yet to be designed and agreed; therefore, the overall revenue costs will be informed by the agreed overall model of care, yet to be developed.

The cost to Powys County Council of one child in a therapeutic children’s home out of county can exceed £8,000 per week, with the cost on average being £7,046.00. This equates to an average cost of £734,814.00 per year for two children. This money would be an immediate saving to Powys County Council made available to fund safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys from the second year onward and will negate lifetime costs to the local authority.

### 4.3 Revenue Cost – PCC Children’s Home

If the multi-agency therapeutic approach cannot be achieved as an alternative to the option detailed within 4.2 the recommendation is that the building purchased would be used by Powys Children’s Services to run a Children’s Home. The revenue costs for a Powys Children’s Home are shown in table 3 and mirror the finance model in place for the Powys run children's home provision in the South of the County. This would be funded by diverting the external placements costs for Powys children who are looked after and who are currently placed with external providers who are often out of County.

Table 3 – Revenue costs for Powys Children’s Home

	Total per Year	Total per Week	Based on 2 placements per week per child
2-bed	£488,108	£9,361	£4,681

The external placement costs for children placed out of county would cover the revenue costs for this provision, however, it is important to note that depending on the children identified as most appropriate to move back to Powys and the costs associated with their current placement together with the timeliness of the move resulting in vacancies there could be a revenue shortfall if not carefully managed. Revenue costs include staffing, overheads, resources/activities and equipment/IT. Start-up and transition period costs would be managed in-year and funded from Children’s Services.

### 5.0 Legal implications

- 5.1 The Social Care Legal Team are aware of the shortage of appropriate placements through current cases and court proceedings and as such offer support to Option 1 (Principal Social Care Lawyer).
- 5.2 Property Services will support Children’s Services in securing a suitable property and undertake negotiation on its behalf.
- 5.3 HR advice will be provided as required.

## **6.0**            **Data Protection**

6.1      This proposal does not involve the processing of personal data.

## **7.0**            **Comment from local member(s)**

7.1      Local Member will depend upon location of multi-agency safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs.

## **8.0**            **Integrated Impact Assessment**

8.1      To follow

## **9.0**            **Recommendations**

9.1            Following consideration of the current position in respect of safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys, the following is recommended.

- To support the agreement from Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and RPB partners to proceed with the development of multi-agency safe accommodation for children and young people in Powys. The RPB's Cross Cutting Resource Overview Group (chaired by the Powys Teaching Health Board's Chief Executive Officer) and the RPB's Start Well Partnership have supported the project.
- To revise Powys County Council's Capital Programme to include £225,000 of available Integrated Care Fund (ICF) capital funding for 2020/21 (previously allocated to Start Well for the development of a multi-agency Early Help Hub) and £300,000 of available Welsh Government capital funding (2020/21), to support the purchase of the property and the development of safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs in Powys. The RPB's Cross Cutting Resource Overview Group (chaired by the Powys Teaching Health Board's Chief Executive Officer) and the RPB's Start Well Partnership have supported this funding allocation. If, for any unseen circumstances, we are unable to secure the full amount of capital funding the project would not proceed.
- To note the timescales and urgency for the purchase of a property within this financial year.
- The final decision with regards purchasing a property to be delegated to relevant Service Portfolio Holders following Cabinet support of this report.
- To acknowledge that the work required for the detailed development of the therapeutic support (model of health care) is yet to be completed and that the work to define the clinical details of delivery as a multi-agency project team will be completed as the project develops.

- A decision to support that in order to mitigate and manage risk, agreement be given that if safe accommodation for children and young people with complex needs development or revenue funding is delayed or cannot be secured on a multi-agency basis, the property would be utilised as a mainstream Children's Residential Home revenue funded by Powys County Council Children's Services providing placements to Powys children and young people within County diverting revenue funding which would be used to fund these placements. This will be dependent on Welsh Government capital funding approval to use the funding in the way and may require a Powys County Council capital bid be submitted for up to £300,000 capital monies to replace the Welsh Government capital contribution.

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