



RHONDDA CYNON TAF COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

CORPORATE PARENTING BOARD

19th NOVEMBER 2018

MONITORING OF INDEPENDENT SECTOR PLACEMENT PROVISION REPORT TO THE GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND CHILDRENS SERVICES

REPORT OF GROUP DIRECTOR COMMUNITY AND CHILDRENS SERVICES IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THE RELEVANT PORTFOLIO HOLDER COUNCILLOR C LEYSHON

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1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to provide members with information and an update about the commissioning and monitoring of external placements for children looked after by RCT CBC.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that corporate parenting board members note the contents of the report and the actions taken to ensure external placements are monitored.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

To ensure members in their role as corporate parents are assured that monitoring activity is taking place.

4. BACKGROUND

Children looked after by RCT CBC require a range of placement accommodation options from internal fostering and residential care to external provision through the use of independent fostering agencies and residential providers. In order to ensure that children placed with external providers are receiving quality care regular monitoring is required. RCT use a range of means to ensure the quality of care provided to children which is outlined in this report.

5. CURRENT SITUATION

- RCT operate a range of accommodation options which includes a fostering service and 3 residential homes. Due to variable demand for placements and matching considerations we also need to use the accommodation resources of external providers to ensure we meet the needs of children and young people.
- Whenever children are likely to become looked after their placement needs are considered by RCT Placement Panel which is attended by Heads of Service and Service Managers. Placement Panel is held on a weekly basis and plays an important role in monitoring accommodation needs and placements of children with external providers.
- The process for identifying placements for children and young people involves RCT placement officers initially reviewing internal resources available. Where a suitable match is not identified internally the children's commissioning support resource (CCSR), an online secure portal developed and supported by Welsh Government, is used to search external placements.
- As at 18/10/2018 RCT place 163 children and young people within the external independent fostering sector (24% of total CLA population) and 30 children young people within the external residential care sector (4% of total CLA population). The table below shows a breakdown of where children with external providers are placed as at 18/10/2018:

	Placed in RCT	Neighbouring Authority	In Wales not neighbouring authority	Outside of Wales	Total
ISP Foster Placements	90	55	19	1	165
ISP Residential	2	7	19	2	30

- As a member of the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4c's), RCT is supported to commission placements with external providers through the All Wales framework for the provision of foster care and residential care to children and young people. There are 21 fostering providers and 21 residential providers on the framework. There is also a process of regular review of providers through the annual QPA process as well as quarterly complaints reporting.
- There are currently 48 non-framework providers who are either currently operating in or looking to develop provision within Wales. 4c's are currently working with 19 providers across Wales to develop quality residential provision.

- The quality of external providers who have applied to the framework are continually monitored and are ranked on the framework by tiers 1, 2 and 3 dependent on quality and commercial performance. Those providers on tier 1 provide the highest score on quality and commercial performance. Quality continues to be reviewed on an annual basis to ensure consistency of performance.
- RCT also monitor providers who have children placed with them through a number of ways. A calendar of visits is planned with all providers by the Senior Practitioner Placements. This is a combination of announced and unannounced visits and where necessary will also involve the Residential Services Manager and if required the Contract Monitoring Officer. Reports on visits are provided to the Head of Services and will highlight any issues where identified.
- The appointment of the Senior Practitioner Placements has strengthened the monitoring of external placements and enabled a stronger focus on quality assuring placement referrals. We are developing links between RCT and external providers through regular visits as well as prioritising visits where there are safeguarding concerns.
- Issues, concerns and compliments are recorded by RCT and also reported by 4c's on a monthly and quarterly basis. The report highlights concerns in terms of quality of service and safeguarding as well as any compliments made. This enables RCT to explore trends and themes in quality across providers and local authorities and to use this when making decisions about where children and young people should be placed.
- During Qtr 1 2018/19 4c's reported 3 complaints from local authorities about residential providers. 2 related to quality of service, 1 related to safeguarding concerns. There were no concerns reported for fostering providers. 4c's also review all inspection reports and provide a summary of issues to RCT officers. During 2017/18 the trend was that more issues are raised about Non-Framework residential providers. This trend appears to be continuing into 2018/19.
- 4c's are able to consider removal of a provider from the Framework in circumstances where there is no evidence of improvement following monitoring.
- Non framework fostering and residential providers are only used for placements where no framework placements are available.

Where there is a need for us to use non framework providers the Senior Placement officer utilises the 4c's contract and service specification to quality assure the provision. They also review the latest CIW/OFSTED inspection report to evidence care standards and this is shared with Service Managers to aide decision making about the use of a non-framework placement.

- Since 1st April 2018 there have been 9 non-framework placements with independent fostering agencies and 17 non-framework residential placements.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

This report is for information only therefore an equality and diversity assessment is not required.

7. CONSULTATION

This report is for information only no consultation is required.

8. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION(S)

There are no financial implications relating to this report.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS OR LEGISLATION CONSIDERED

The placements service works within the regulatory requirements of the Social Service and Wellbeing Act (Wales) 2014.

10. LINKS TO THE COUNCILS CORPORATE PLAN / OTHER CORPORATE PRIORITIES/ FUTURE GENERATIONS – SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT.

The monitoring of external placement provision links with the corporate plan priority making sure that children and young people get a great start in life.

11. CONCLUSION

This report provides an update of the monitoring activity necessary to ensure children and young people are placed in suitable provision and receive a quality service from externally commissioned providers.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

AS AMENDED BY

THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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