

Market Position Statement From April 2020 to April 2022

A statement to providers about our Children's Services explaining the current demand and projected future need for our foster, residential and supported living services for our children looked after.

Introduction

We have a placement commissioning strategy (PCS) that shapes and informs our service development. This strategy was agreed through data analysis of our looked after population; consultation with stakeholders; research of the process and practices for sourcing appropriate accommodation; and focused decision making on how to improve outcomes for children who are looked after. We are now able to set out our Market Position Statement (MPS) to effectively communicate our vision for the strategic commissioning of placements to the market, which is to:

Meet our Sufficiency Duty by increasing placement choice and enable good matching, through;

- ✓ shaping our internal services
- ✓ working in partnership with stakeholders, and a range of public and private sector partners
- ✓ working in collaboration with public sector partners across the Regional footprint where this offers identifiable benefits;
- ✓ co-produce outcomes focussed services acknowledging that there are a range of different methods for strategic commissioning with multiple partners who may be co-operatives, charities or commercial partners.

Purpose of our Market Position Statement

This Market Position Statement is for fostering providers (referred to as IFA's), providers of children's residential care homes and supported living providers who are; delivering, able to deliver, or are planning to deliver' services in our local area. This document will help to structure engagement between the Council, Children's Services, our children looked after, their family and friends, carers and providers regarding the future vision of this service.

Our Market Position Statement will:

- Act as a starting point for discussions between Children's Services and care providers;
- Provide data on current placements and forecast demand to inform providers on specific areas of growth or need;
- Identify priority service areas of development where we want to co-produce, collaborate and commission services from providers.

Where sufficiency cannot for identifiable reasons be achieved in the local area, there is a joint commitment to prioritise sufficiency across regional footprints that mirror the Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and Local Health Board (LHB) footprint. The basis for this commitment is evidence based, intended to support improved outcomes for looked after children and to maximise use of local resources for local children.

If considering Rhondda Cynon Taf as a location for your service, we welcome an early conversation with providers to help inform location assessments and decision making on service developments. We are keen to work with providers who are able to meet the needs profile of our children.

What Outcomes do we want for our Children?

We will ensure that children are looked after in safe placements that meets their assessed needs, to enable them achieve the best possible outcomes, fulfilling their potential. Under the Social Services and Well-being Act (Wales) 2014, this is now articulated through the concept of well-being. The Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4C's) have in worked with young commissioners to identify outcomes that are important to children and young people that correlate to the Act, we monitor service outcomes against these child focused priorities.

Carer Skill Set & Training

Our social work practice is informed by building resilient families, outcomes focussed conversations and influenced by the Trauma Recovery Model (TRM). It is therefore helpful if carers are recruited, trained and supported to work in a consistent way alongside our social work teams. As an Authority we can work with providers to supplement carer and provider training where necessary. The Cwm Taf Regional Training Calendar is open to local providers.

Resources

Like most Welsh Local Authorities, we operate within the context of reduced funding and increasing demand pressures. The Council's spend for 2018/19 was £6,235,067.00 on commissioning external foster care placements and £3,498,660.00 on delivering foster care placements through in-house foster carers. Our spend on external residential placements during the same period was £7,348,573.00 on commissioning placements and £1,282,221.00 on delivering in-house residential placements.

We are more likely to commission services that have clear aims and objectives, target resources and provide strong evidence of impact of value for money. Having a model of care that is understood and embedded across the whole organisation is a development that we absolutely welcome, examples of this include: Trauma Recovery Model, MYST and DDP. Models of care should be effectively monitored by providers to demonstrate positive outcomes.

Research evidences that models setting clear expectations with a consistent approach build staff confidence. They improve the quality of assessment, intervention, and direct work with children and their families and ultimately improve outcomes for children. We are committed to work with providers to support service developments and welcome contact from you to discuss any service developments.

Fostering

Where we are now

We are well placed with a good balance of internal and external provision. We are confident that we match the majority of local children's needs.

There is a small number of children who require complex care packages, where we are unable to offer placement choice, or these are not to the high standard we would like. Some of our children need specialist support due to their needs, which include:

- trauma,
- challenging behaviour,
- anger management issues,
- physical violence and verbal aggression., inappropriate sexual behaviour,
- drug and alcohol abuse.

Key Statistics

We have a reducing reliance on IFAs, 31% (165) of the total foster placements (534) are placed with IFA (Dec 2018)

25% (176) children placed out of area (Dec 2018), however a majority are placed in neighbouring LAs, only 1 foster placement outside Wales and 9 with relative foster carers.

29% (4 of 164) children who become looked after were placed on an unplanned basis with a further 21% (35) on an emergency basis. (Mar 2019).

What we don't need

We do not want to compete with IFAs for the same carer pool. We want to work in partnership.

We do not need short breaks support for families & foster carers, demand is met internally.

We do not need parent and child foster placements, there is very limited demand for these.

We do not need carers for children with a learning or physical disability, there is low and static demand for these.

We do not need carers for babies, demand met internally.

Where we want to be

We want increased choice of foster care placements able to support children who need specialist support.

We expect the internal fostering recruitment conversion rate to improve in medium term. increasing internal capacity and choice.

We want to reduce the number of out of area placements we make through necessity rather than choice.

We want to have strong relationships with charitable, co-operative and commercial providers, working with you to develop services that will complement those we deliver in house.

We need carers who are:

- * Resilient when faced with challenging behaviour this includes the threat of physical violence, verbal aggression, anger management issues and are skilled in de-escalation.
- * Resilient & trained to work with childhood trauma, absconding, risk of CSE, risk of criminal exploitation, self-harm behaviours and those with ADHD.
- * Able to support children who have reduced school timetables/attendance and who may be excluded from school, this requires flexibility of routines.
- * Able to support children to maintain contact with family and friends, normalising this as visiting family wherever possible. Carers who are able to proactively work to reunify children and young people with their families.
- * Proactive asking for support when needed to maintain stability.
- * Carers who are able to accept emergency referrals.

Residential

Where we are now

Children and young people do not have sufficient placement choice and as a result experience instability. Capacity and ability to meet need is insufficient.

There is a particular pressure identifying suitable placements for young people requiring complex care packages, supported by multi agency skills.

We are unable place children and young people within residential homes in the local geographic area. A number of local providers accept out of area and out of region placements.

What we don't need

RCT run 4 residential homes. The in house provision supports

- short breaks for disabled children (1 home)
- short or long term placements (2 homes)
- emergency / immediate assessment on a short term basis.(1 home)

We do not need duplication of internal services.

We do not want new homes to open in the Aberdare, Pontypridd localities where there is already capacity.

Where we want to be

We are implementing an established model of care, the Trauma Recovery Model across all RCT residential provision.

We want providers to complete location assessments and consult us prior to purchasing properties for development.

We want strong relationships with providers able to offer positive outcomes for young people who require complex care packages at the highest end of the continuum of need.

We want to proactively coproduce solutions with local providers.

Key Statistics

5% (39) of all placements are made within an independent sector residential setting. 1% (8) are made in internal provision. (Mar 2019)

25% (176) of all placements are out of area. (Dec 2018)

10% (17) placed outside of Wales, 4 placements were made outside of Wales for young people requiring complex care and support packages.

29% (4 of 164) children who become looked after (were placed on an unplanned basis with a further 21% (35) on an emergency basis. (Mar 2018)

Who we need

- * RCWs trained in trauma recovery & who offer empathetic care.
- * RCWs trained in crisis intervention, who can work calmly under the pressure of emergency planning.
- * Resilient carers trained to work with childhood trauma, absconding, high risk of CSE, risk of criminal exploitation, high risk self-harm behaviours, UASC and those with ASD presenting behaviours.
- * Resilient carers when faced with threat of physical harm by young people towards carers and other children. Carers should be skilled in de-escalation techniques that minimise physical interventions.
- * Services who are able to work to reunify children and young people with their families.
- * Services who are able to support children and young people who have clinical therapy, mental health and behaviour support needs.
- * Services who are able to offer education packages.

Supported Transitions

Where we are now

Transition accommodation is an existing gap and an area of anticipated increased demand due to the profile of our children and young people looked after.

A Housing First Strategy is being developed regionally which will address transition to adulthood and transition planning across Council Departments.

Domiciliary care providers offer ad hoc support packages to those in greatest need but as a short term fix rather than the long term plan.

There is limited capacity to support transition from residential to foster care.

What we don't need

Training flats in isolation from support packages. The support element should be integral to developments.

Large multi occupancy developments are not likely to be fit for purpose for our young people with highest support needs.

Short term tenancy support arrangements.

Where we want to be

We would like our children and young people who leave care to have the support that they need into adulthood for stable safe supported transitions.

We need a range of suitable accommodation to support care leavers to develop the skills that enable them to move on full to independence and maintain successful tenancies which can be stable homes for them. More single assessment placements for those 16+ yrs.

Expand the supported lodging provision, exploring opportunities to enhance mentoring available for care leavers through a mentoring scheme.

Sufficiency for transition / step down to foster care.

Key Statistics

14% (92) young people looked after are aged 16+ and this percentage is increasing. The majority of care leavers left as they reached the age of 18 not younger (Mar 19).

Children between 10-15 years are consistently the largest cohort of children looked after so this upward trend is likely to continue.

Training flat provision is over subscribed.

There has been an increase in the number of care leavers remaining with foster carers post 18 years since 2018.

- * 3rd remain with foster carers in When I'm Ready placements,
- * 3rd return to family/friends
- * 3rd move into independent living

Who we need

We will engage with a range of providers to commission supported living accommodation for care leavers 16+.

We would like to co-produce solutions with established housing providers who can offer care leavers a stable home through long term tenancies with initial flexible support packages.

More foster carers offering When I'm Ready placements

We need foster carers who will work intensively with residential care to support transition to a family environment.

How we will commission services

We will continue to use the All Wales Local Authority Frameworks to commission individual placements across a range of placement types. These frameworks deliver strategic level partnerships with providers in fostering and residential services. The frameworks are used where either the Local Authority's Sufficiency Duty necessitates external commissioning or where best quality, outcome delivery and value for money is achieved through external commissioning rather than internal service delivery. The All Wales Frameworks are managed by the 4C's.

The vehicle we use for e-tendering external fostering and residential placements is the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) which offers transparent and outcomes focussed placement commissioning for both Framework and Non-Framework regulated placements and allows compliance with the relevant procurement guidance and regulation that underpins our commissioning. We want our market providers to be registered on CCSR to respond to tenders that are published.

For bespoke or larger tenders we use Sell 2 Wales and actively require our market providers to be registered on this site to respond to tenders that are published.

Support we will offer in service development

We want to work collaboratively with good quality providers to co-produce development of services that we need. In specific areas, a co-production approach with shared resource components between us and providers that work in an integrated way may be identified as the best approach. Opportunities for discussions on co-production will be publicised across the market.

We take a relationship based approach to commissioning underpinned by compliant procurement processes. We believe that use of e-procurement systems are an effective tool that can complement relationship commissioning rather than transactional commissioning, with a positive ethos adopted by partners.

We will facilitate events for existing and potential providers on an annual basis which will complement regional and national provider engagement events.

We will use forums and events at regional and national level to engage with providers, these may be facilitated by 4Cs or RPBs. We encourage providers to attend these events which are valuable to information sharing and networking.

We will ensure the voice of the child is heard by continuing to support children who are looked after to influence our commissioning decisions and will always consult with them to shape the services that they want.

This MPS is a live document and will be updated bi-annually or whenever there are key changes that you need to know about.

Contact us

- Commissioning - 4Cs@rctcbc.gov.uk 01443 570098
- Contracting - Sarah Rees Placement Team Manager sarah.rees2@rctcbc.gov.uk