



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT, DOCUMENT

Removing profit from the care of children looked after: briefing December 2023

December 2023 update of the work of the Programme Board.

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Background

Our Programme for Government contains a number of commitments that set out our vision for children's services in Wales. Our ambition is for whole system change and, at its heart, we want to see more children and young people being enabled to live with their families and in their home neighbourhoods with many fewer needing to enter care. We also want to ensure the period that young people are in care is as short as possible.

We are committed to keeping families together. Our vision is to redesign how we look after children and young people so we can do the best for our young people, their families and communities by providing services that are locally based, locally designed and locally accountable.

As part of the Co-operation Agreement between the Welsh Government and Plaid Cymru, there is a clear commitment to 'eliminate private profit from the care of children looked after' as a key component of this radical agenda.

The initial focus of our proposals is on the private provision of residential care for children, alongside independent sector foster care.

A multi-agency Programme Board has been established to progress the technical and development work to support our legislative options, shape our future approach and deliver market stability.

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Summary of Programme Board discussion – 22 November 2023

Progress

A further meeting of both the Children's Services Transformation Delivery Group and the Ministerial Oversight Board was held in October.

The North Wales care experienced summit took place on 22 October 2023 and was attended by the Deputy Minister for Social Services.

The Corporate Parenting Charter had now been publicly launched and work was under way to develop a toolkit, engagement plan and to strengthen guidance.

The evaluation of the virtual school's pilot would begin in the new year. 13 local authorities had participated.

A new monitoring framework had been established with local authorities and Regional Partnership Boards for complex need provision.

Amended guidance was being finalised on the Single Unified Safeguarding Review, with training beginning in January and the guidance being launched in Spring 2024.

The Family Drug and Alcohol Courts pilot had now ended, and the evaluation was underway.

Officials had continued to meet with local authorities to discuss their Placement Commissioning Strategies.

Considerable work and time had gone into completing policy instructions for the Social Care Bill given the complexities involved.

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Phase 2 workstreams

The four workstreams had continued to meet on a regular basis to support the work of the Programme Board.

A workshop had also taken place on 20 November 2023, supported by members of workstream 3, to provide expert advice on transitioning to a not-for-profit model for current for-profit providers. The event was well attended, and feedback is being compiled as an outcome of the workshop.

Local authority placement commissioning strategies

Local authorities had been revising their Placement Commissioning Strategies, many with the support of the 4Cs.

The key challenge identified was forecasting future need. This was linked to the decision making around policy implementation. Until there was a clear idea of the number of for-profit providers who would transition to a not-for-profit model it was difficult to forecast.

Communications

A draft Communication Implementation Plan had been circulated to members to consider further what tailored communication was needed and next steps to develop these communications.

The development of communications needed to be an iterative process, working with Board and workstream members to develop the content and advise on distribution mechanisms to ensure targeted messaging is being received by all stakeholders.

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A general update had been developed by Welsh Government and circulated to all Programme Board and workstream members for sharing with their networks.

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