



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT, DOCUMENT

Removing profit from the care of children looked after: board discussion August 2024

August 2024 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.

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

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.

Summary of Programme Board discussion, 22 July 2024

Progress in relation to the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill:

The Health and Social Care Committee had held several evidence sessions throughout June and July, with the minister giving evidence as well as several

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members of the board and their representatives.

Several issues had been raised by stakeholders during the committee's oral evidence sessions, including:

- concern around sufficiency of placements and consequently a potential increase in services operating without registration
- the four not-for-profit models on the face of the bill presented key challenges for many providers to becoming a not-for-profit entity including issues of cost and practicality
- concerns around workforce and losing expertise from the sector if providers choose to exit the market
- the transfer process for foster carers adds an extra layer of complexity and poses a risk to maintaining the numbers of foster carers needed
- more clarity needed surrounding arrangements for legacy placements and the process for approval of supplementary placements
- the financial implications for local authorities and resources required to develop in house provision
- achieving sufficiency of not-for-profit placements within the current intended timescales for implementation

Reports were expected from the committee around mid-October 2024, which would signify the end of Stage 1 scrutiny.

Following this, it was expected the Senedd would debate on the general principles of the bill towards the end of October 2024, before stage 2 scrutiny commenced.

Phase 2 workstreams:

With the introduction of the bill, it was proposed that a new phase and focus of the workstreams would be needed going forward. It was agreed that:

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- workstreams 1 and 4, would merge into one workstream focused on local authority implementation and working to overcome specific challenges for local authorities and other public sector bodies
- workstream 2 would remain with a slightly revised programme of work and refreshed membership
- workstream 3 would remain with a slightly revised programme of work

It was acknowledged that under these workstreams there is likely to be a need for several subgroups focusing on particular issues, and these may require membership from across the different workstreams.

Communications:

The general briefing document discussed at the previous meeting had been circulated to members of the programme board and all workstreams to share as widely as possible.

In addition, several resources had been published alongside the bill and members were encouraged to review this and note any gaps in knowledge or areas that may be unclear.

Targeted communication updates for various groups impacted by the changes were currently being compiled by Welsh Government officials to be shared with members for comment towards the end of Summer 2024. Of particular importance would be communications and information for children and young people.

Risk register:

The Programme Board Risk Register had been amended to align with the standard Welsh Government risk register template.

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The previously identified risks had been merged into key themes to allow for more thorough and regular reviews by the board.

Target risks had been included to highlight the comfortable level of risk or the level of risk which would have to be tolerated.

Given the changes that had been made to the latest version, members were encouraged to review the previous and new version ahead of the next programme board meeting where a detailed and substantial conversation would be held.

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