



Llywodraeth Cymru
Welsh Government

REPORT, DOCUMENT

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

October 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 – 19 September 2023

Progress

The Corporate Parenting Charter had an initial soft launch on 29 June, with a wider launch held in September 2023. Members were urged to sign up if they had not already done so.

Following the Inaugural Care Experienced Summit in December 2022, a follow-up Care Experienced Summit is being scheduled to take place in North Wales later this year.

On 8th August the Deputy Minister for Social Services chaired a fostering and adoption panel at the National Eisteddfod to discuss the benefits of businesses adopting practices and policies which enable their staff to undertake the adoption and/or fostering journey. It was at this event that the National Adoption Service launched its 'Adoption in your Business' Toolkit which has been created to help employers progress their adoption policies and ways in which they can support employees who have adopted, alongside those who may be considering becoming adopters.

Through its corporate adoption policy, Welsh Government has been awarded recognition for meeting the National Adoption Service's requirements outlined within this toolkit.

On 13th September Foster Wales held its annual Conference in Wrexham where it reflected upon the past year's achievements and discussed plans for future work. To support the harmonisation of fees and allowances work Foster Wales launched a live survey at the event to seek feedback from foster carers. This will remain open until 29th September.

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Phase 2 workstreams

The three workstreams established under the Programme Board continue to meet on a regular basis in order to identify and advise the board on action to be taken to support implementation of the agenda.

A new workstream has been established to consider issues of transition for children and young people who may be impacted by the policy to remove profit. The aim is to ensure the best interests of children and young people are kept at the forefront of policy development.

A workshop will be held later this year to work through some of the barriers to transitioning to a not-for-profit model being highlighted by some current private providers. This workshop will consider issues of assets and business models in more detail.

Risks

The Risk Register has been updated to reflect the comments from Programme Board members made at previous meetings. Some further considerations were flagged, and a further version will be circulated.

Communications

The Communications Plan has been updated, but this now needs to be implemented with specific messaging developed for particular groups of stakeholders. The Welsh Government will work in collaboration with members of the Board and workstreams on this.

Communications needed to be targeted, open, accurate and timely, with

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particular sensitivities needed surrounding how children and young people are communicated with regarding this policy and legislation.

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