

Children and Young People's
Residential Care and Fostering

North Wales Market Position Statement

Update to May 2019 publication
April 2021 to April 2023



Update to providers explaining the current demand
and projected future need for our foster
and residential services

1. Introduction

The North Wales region consists of Wrexham, Gwynedd, Flintshire, Anglesey, Denbighshire and Conwy local authorities. We work in partnership with social services, health, the third and independent sectors, carers and others in order to ensure that the care provided to our children is of the highest quality and provides value for money, and most importantly provides the best outcomes for children who are looked after by us.

Where sufficiency cannot, for identifiable reasons be achieved in the local area, there is a joint commitment to prioritise sufficiency across a regional footprint that mirrors the Regional Partnership Board (RPB) and Betsi Cadwaladr University Health Board (UHB) 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.

This Regional Market Position Statement reflects the placements needs for services in our area. When planning and developing your services we would like to remind you to consider the current Programme for Government, including the commitment to “Protect, re-build and develop our services for vulnerable people”, the Programme for Government and details on how they will achieve their commitment can be found via the link below:

<https://gov.wales/sites/default/files/publications/2021-06/programme-for-government-2021-to-2026.pdf>

The North Wales region are now able to communicate our joint vision for the strategic commissioning of placements to the market, which is to:

Meet our Sufficiency Duty by providing the right placement choice and enable good matching based on our regional needs, through;

- ✓ shaping our internal services which will enable us to support our regional partners
- ✓ 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.



2. Purpose of our Market Position Statement

This Regional Market Position Statement is for fostering providers (referred to as IFA's) and providers of children's residential care homes who are; delivering, able to deliver, or are planning to deliver' services in our region.

Our Regional Market Position Statement will:

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

3. 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 to 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 worked with young commissioners to identify outcomes that are important to children and young people in placements, within the national understanding of wellbeing. This is the basis of our quality assurance of service delivery to monitor good and improving outcomes.

4. Resources

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. We would like services to have a model of care that is understood and embedded across the whole organisation and the delivery of therapeutic trauma informed care.

Research evidences that models setting clear expectations with a consistent approach will 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 working with providers and welcome contact from you to discuss any service developments.

Our identified placement needs, detailed by placement type, are set out in the following pages alongside where we want to externally commission provision on a regional basis.

5. Foster Services:

What's happening now?

- We are able to provide foster placements to meet the needs of our younger children or children less exposed to trauma.
- Demand for foster placements currently outstrips supply. This includes placements for children who require a complex multi-agency care package or have challenging risk management plans. Examples of these behaviours include anger management issues, verbal aggression and physical aggression towards adults.
- Some of our children and young people are living outside of the North Wales region, which is not our preferred location.
- As a host local authority for other areas, there is significant pressure on our available resources to support our children who are looked after.
- The North Wales region is a target for 'county lines' drug networks by gangs from Northern England, with the majority of gangs from the Merseyside area. These gangs are exploiting vulnerable groups including our children who we look after, this includes using children to transport drugs.
- North Wales is a host authority for foster care provision for some English local authorities, this has increased the prevalence of County Lines within our area. Some children looked after by English local authorities have been exploited by county lines gangs before moving to North Wales and this may continue in some cases in their new location.
- There are not a enough foster carers who are able to care for our children who have a disability. Covid has placed significant pressure on families and there are currently children within our regions who require carers with the right skills to support them.
- There is not enough availability in our region for our disabled children who require short breaks.
- There are not enough carers who are able to speak Welsh in our region.
- There is a shortage of parent and child places in the North Wales region, particularly in the Wrexham and Flintshire areas.
- There is a lack of sufficiency for highest end of needs profile. There are children who currently live in a care home as there are not enough skilled foster carers who are able to meet their needs.

What we don't need:

- We do not want to compete with independent providers for local carers. We believe this is a waste of everyone's resources. This can be achieved by independent agencies targeting their local recruitment at the areas where we are not developing our own in house services.
- The provision of general foster placements by the independent sector is not an area where we require an increase in provision.
- We are able to look after the majority of children under 8 within our in house fostering services.

What we want:

- We want both existing and new local providers to target their recruitment activity at specialist areas of regional demand which are categorised as:
 - Sibling Groups
 - Parent and child placements
 - Children who are aged 8 and over, presenting with attachment disorders, multiple needs, often requiring therapeutic support and complex care packages.
- We want permanence for young people who have experienced significant trauma and maybe exhibiting multiple risk-taking behaviours including substance misuse, self-harm, risk of CSE, poor decision making and absconding.
- We want providers to support carers with well-trained teams around the placement, promoting stability, with early identification of any indicators of instability that if left unaddressed may lead to unnecessary disruption. Wrap around support should be responsive to assist with de-escalation of conflict within a placement. This support can be delivered in partnership with the host local authority.
- We are keen to work with providers who have an established local footprint of capacity and those who will invest in service development locally for local children.
- During periods of instability, we want providers to engage with us early so that we are able to provide the right care for our children and prevent any unnecessary placement moves.
- We want providers who ensure that their carers are appropriately trained to meet the individual needs of our children.
- We want to offer and deliver strong collaborative services for North Wales.
- We want our children and young people to stay close to home and live in North Wales.
- When an additional child is placed with a foster carer who cares for our children, we would like providers to consult us in order to ensure that our children remain settled during the process.
- Welsh culture is very important to us as a region and we want more foster carers who are able to speak Welsh.
- We are especially keen to work with local charities, co-operatives and social enterprises to increase their presence in the local fostering market.
- We want all providers to deliver social value across our communities in North Wales.

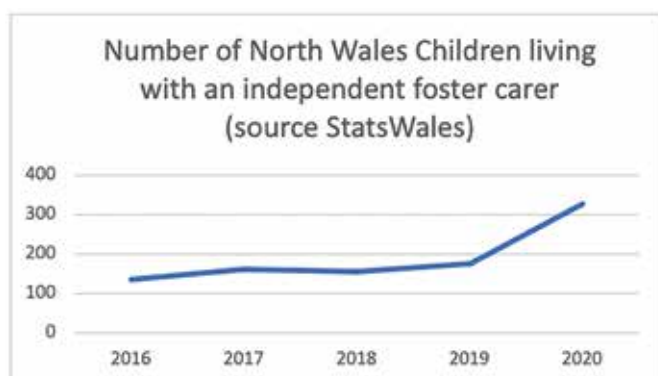
Carer skill set & training desired:

- Carers who are able to work with our internal services and are trained in the delivery of therapeutic trauma informed care.
- Carers who are aware of the impact of county lines and have received training to support children who are vulnerable to exploitation via these gangs. This includes the resilience to work with children who are being exploited by gangs, frequently abscond and can display verbal and sometimes physical aggression.
- Carers who are resilient & trained to work with childhood trauma, absconding, exploitation and self-harm behaviours.
- Carers who are trained to understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on children who they care for.
- Carers who are proactive, asking for support when needed, e.g. when placements may be experiencing instability.

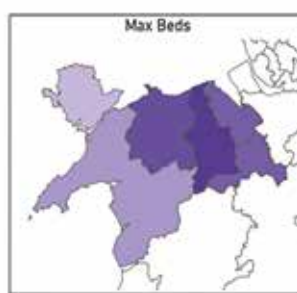
- Resilient carers when faced with threat of physical harm by young people; skilled in de-escalation.
- Flexible carers who will work across different environments, including supporting the child in their parental home.
- Carers with the ability to speak Welsh or commitment to learn.
- Carers who are able to offer parent and child placements

Key Statistics:

- The number of children who required a foster placement increased by 34% during the period April 2016 (600 children) to March 2020 (805 children).
- As at the 31st March 2020, there were 805 North Wales children living with a foster carer 40% (325 children) were living with an independent foster carer and the majority of those children required a specialist placement in order to support their needs, which could not be supported by our in house services.
- There are currently 11 children who are living in a children's home who could be supported by specialist foster carer. There are not enough foster carers with the right skills to support the needs profile of our children.
- During the period April 2020 to the end of February 2021, there were 34 children who required a parent and child placement and assessment.



Foster provision in North Wales – March 2021



19	Providers
647	Care Settings
1,240	Max beds

6. Residential Services:

What's happening now?

- The number of children who live in a children's home has increased, some of these children are able to live in a foster placement but there are currently not enough foster carers with the right skills to support them.
- Some of our children who live in a children's home live outside of LA boundary despite sufficient in area capacity.
- Conwy and Denbighshire are developing some in house provision in order to build capacity.
- The North Wales region is a target for 'county lines' drug networks by gangs from Northern England, with the majority of gangs from the Merseyside area. These gangs are exploiting vulnerable groups including our children who we look after.

- It is challenging for us to access secure welfare beds and local alternatives that provide crisis intervention and diversion from secure accommodation.
- The gaps in our current provision include:
 - Local emergency / crisis models of care;
 - Step down from Secure Welfare;
 - Homes with evidence based models and proven outcomes;
 - Support for emotional and mental health ;
 - Services that are provided in the Welsh language;

What we don't need:

- We do not encourage expansion in North Wales by independent providers of residential care for children whose services are not developed to meet the needs of our children.
- We do not want providers to operate children's homes without a clear model of care or deliver standard provision only.

What we want:

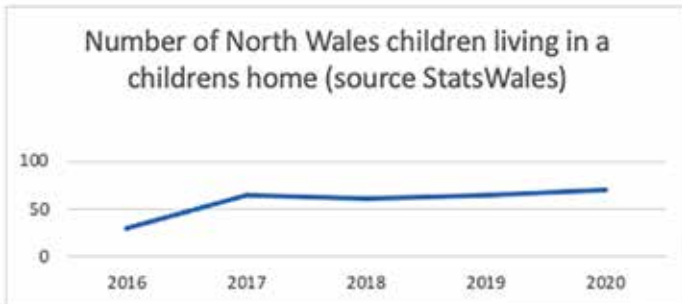
- We want to work with new and existing providers and support them to deliver models of care that will meet the needs of our children.
- We want to work with new and existing providers and encourage them to develop their businesses in a way that, in addition to improving outcomes for our children, also provide a wider social value to our communities.
- We want providers who are able to safely care for our children with multiple high needs and are able to provide alternative accommodation to secure welfare provision.
- We want providers who will work in partnership with us during periods of transition including stepping down to live with a foster carer or reunification with their family.
- Welsh culture is very important to us as a region and we want more providers who are able to deliver their services in Welsh.

Carer skill set & training desired:

- Carers who are able to work with our internal services and are trained in the delivery of therapeutic trauma informed care.
- Carers who are aware of the impact of county lines and have received training to support children who are vulnerable to exploitation via these gangs. This includes the resilience to work with children who are being exploited by gangs, frequently abscond and can display verbal and sometimes physical aggression.
- Resilient & trained to work with childhood trauma, absconding, exploitation and self-harm behaviours.
- Carers who are trained to understand the impact of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) on children who they care for.
- Carers who are trained in crisis intervention, and can work calmly under the pressure of emergency planning.
- Resilient when faced with threat of physical harm & trained in de-escalation, with positive behaviour management planning, minimising use of restraints;
- Carers with the ability to speak Welsh or commitment to learn.

Key Statistics:

- As at the 31st March 2020, there were 70 North Wales children living in a children's home.
- The total number of children living in a children's home increased by 133% in North Wales during the period 31st March 2016 (30 children) to 31st March 2020 (70 children).



Residential provision in North Wales – March 2021



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 Regions 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 via <https://www.data.cymru/ccsr-registration>.

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 via <https://www.sell2wales.gov.wales/>.

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 and use forums, events at regional and national level to engage with providers. The North Wales Region, the 4Cs, or Regional Partnership Boards may facilitate these events, and we encourage providers to attend these events, which are valuable to information sharing and networking.

We will ensure the voice of the child and young person is heard by continuing to support children and young people 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.

For enquiries regarding this Market Position Statement
please contact :

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