

When I Am Ready (WIR)

Reason for the Report

1. The Corporate Parenting Advisory Committee is responsible for actively promoting real and sustained improvements in the life chances of Looked After Children, Children in Need, and Care Leavers. This report will provide Members with information in relation to the 'When I am Ready' (WIR) scheme enables young people in foster care to continue to live with their former foster carers under a different arrangement once they turn 18yrs. The presentation will provide information on the number of young people this may affect and the different living arrangement that has to be developed with monitored outcomes.

Background

2. The When I am Ready (WIR) scheme is part of the local authorities new legal duties under the Social Services and Well Being (Wales) Act 2014, which came into force April 2016
3. The transition to adulthood can be more difficult for care leavers than many peers of a similar age. This scheme will give young people the time and support to develop the necessary skills and resilience to make a successful transition.
4. The WIR scheme seeks to ensure that the life chances of Looked After Children and care leavers are maximised in terms of health, educational attainment, and access to training and employment, to aid the transition to a secure and productive adulthood.
5. The WIR scheme allows young people, who have previously been fostered, to stay in a stable and nurturing family environment up to the age of 21yrs or 25yrs if they are completing an agreed programme of education or training.

6. The presentation will give more information about the Cardiff WIR scheme, the impact on young people and their former foster carers, and the outcomes to date.

Financial Implications

7. There are no direct financial implications arising from this report.

Legal Implications

8. When I am ready is the name given to the scheme through which local authorities fulfil their statutory duty to facilitate post 18 living arrangements under the Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014. It imposes duties upon local authorities towards young people in foster care who wish to continue living with their foster parents beyond the age of 18, up until the age of 21 or until they young person ends their agreed programme of education or training after their 21st birthday.

There are duties upon the Local Authority under the Act to;

- i) Ascertain when completing pathway assessments/plans for young people aged 16 and 17, to ascertain whether the young person or his foster carers wish to make a post 18 living arrangement.
- ii) To provide advice and support to facilitate post 18 living arrangements, where the young person and foster carers wish to enter into them and provided the local authority is satisfied that this is not inconsistent with the young person's well-being.

Once a young person has turned 18 and is an adult, they are no longer legally 'in care' or 'looked after', fostering arrangements and legislation relating to children placed with foster cares no longer apply. The Local Authority is no longer making a 'placement', but facilitating a 'post 18 living arrangement' for that young person.

RECOMMENDATION

9. The Committee is recommended to note the information presented.

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