

**CORPORATE PARENTING
ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

22 January 2023

REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR, CHILDRENS SERVICES

RESIDENTIAL HOMES UPDATE

Reasons for the report

1. This report has been prepared to provide the Committee with an update in relation to the Children's Services Accommodation Strategy and the new residential homes that have been created in Cardiff

Background

2. On the 19th January 2023 Cabinet approved the new Children's Services Strategy, which has been developed to set out the vision and direction for service provision over the next 3 years.
3. The Children's Services Strategy sets out how we will seek to work with our partners to meet the needs of children, young people and their families, using the least interventionist approach. We call this "shifting the balance" and we are focusing on three key areas:
 - a. Place – ensuring that children remain at home with their family where it is safe and appropriate to do so.
 - b. People – recruiting a permanent workforce and reducing our reliance on agency social workers.
 - c. Practice - developing our practice to ensure it is strength based, trauma informed, restorative, research led and family focused.

4. Cardiff Children's Services have a clear vision for our Children Looked After and their families, in that we want to provide families with the right support, from the right person at the right time, in the right place and at the lowest safe level of intervention, enabling them to remain with their family where it is safe for them to do so.
5. However, for some children and young people their needs are best met in an accommodation setting and we want to ensure that there is enough sufficiency in Cardiff for them. All children and young people deserve to have a place they call home where they are safe, nurtured and protected.
6. The Accommodation Strategy, which was also approved at Cabinet on 19th January 2023 as an appendix to the main strategy, sets out the accommodation provision that we need. This strategy is closely linked with our work to implement The Right Place model in Cardiff (based on the North Yorkshire Model) and includes our ambitious plans to increase residential care provision for children and young people in Cardiff.
7. The strategy gives an overview of the current position, analyses demand and details the proposals for the following workstreams with consideration for The Right Place and NEST/NYTH (Nurturing, Empowering, Safe and Trusted) framework. It considers the following;
 - Children's Residential Provision
 - Children with Disabilities
 - Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing
 - Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC)
 - Parent and Baby
8. The requirement for an increase in residential placement provision is in part being driven by a reduction in the amount of external fostering placements. There has been a consistent and sustained fall in the number of placements between Quarter 4 in 2020/2021 (345 external foster placements) and Quarter 2 2023/2024 (288 external foster placements).

9. In order to meet the demands of the service the proposal is the utilisation of the current assets within the authority, as well as the acquisition and development of a number of other properties. Childrens Services have 5 new operational properties (3 General, 1 Mental Health and Emotional Wellbeing and 1 for Children with Disabilities) with a further 4 due to be completed in the first half 2024.

Progress

10. Currently, the provision is:

- 'C'- Operational residential property comprising 6 young people beds
- 'F'- Operational residential property comprising 3 young people beds
- 'O'- Operational residential property comprising 1 young person bed

New Residential Homes since the implementation of the accommodation strategy:

- 'FH U1'- Operational and successfully registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (1 young person bed)
- 'FH U2'- Operational and successfully registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (1 young person bed)
- 'BP'- Operational and successfully registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (2 young person beds)
- 'AG'- Property Handover due December 2023. Furnishing planned for January 2024 with registration and occupation to follow (3/4 young person beds)
- 'H'- Property purchased and refurbishment works underway – estimated handover February 2023 (3 young person beds)
- 'MC'- Property purchased and refurbishment works due to start January 2024 (3/4 young person beds)
- 'HH'- Property purchase complete, schedule of works being finalised for refurbishment (4 young person beds)
- 'NS'- Offer accepted – property purchase being completed (2 young person beds)

For children with additional health and disabilities there are:

- Ty Storrie- Respite care comprising 4/6 young person beds

- 'BR'- Operational and in the final stages of registration with Care Inspectorate Wales (1 young person bed)
11. Children's Services are currently exploring the potential to purchase 4 smaller homes which would be used for solo placements, respite and shared care for children and young people who require additional health and disability support.
 12. 'CL' is a residential provision that is operational and providing solo placements for children and young people who require additional mental health and wellbeing support. It offers 5 solo placements and is currently in the process of being purchased by the authority, prior to undergoing registration with the Care Inspectorate Wales.
 13. 'CR' is a residential provision that is operational and providing placements for 6 Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC). Scoping is underway to deliver accommodation solutions for the medium term.
 14. There will also be a refurbishment of Ty Storrie, a specialist short break provision which will see it become a Child Health And Disability Hub.

Issues

15. The Right Place model recognises that Cardiff children need Cardiff homes and incorporates the No Wrong Door Policy adopted by North Yorkshire County Council.
16. This includes:
 - Residential Provision (Emergency and Medium term)
 - Hub Community Families – 2 Foster Carers dedicated to the Hub for short, medium and respite care.
 - Supported Accommodation – Independent units for older CYP to try out their independence.
 - High Need Supported Lodgings
 - Bespoke Placement Options – ad hoc bespoke placements to take CYP out of area when required
 - Multi – Agency Team – including residential staff, edge of care workers, Clinical Psychologist, Speech and Language therapist, Police Liaison Officer and portfolio leads including education.
17. The Right Place Model is also supported by the commitment from Welsh Government to end private profit from the care of children who are looked after.

From 1st April 2026, any new providers of care home services for children in foster care seeking to register with Care Inspectorate Wales will need to demonstrate their not for profit status. Existing companies will be expected to transition from for profit, to not for profit by 1st April 2027.

18. The aim for the next phase is to continue to drive the inhouse residential and work with providers, in line with the eliminate profit agenda and to register and open 12 new residential homes in Cardiff over the next 12 months. We want to provide homes for our children and young people where they feel safe, nurtured and protected.

Financial Implications

19. The strategy timespan is for three years and the accommodation strategy details additional properties to increase residential placement provision within the authorities boundaries. The acquisition of these properties will have a longer lifespan than the strategy, and when capital expenditure is being incurred, there will need to be a longer planning horizon, with a risk assessment and consideration of mitigations that might be required, to ensure that assets being bought, created or reconfigured will continue to provide benefits to the council over the lifespan of the asset. The accommodation strategy notes previous Capital allocations that have not been utilised to date and the possibility of external grants to fund the acquisition and adaptation of properties. Further work will be required to ensure the accommodation strategy is affordable within the current funding envelope and utilisation of grants are in accordance with timescales and the terms and conditions of the individual grants.
20. Currently there are significant cost pressures within Children's Services, as high-cost placements and bespoke care arrangements have arisen due to external changes since the pandemic and insufficient market capacity leading to increased prices. This strategy aims to manage and reduce the risk of significant overspends in future years through the implementation of several individual strands of work. An appropriate financial monitoring mechanism will be required, aligned with performance indicators and delivery plans, to measure and communicate financial

performance and cost effectiveness of schemes deriving from the strategy and ensure ongoing management control of schemes.

Legal Implications

21. There are no legal implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION

22. The Committee is recommended to note the Children's Services Accommodation Strategy pilot to make any observations or comments and, if appropriate agree how the implementation of the Strategy is reported to this committee going forward.

DEBORAH DRIFFIELD
Director, Childrens Services
13 December 2023

Appendix A– Residential Update