

## Newport City Council Children's Services

**Service Description:** Please see previously completed template

### Headline performance measures:

- **reduction in the number of children in care**

Using the data of the past five years and the current trajectory of the figures we recognise that halting the increase and then turning to a reduction is testing. The National research all points to a very wider range of factors and influences and casting the net to facilitate enduring change will require work across agencies and the courts. On the current trajectory our numbers of looked after children would increase during this year by a further 55 taking us to 435. We have already put in place a number of measures to attempt to slow this trajectory but realistically rebuilding a culture where a higher degree of risk is accepted and there is ownership across all areas of public bodies as well as an understanding and emphasis throughout the universal and preventative services takes time. This year we therefore plan to slow the upward trajectory and then look to reduce the overall figures in the following two years. The work to move towards these reductions has already commenced but is also predicated on the support of the revenue streams from ICF and work with Cafcass Cymru and the courts.

Predicting the UASC numbers continues to be immensely challenging and while predicting looked after children numbers is always fraught the complexity in this area poses particular difficulties and potentially compromises any setting of targets.

- **reduction in the number of children placed out of county**

Data as of 15.07.2019

There are currently 123 children placed out of Newport.

Of this group 16 children are placed with kinship foster carers spread across South Wales.

36 children are placed with Newport City Council foster carers who live within the Gwent area.

38 are placed with Independent Fostering Agency carers across South Wales.

24 are in residential care in South Wales.

1 child is in residential care in North Wales.

8 children are placed for adoption outside of the SEWAS area.

We do not plan to reduce the numbers of children placed out of Newport with family members, with NCC foster carers or placed for adoption in Wales. Of the children currently placed with IFAs many are settled. However, overall we are working towards reducing the number of children placed with Independent Fostering Agencies and Residential care and anticipate some change in this area arising from the activities being undertaken.

For all children our focus is on ensuring the needs of the individual child are met as fully and as sustainably as possible. For the majority of children this means being placed as close to their family and community links as is safely possible. It can on occasion be more appropriate to place children in a neighbouring LA than to place on the opposite side of Newport.

Based on current activity in respect of criminal exploitation there is a possibility of an increase in this group of children being placed out of county in order to facilitate disruption and break patterns of behaviour.

- **reduction in the number of children placed out of Wales**

Data as of 15.07.2019

We currently support 11 children placed with family members on a kinship foster care basis. We work with 3 children placed in residential school. We do not plan to return any of this group of 14 children to Wales as these placements are in the best interests of the children. One of these children will become 18 in 2 years.

We support 7 children who are placed with adoptive families and are awaiting adoption orders. Once the Orders are granted these children will cease to be placed out of Wales. However, on the data of the past 3 years we are likely to continue to place children for adoption out of Wales and therefore the overall number placed in England and Scotland pending finalisation of adoption orders will not change significantly.

- **reduction in the number of children removed from parents with a learning disability**

At the last submission of the Children Receiving Care and Support Census Newport had 70 children with the definition of "If one or more of the parents or carers has an impairment of intellectual function that significantly affects their development and leads to difficulties in understanding and using information, learning new skills and managing to live independently". This was across the whole group of children for Newport. 8 of the 70 children became looked after in 2017/18. The 8 children came from 3 families. None of these parents were accessing Adult LD Services. As outlined in the previous iteration of the template in 2018/19 there

were no children removed from parents who were receiving services from adult learning disability services. There were 7 parents who after capacity assessments required the services of the Official Solicitor. Capacity assessments are commissioned for a number of parents. The assessments are used to assist with the type of parenting support offered. All PAMS assessments are carried out internally and we also use elements of PAMS methodology when appropriate. Family support services have worked on specific packages for parents who require extra support and for example materials in different formats. We await the work commissioned from IPC under the auspices of the MAG to consider further steps we could take.

**Proposed Reduction Expectations – numbers of children in care**

**Year One (2019/20):** 410  
**Year Two (2020/21):** Reduction of 10% to 15% on the total number at the end of March 2020  
**Year Three (2021/22):** Reduction of 5% on the total number at the end of March 2021

**Proposed Reduction Expectations – numbers of children placed out of county**

**Year One (2019/20):** 122  
**Year Two (2020/21):** 118  
**Year Three (2021/22):** 116

**Proposed Reduction Expectations – numbers of children placed out of Wales**

**Year One (2019/20):** 21  
**Year Two (2020/21):** 21  
**Year Three (2021/22):** 21

**Proposed Reduction Expectations – numbers of children removed from parents with a learning disability - no targets set**

**Year One (2019/20):**  
**Year Two (2020/21):**  
**Year Three (2021/22):**

**Please briefly provide an explanation of your overall approach to out of county and cross-border placements and your plans to increase placement capacity?**

We have used local authority and ICF capital funding to develop our in-house children’s residential care. A new children’s home opened in January 2019 with a further home planned for later in the year. The children placed in the home returned to Newport from out of authority residential care. This will also be the case in the second home. We are currently driving our recruitment of foster carers locally. While we have a reasonable pool of carers our relatively low use of IFAs. The recruitment of new carers is

an ongoing attempt to address this issue. A paper is currently being drawn up to improve our financial offer to foster carers in line with some of the other LAs in the region. We have already reduced the number of children placed out of county and anticipate further reduction but we are seeking to ensure children are in South East Wales as opposed to just Newport.

**Any additional text to describe your rationale?**

Please see previously completed template