

Information Report



Scrutiny

Part 1

Date: 07th September 2021

Subject In-house Children's Residential Care

Purpose To ensure Cabinet Members are briefed on the developments on Children's Residential Services.

Author Joanne Llewellyn

Ward City wide

Summary This report explores the current children's in house residential provision; the model of care being developed in the service, and new homes and provisions planned for the future to meet the needs of children who are looked after in Newport.

Proposal To update Members in relation to how children's residential services have developed in the past two years and future plans and developments.

Action by Joanne Llewellyn

Timetable Immediate

This report was prepared after consultation with:

- Home Managers
- Responsible Individual Lucy Jackson.
- Team Manager Children's Residential

1. Introduction

Children's residential care settings, or children's homes, have suffered over the years from a perception of being a 'last resort' for young people in care, potentially dangerous and extremely expensive. Welsh Government has a strong drive to return children from out of authority placements to their home Local Authority and to increase the local provisions for children looked after; this includes residential provision. It is important as a LA that we have sufficiency of placement provision to meet the needs of the children looked after in Newport. We are thus continuing to increase the number of placements available and improve the quality of our residential care provision.

The devastation and impact of Covid-19 on individuals, families and communities cannot be underestimated. Short and long term impacts of the pandemic will vary in ways and degrees for everyone. The speed of how services were expected to change and respond to the pandemic was unprecedented, providing no meaningful time to plan ahead. Preparing for sustaining service delivery and providing effective communication to families and children was immensely challenging.

From the very moment the pandemic was upon us, there was a significant impact upon the children residential care homes. The introduction of PPE and especially face masks into our children's homes was significant. The staff and children adjusted swiftly to this but the ongoing impact is still being understood. Staff have stayed in the homes for the 10 day isolation period to provide continuity and care to the children when they most needed it. Many have gone above and beyond to ensure that our young people have felt supported and cared for during these difficult times.

Newport Children's Services have continued to develop our in house residential services to provide warm, safe and loving homes for our children. During 2020 - 2021 we have overseen the closure of one home, the opening of a new home and the start of the building of another home. These developments have continued despite the Covid pandemic and its impact on the care sector.

2. Project Perthyn

Project Perthyn is a drive by Newport City Council to return children who had been placed in out of county placements to their home city. As part of this project, we have committed to opening 3 new children's homes within the Local Authority area. The homes follow innovative and new ways of working in residential care in Newport involving attachment and trauma informed practice. This model was initially a pilot within one home in January 2019 and is now extending across all of the Local Authority homes including the opening of Rosedale in 2021 and the planned opening of Windmill Farm in 2022. The drive to extend across the homes has come after the Care Inspectorate Wales inspection report evidencing that this has been successful in our pilot home. This has resulted in a positive effect on the children who access social care in Newport.

Project Perthyn means belonging; bringing children back to Newport, to their homes, schools and family and helping children to remain in Newport by providing a different type of care experience. This project has utilised CAMHS colleagues to train staff in a trauma informed manner to support development and give our children a happy, healthy childhood and to integrate them back into their community. There has been interdepartmental and across agency working and this approach has meant that our children have returned successfully to Newport. There have been links with education and social work teams to enable extensive consideration of rehabilitation to family and to improve the view of residential care not as a last resort but as a positive move for some of our children.

The new way of working means through Project Perthyn that we have no locked doors and no office as we are providing a home environment, which is as close to a familial home as possible. Language is an important part of this as residential staff are not referred to as staff but by their names, home not unit, we do not discuss shifts or annual leave, we talk about family time not contact time. Project Perthyn helps improve services and supports equality, diversity and language choice to improve outcomes for our children. The children are discouraged from using language that institutionalises them and talking about their family home promotes inclusion and a sense of belonging.

We have a 'cwthch' approach in place, understanding the need for children to receive hugs and in turn learn about appropriate physical touch. Project Perthyn is striving to establish and maintain the trust and confidence of our children in the way we work so that their voices are heard and their well-being is promoted. The children are involved in day-to-day decisions such as menu choices, activities, decoration of their home and what to grow in the garden. The children are having meetings to discuss how they want their homes to look and are given choices about who can visit their home. This gives them a voice and control over their surroundings and home.

The change of language is promoted throughout children's services to encourage everyone to consider how they discuss our children's homes and how they speak to our children. This is leading to a change of understanding within children's services that residential care in Newport is not a last resort but a positive, life enhancing experience for our children.

As an authority we applied to the Social Care Accolades for Project Perthyn and were finalists and highly commended for innovative and inspiring ways of working.

3. Current homes

Cambridge House



Cambridge House (CH) shut in May 2021.

It had been one of Newport's longest standing homes offering many years of care for children across the City. It had been pivotal in developing many of our residential staff members which nearly all have worked and started off their carers within its four walls.

As a children's home CH was a very large building which is out of kilter with best practice in children's residential care. The building layout was challenging to manage with children who

have more challenging behaviours. The building was in poor condition and in order for continued safe use required extensive capital spend. Being cited in the middle of the City posed extensive challenges because of the risks of children being exploited and targeted.

The decision to close Cambridge House was in line with the developments of smaller children's homes with focussed methodologies of care set in the more rural areas of the City. Experience has proven in that smaller homes we are more able to meet the needs of children and are better suited to developing a family environment.

Forest Lodge



Forest Lodge is located in a semi-rural area just outside of Newport City. It is surrounded by woodland and a short walk away from Fourteen Locks canal. It is a residential home for four young people between the ages of 11 to 18 years old, with a spare bedroom for an emergency placement when needed. Each young person is treated as an individual and is encouraged to reach their full potential in all aspects of their life. This includes education where the young people all have different placements, depending on their skillsets and needs.

Over the last 6 months Forest Lodge has gone through a transformation inside making it feel homely and modern. The children have been involved in picking items and colours that they would like to be in their home and have enjoyed building the furniture and planning where it all goes. All Children have been involved in new experiences and activities; Work experience on Farms, Trials with Rugby Academies, successful completion of qualifications in college and completing and passing a fork lift driver course are an example of some of the many things the children have achieved in the most recent months at Forest Lodge. The children continue to engage in meetings where they discuss their wishes and feelings. The staff team have worked extremely hard to create a warm, friendly and supportive culture where the children can express themselves and feel that they will always be supported and encouraged to make positive choices around their independence and wellbeing. Plans to continue to improve the quality of the home such as new carpeting and changes to how we manage the removal of effluent are continuing!



Rose Cottage

Rose Cottage was opened in Jan 2019, as a new model style of children's residential in Newport. Four children were chosen to move to Rose Cottage from out of county placements to return to their local authority and have their forever home. Rose Cottage has no locked doors or office and the children live in a family environment.

Rose Cottage was short-listed for an award with Social Care wales Accolades 2020.



Rose Cottage has provided care to young people throughout the last 20 months. Young people have been supported to deal with the world around them and the effects the pandemic has had on all our lives.

All young people have been supported to see family where possible during the pandemic. All young people enjoyed Christmas, birthdays and all the usual celebrations. We have had three lockdown periods during this time. 4 staff lived in the home for a 14 day period in October 2020. All young people remained very settled and were happy that staff had been able to remain in the home for the isolation period.

One young person was rehabilitated home to the care of her Mother in April 2021. Another young person was returned to his mother's care in August 2021. One young person was also moved to their new placement which better met their needs in May 2021. We have continued to look at the compatibility of the young people at Rose Cottage and three new children have moved in. They have made progress, one has achieved several GCSE qualifications and is looking forward to starting college in September studying Health and Social Care. The other young person had missed so much of school he didn't achieve any qualifications, however he is now engaging in ACT and is attending 3-4 times a week. He has done this since July 2021 and is thoroughly enjoying this. The young people are being supported with their independence skills and working towards their independence plans.

Brynglas Bungalow

Brynglas Bungalow is currently supporting one young person. Since moving in during May, the young person has expressed how happy he is and how much more settled he feels. The team work in an attachment focused way, to help support the young person through trauma that has been experienced in early childhood. There has been a reduction in both his risk taking behaviours and his overall incidents per month. He has engaged in lots of activities within the home and out in the community. The team have built up really strong attachments with him and he has been able to feel comfortable and safe to trust and allow them to help him. He has been encouraged to play and do things that suits his ability and understanding, things like role play and hide and seek. He is now having half hour of being read to each evening before bed, watching cartoons, more time independently in the community and taken responsibility for life skills such as room cleaning, washing up and money management.



Rosedale



Rosedale opened in March 2021 and is a beautiful, modern, family styled, 4 bedroom home for children age 11 to 18 who need medium to long term support. The home aims to create a settled, safe and nurturing environment for children to have the opportunity to be supported and succeed in day to day life. The children are supported by 1 manager, 1 assistant manager, 9 day staff and 2 waking night staff who work on a rota basis.

We strive to promote positive outcomes for our children via a child centred approach using trauma informed and attachment focussed strategies. We believe that building positive, working relationships with our children is key to meeting their needs and promoting good health and wellbeing. Building these relationships has been proven to increase our children's confidence, self-esteem and trust in adults resulting in them investing in the journey and allowing adults to support them.

Rosedale was opened to support children coming back into the local authority in order to be closer to families, schools and their communities. Our first young person successfully moved in during April 2021 who had lived over an hour away from her family & school for over 18 months. The transition into Rosedale was flawless. She spent 6 months building good, positive relationships with adults and children which reduced her anxieties and allowed her to feel more comfortable when she moved in.

Quote from a YP person living at Rosedale,

"I recently moved into Rosedale after being away from Newport, when I found out I was moving back to Newport I was quite happy but nervous at the same time I then had a weekly teams call and spoke to the assistant manager Emma Campbell she spoke to me about what it's going to be like when moving into Rosedale. I love living in Rosedale because I am closer to my family and really close to my school so I don't have to travel an hour a day and also really close to my friends. I feel really settled and comfortable living here and I am really close with the staff and I can feel like I can speak to them about anything, also this house is probably the best placement I've lived in because its more close to my family"

Emma Campbell (Assistant Manager, Rosedale)

"Rosedale has been a huge success since we opened on 20th March 2021. We currently have 3 young people living at Rosedale, who have craved a family style house that they all, now call their home. The children have benefitted from adults using a child centred approach where children are involved in every decision that is related to their care and their home. We

have placed great emphasis on children being able to increase their independent and life skills and the children have shown us how well this has worked with them all helping out around the home and taking great pride in ensuring their home is kept clean and tidy. It has been a great pleasure to be involved in the journey of opening Rosedale and observing how well the children have settled. I strongly believe this is due to the child centred approach we use, the positive relationships the children have built with adults and a consistent routine”

ND (Residential Childcare Worker, Rosedale)

“I have worked at Rosedale since we opened in March 2021 after working in many other homes around Wales and England. I love the therapeutic way that we work with the children and the homely environment that they live in. The children are happy and settled and all the staff genuinely care about them and provide a nurturing environment on a day to day basis. The children are supported to attend full time education and sporting clubs outside of education which has really shown them the importance of improving their own health & wellbeing. We have also created a garden whereby they are supported to grow their own fruit and veg that they then cook and eat which has been great to improve their life skills. We are a very active home with the children engaging with adults in many activities within and outside the home, such as monopoly, card games, gym, swimming, walks etc.”

Rosedale currently has three young people residing there. The fourth bed is currently being used as a Remand/PACE bed (discussed below). The plans for the fourth bed after the pilot ends is to sell the placement to another Gwent Local Authority. Plans are already underway to consider which child to move into the home.

4. Pace and remand provision

Across Wales it has been recognised that given the overall shortage of sufficient accommodation available to Local Authority Childrens Social Services Departments, that when a bed is requested for vulnerable young people who have been refused bail by police, there has sometimes not been sufficient accommodation available. Unfortunately, this has on occasion led to young people having to stay overnight in custody suites, which all stakeholders agree is not in their best interests.

A multi-agency task and finish group of stakeholders was set up to look at potential solutions to this problem. A number of discussions have been held and actions identified; one key action was to test the idea of a retained ‘bed’ being kept available for use in an emergency in non-secure, but safe, accommodation. Welsh Government have provided grant funding to run a pilot of a retained residential care bed for 3 months. The pilot will then be evaluated by the group and used to inform development of longer-term solutions.

It was agreed that the fourth bedroom at Rosedale would be used by the pilot scheme and this started on Monday 5th July 2021 for a duration 3 months. The pilot area covers South Wales. Specifically, across Gwent Police, South Wales Police and Dyfed Powys Police Force areas, and the Local Authority footprints included within that geographical area.

It was agree that the emergency admissions must be risk assessed at the point of referral to ensure that the other young people can be kept safe. If the risks cannot be safely managed then the Registered Manager and Senior Management Team have the right to refuse an admission. Every effort will be made to manage risk safely by the residential care team but it is important that their decision is respected in regard admissions.

Referrals to access Rosedale will only be made by the relevant Local Authority social work team, after the normal exploration and discussion between Social Services / Police / YOT. The options of bail, alternative accommodation provided by the placing local authority such

as family, a foster placement, a pre-existing residential placement, must have been exhausted prior to referral. The basis of the pilot is that this is an emergency placement of last resort, not the preferred choice.

The pilot is reviewed by key stakeholders on a fortnightly/ monthly basis. The pilot will be evaluated to consider the referral data, needs profile data, placement data, occupancy data and reasons for use / not using will be collated and evaluated to inform further discussion on longer term planning in the Autumn of 21.

Key Messages from Partners

Chief Constable Pam Kelly, Chair of the Welsh Chief Officers Group and PCC Dafydd Llewelyn, Chair of Policing in Wales commented: *“Policing in Wales welcomes the pilot residential bed being taken forward by Newport City Council. We hope that the lessons learned from the evaluation of this work can be brought forward quickly and if appropriate, act as a framework to develop a solution that offers an alternative to police custody across all four force areas in Wales. Our most vulnerable children and young people should not be held in police cells and we look forward to working with partners to build on what we hope will be a successful pilot period.”*

Minister for Social Justice and the Deputy Minister for Social Services commented: *“Welsh Ministers have consistently been of the view that children should not be held in police cells. We acknowledge, however, that this has been a complex issue for some time. Thanks to the effective joint collaboration between policing and local authority colleagues and Welsh Government, we are pleased that the PACE and Remand Pilot exercise has been developed. We hope that the pilot exercise will generate the learning required to assist in identifying a longer-term solution to this important matter.”*





Plans are also in the early stages to consider the annexes at Rosedale and how we can utilise ICF funding to develop further emergency accommodation. These are in the early stages and planning permission will be required for any further developments of the site.

Oaklands

Oakland's is a short break service which provides planned overnight short breaks for children and young people with a disability. The age range is up to 18 years and a safe, nurturing and stimulating environment is provided.

Oaklands has remained operational through COVID thanks to our dedicated staff members who committed themselves to continue to support vulnerable children. We have completed weekly PCR tests in house and also LFT testing to manage the ongoing risks of covid. Staff have kept up to date with their training both virtually and online. Staff have been offered the covid vaccination and uptake has been high.

We have had to be creative in the way we communicate with families due to the impact of COVID, which has limited our face-to-face contact including our coffee mornings. We have set up regular family group meetings and 1-1 meetings via Teams and created a newsletter, which goes out monthly.

Through the pandemic we have had two children living with us until suitable accommodation is found and we have also supported an additional 16 young people with additional needs

Oaklands now has an operational sensory room and garden. Brynglas day services kindly donated sensory items which are going to great use within the home. We have given the summer house a revamp. It's been painted in the colours of the rainbow with support of some of our young people and it is now the disco room. We have a lovely mud garden which was made by a relative of a staff member and kindly donated to us. We have been making improvements to the outside space; we have had a trampoline fitted into the ground, which the children love.

Oaklands has had a complete refurbishment, which has given the children a lovely living space. The home also has individual pods, which allows the children to have their own quite space when they need it to relax and watch TV.



5. Future developments

Windmill Farm

Windmill Farm is situated on the outskirts of Newport of in a semi-rural location close to the village of Llanvaches. It is a five-bedroom house, set within twenty-nine acres of farmland. The house has its own orchard with a seating area and a covered terrace with outside seating attached to the house. There is plenty of space for the young people to explore and exercise.

Windmill Farm will provide a home to children aged between 10 and 18 years of age. Placements will be medium / short term, offering a stable home for children and young people through to independence or to support a planned return to family for up to 6 months. Young people accommodated at Windmill Farm will be receiving support from Social Services and Health services, and will have a profile of complex social and psychological needs that require a safe, nurturing environment that follows the biopsychosocial model of therapeutic care.

The team will support children and young people to feel safe and cared for and in turn provide for their holistic needs. Provision to include:

- Access to education.
- Access to services to support health and dietary needs.
- Physical safety and emotional containment provided by a combination of trained social care staff, and trained healthcare staff.
- Support from staff to facilitate understanding and self-management of risk.
- Understanding risk around exploitation – criminal or sexual.
- Independence, social and contact needs.
- Access to community services and leisure.
- Access to a range of psychological therapies, focused around emotional stabilisation, emotional containment and distress tolerance.
- Access to family therapy and trauma focused work, when appropriate.
- Access to a range of allied health therapy such as occupational therapy, dietetics and physiotherapy.





Rosedale Annexes

Newport and neighbouring Local Authorities have continued to have issues with obtaining emergency accommodation for young people who have experienced trauma and display challenging behaviours or because of the emergency nature of their situation. To help ameliorate this Newport have considered the current facilities and how we can develop our provision to meet the needs of children and young people in Gwent. An application for Intermediate Care Fund capital funding to develop the annexes at Rosedale was submitted and we are awaiting confirmation of ministerial approval before we can further plans to develop these buildings.



Residential care in Newport is an important resource to meet the needs of our most vulnerable children. The importance of providing high quality loving care to those children most in need of it cannot be underestimated. The plans to continue to develop the service according to future needs and finances will continue.

Joanne Llewellyn
06.09.2021