

**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**  
**Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol**  
**Minister for Children and Social Care**



**Llywodraeth Cymru**  
**Welsh Government**

Ein cyf/Our ref: MA/DB/1014/25

Peter Fox MS  
Chair, Health and Social Care Committee  
Senedd Cymru  
[SeneddHealth@senedd.wales](mailto:SeneddHealth@senedd.wales)

2 May 2025

Dear Peter,

Further to my letter of 11 April in which I provided responses to recommendations 6 and 13 of the Health and Social Care Committee's stage one scrutiny report on the Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill, I am now providing a substantive response to further recommendations.

### **Recommendation 9**

I attach a report in line with recommendation 9 on the progress being made with the transition to a not-for-profit model. This is the first published report and provides detailed information on the number of children's services, places and households. The report also highlights the stability of placements and the take-up of advocacy services, ensuring that the needs and rights of children are being met effectively.

I would like to thank partners across Foster Wales, Care Inspectorate Wales and the Children's Commissioning Consortium Cymru for the help and information they have given to my officials in preparing this report. Collectively, efforts are underway to harmonise collation and reporting of the various data components to ensure future publications of this report are as comprehensive and consistent as they can be. This work will be progressed as part of the programme of work underpinning the Eliminating Profit Programme Board.

I note that recommendation 9 of your report contained an additional request relating to details of the consultation with children and young people directly affected by the Bill. My response to that request was in part set out in my previous letter to you under recommendation 13 (to make available resources aimed at informing children and young people about the Bill and how to make known their views on it). It noted the work we have undertaken with the Eliminating Profit Programme Board members, including Voices from Care Cymru and the office of the Children's Commissioner for Wales, in shaping and testing targeted messages to inform and aid understanding amongst children and young people, as well as those who work in foster care and children's homes, about the new arrangements. It also noted we continue to work with children and young people and their representative organisations to ensure their voices can be heard.

Canolfan Cyswllt Cyntaf / First Point of Contact Centre:  
0300 0604400

Bae Caerdydd • Cardiff Bay  
Caerdydd • Cardiff  
CF99 1SN

[Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru](mailto:Gohebiaeth.Dawn.Bowden@llyw.cymru)  
[Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales](mailto:Correspondence.Dawn.Bowden@gov.wales)

Rydym yn croesawu derbyn gohebiaeth yn Gymraeg. Byddwn yn ateb gohebiaeth a dderbynnir yn Gymraeg yn Gymraeg ac ni fydd gohebu yn Gymraeg yn arwain at oedi.

We welcome receiving correspondence in Welsh. Any correspondence received in Welsh will be answered in Welsh and corresponding in Welsh will not lead to a delay in responding.

The published messaging can be found at <https://www.gov.wales/removing-profit-care-children-looked-after-information-leaflets>.

## **Recommendations 17 and 20**

In response to recommendations 17 and 20, I also write to provide an update on progress with development of the central hub for NHS Continuing Healthcare (CHC) direct payments, and to provide an update on progress made to prepare Local Health Boards (LHBs) for new CHC direct payment responsibilities.

Recommendation 17: following the passage of the Bill the Welsh Government has continued discussions with the NHS Joint Commissioning Committee (JCC) around them hosting the proposed centralised hub to support the implementation of direct payments. The JCC board is currently considering the formal proposal for CHC Direct Payments Hub development as an element within a wider programme of work for CHC. I will provide a further update on this matter as part of the next six-monthly update to the committee. Following recent engagement with stakeholders, there is recognition that whilst some functions could be centralised across Wales (e.g. disseminate information, offer guidance, and support areas such as budgeting, governance, training and delegated healthcare tasks), the ability to support direct payment recipients in the locality where they live remains an important consideration. As a result, a mixed model of delivery is being considered and as part of this Local Authority direct payments teams as well as third sector organisations have been engaged to learn from their experience and to consider where they might best contribute to CHC direct payment delivery. This continues to be a key part of implementation planning.

Recommendation 20: Regular links have been maintained with LHBs, with the CHC lead officers engaged on a bimonthly basis for the past two years. In addition to being kept apprised of the Bill's progress, LHBs have had the opportunity to consider their new CHC direct payment responsibilities alongside their peers through this network. My officials have close contact with the National Director for CHC, alongside wider discussions at NHS leadership level, and further engagement with CHC leads commenced earlier this month to consider a number of key issues relevant to LHBs' new responsibilities. In addition to learning from direct payments best practice from outside Wales, as noted above, my officials have undertaken coordinated engagement with local authorities' direct payment teams to increase understanding of current processes and practice in successfully delivering social care direct payments on the ground. This work is being used to inform LHB discussions including discussions as to which functions would best be delivered locally or centrally; and will prove very useful in creating seamless transition arrangements from social care to CHC.

Yours sincerely,



**Dawn Bowden AS/MS**

Y Gweinidog Plant a Gofal Cymdeithasol  
Minister for Children and Social Care



---

Llywodraeth Cymru  
Welsh Government

# **Removing profit from the care of children looked after – transition to a not-for-profit model**

**Report 1 - April 2025**

# Contents

	<b>Page</b>
<b>Introduction and report structure</b>	3
<b>Report summary and next steps</b>	4
<b>Section 1</b> – Number of registered children’s services, places and households for residential care, fostering and secure accommodation	7
<b>Section 2</b> – Market entrants and exits – Children’s homes	10
<b>Section 3</b> – Market entrants and exits – Fostering	14
<b>Section 4</b> – Stability of Placements	17
<b>Section 5</b> – Offers of Advocacy	20

## Introduction

The Health and Social Care Committee published its Stage 1 report on the then Health and Social Care (Wales) Bill on 11 October 2024. Recommendation 9 of that report stated:

*The Minister should prepare and publish a report on progress with the transition to a not-for-profit model. This should include an update, by local authority, on the number of placements leaving the market and the number of new placements created and should reflect on the stability of existing placements. It should also include details of the consultation with children and young people directly affected by the Bill and the numbers taking up the active offer of advocacy. This should be done at six monthly intervals, starting from the date of the Stage 1 debate.*

The Minister for Children and Social Care accepted this recommendation and committed to publishing a six-monthly progress report. This is the first of these reports - the next will follow in October 2025.

## Report structure

This report is divided into sections, beginning with a summary of the report's findings and setting out next steps. Where possible, residential and fostering data is broken down into local geographical footprints across the following types of provision:

<b>Not-for-profit provision</b>	<b>For-profit provision</b>
Local Authority (LA) run	(this data is not broken down by specific type of for-profit provision)
Other not-for-profit (non-LA)	

Provision is measured in terms of the number of services and places (maximum capacity of each service) registered with Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW). Some fostering data is also presented in terms of households.

Section 1 provides an overview of the sector in Wales as it currently stands, giving recent data on the number of children's home services, fostering services and secure accommodation services, breaking this down by provider type (not-for-profit local authority, other not-for-profit or for-profit) and local authority area. These are the three services that will all need to be provided by either local authority or other not-for-profit providers once implementation of the Health and Social Care (Wales) Act ("The Act") is complete.

Section 2 covers market entrants and exits for children's home services and section 3 covers this same data for fostering services. The report then reflects on the stability of placements of children looked after in section 4 concluding with data on the take up of the offer of statutory advocacy in section 5.

## Report summary

This report provides detailed information from several sources on the number of registered children's services, places and households for residential care, fostering and secure accommodation in Wales. It also highlights the stability of placements and the take-up of advocacy services to ensure that the needs and rights of children are being met effectively. Key points from the most recent available data are set out below:

- 1. From the most recently available figures (as at 31 March 2025) there are 350 children's home services in Wales offering a maximum number of 1,224 places. For-profit provision accounts for over three quarters of all residential places.**

The greatest proportion of places are found in the geographical areas of Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) (102), followed by Cardiff (100), Powys (94) and Swansea (89).

The greatest proportion of for-profit children's home services is found within the Blaenau Gwent area (17 services, 41 places) and Torfaen (13 services, 29 places) both of which are entirely for-profit. In contrast Ceredigion has no for-profit children's home services, albeit only 6 places overall which are non-LA run.

- 2. A significant proportion of entrants to the children's home market have been for-profit to date.**

Data between 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025 shows 21 out of 25 services registered with CIW and 52 of 57 places were for-profit. The remaining 4 services (and 5 places) were registered to a local authority. By contrast only 4 for-profit services (and 7 places) left the market during this time.

- 3. Precise fostering data is currently difficult to assess. The vast majority of foster households and places are not-for profit. The South of Wales sees the highest proportions of not-for profit fostering provision. Provision in North Wales tends to be for-profit.**

Overall comparisons of fostering data are currently difficult to undertake for this report, given the various reporting cycles and the availability of information from different organisations. Most fostering data is provided as at 31 March 2025. However, data for the total number of local authority fostering households and places is only available up to 31 March 2024 and included on an all-Wales basis. Foster Wales, which collects local authority fostering data, will be analysing the dataset for the 2024/25 reporting year this summer and it will be available for inclusion in the next report.

- 4. From the most recently available figures (as at 31 March 2025) there are 22 non-LA run not-for-profit and for-profit fostering services in Wales with 983**

**fostering households offering 2081 places. Of these 794 households and 1,693 places are for-profit.**

Of the data available for each local area (i.e. non-LA run not for profit and for-profit provision), Cardiff had the greatest amount of identified for-profit provision (225 of 292 foster places) followed by Carmarthenshire (157 of 167 foster places). Wrexham holds the greatest proportion of for-profit fostering places (52 of 53 or 98%). Denbighshire and Flintshire are the only authorities that do not have any non-LA run not-for-profit provision in their areas.

For LA run fostering services from the most recently available figures for the reporting year ending 31 March 2024 the 22 local authority run fostering services in Wales provided 2,609 fostering households and 4,144 fostering places.

## **5. Most children have only experienced one placement during the year.**

Nationally the vast majority (74% or 5,310) of children looked after on 31 March 2024 experienced one placement within the year. 18% (1,265) of children experienced two placements and 9% (620) children experienced three or more placements. On average, 241 children in a local area experience one placement. Correspondingly 58 in each area will have two placements and 28 will have three or more.

There is a lot of variation across Wales. Despite Cardiff having far more children looked after, other areas have seen a higher proportion of 3 or more placements, including Flintshire and Powys (13%, compared to Cardiff's 9%). It is worth bearing in mind, however, that a degree of movement can be considered a sign of timely care planning and necessary to meet specific needs.

## **6. Some local authorities have seen a high ratio of independent professional advocacy being provided following an active offer being made**

Bridgend saw advocates provided in 64 out of 71 (90%) of active offers, Merthyr Tydfil also had a similar ratio with 54 advocates from 60 offers and Neath Port Talbot had a ratio of 89% with 55 advocates from 62 active offers. Other local authorities reported a higher number of offers (Powys with 485 offers, Conwy with 494), although did not see a similarly high return in provision.

## **Next Steps**

The next report will be published in October 2025 and thereafter on a six-monthly basis. Prior to the next report work will continue to bring together the various data sources, reporting periods and collation points between sector partners to ensure greater alignment where practicable. This alignment will also benefit cross-sector planning as part of implementation. Discussions are already underway with colleagues in Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW), Foster Wales and the Children's

Commissioning Consortium Cymru (4Cs) to address this going forward and work to address fostering data will be progressed as part of the programme of work underpinning the Eliminating Profit Programme Board.

The Welsh Government alongside delivery partners continues to engage with for-profit providers and the broader sector to support those considering re-establishing as a not-for-profit entity. It is also providing three-year funding to Cwmpas to provide support to those organisations wishing to consider changing their business models to not-for-profit.

Officials recently held information workshops on the Act with for-profit providers and further engagement and support is planned as part of the implementation programme. CIW has also been ensuring that new for-profit providers seeking to register are aware of the legislation and the implementation timetable including the limits on their future activity.

## Section 1 - Number of registered children's services, places and households for residential care, fostering and secure accommodation

Table 1a: Number of registered children's home services and registered maximum places (as at 31 March 2025)

Source: CIW

Local authority area	Number of <b>registered children's home services</b>				Number of <b>registered maximum places</b> in children's homes			
	Not for-Profit (Local Authority)	Not-For-Profit (Other)	For-Profit	<b>Total</b>	Not for-Profit (Local Authority)	Not-For-Profit (Other)	For-Profit	<b>Total</b>
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	17	<b>17</b>	0	0	41	<b>41</b>
Bridgend	5	1	15	<b>21</b>	20	1	45	<b>66</b>
Caerphilly	7	0	7	<b>14</b>	23	0	22	<b>45</b>
Cardiff	8	0	15	<b>23</b>	22	0	78	<b>100</b>
Carmarthenshire	3	0	16	<b>19</b>	13	0	51	<b>64</b>
Ceredigion	0	1	0	<b>1</b>	0	6	0	<b>6</b>
Conwy	1	0	6	<b>7</b>	10	0	19	<b>29</b>
Denbighshire	0	1	9	<b>10</b>	0	5	42	<b>47</b>
Flintshire	5	1	19	<b>25</b>	12	5	58	<b>75</b>
Gwynedd	1	0	6	<b>7</b>	6	0	39	<b>45</b>
Ynys Mon	4	0	2	<b>6</b>	7	0	7	<b>14</b>
Merthyr Tydfil	2	0	9	<b>11</b>	3	0	26	<b>29</b>
Monmouthshire	0	1	10	<b>11</b>	0	1	34	<b>35</b>
Neath Port Talbot	0	1	20	<b>21</b>	0	3	81	<b>84</b>
Newport	8	0	10	<b>18</b>	31	0	33	<b>64</b>
Pembrokeshire	2	0	9	<b>11</b>	6	0	36	<b>42</b>
Powys	5	2	15	<b>22</b>	13	6	75	<b>94</b>
Rhondda Cynon Taf	9	1	21	<b>31</b>	28	4	70	<b>102</b>
Swansea	2	1	21	<b>24</b>	4	4	81	<b>89</b>
Torfaen	0	0	13	<b>13</b>	0	0	29	<b>29</b>
Vale of Glamorgan	0	9	4	<b>13</b>	0	32	14	<b>46</b>
Wrexham	3	1	21	<b>25</b>	11	4	63	<b>78</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>65</b>	<b>20</b>	<b>265</b>	<b>350</b>	<b>209</b>	<b>71</b>	<b>944</b>	<b>1224</b>

1.1. Table 1a shows a total of 350 registered children's home services in Wales as at 31 March 2025. Collectively these provide up to 1224 registered places. Most of the services (265) are provided by for-profit providers, the equivalent of 76% of all children's home services.

**Table 1b Number of registered fostering services, foster care households and registered maximum places**

**Sources:**

1 Registered Services – CIW (to end March 2025)

2 Local Authority households and places – Foster Wales (to end March 2024)

3 Non-Local Authority registered households and places - 4Cs (to end March 2025)

	Number of <b>registered foster care services</b>			Number of <b>registered foster care households</b>			Maximum number of <b>foster care places</b>		
	Not-For-Profit (Local Authority)	1 Not-For-Profit (Other)	1 For-Profit	2 Not-For-Profit- (Local Authority) <i>all-Wales figure only</i>	3 Not-For-Profit (Other)	3 For-Profit	2 Not-For-Profit (Local Authority) <i>All Wales figure only</i>	3 Not-For-Profit- (Other)	3 For-Profit
Blaenau Gwent	1	0	0		10	10		17	20
Bridgend	1	0	0		11	63		19	135
Caerphilly	1	1	0		12	35		21	79
Cardiff	1	3	4		32	101		67	225
Carmarthenshire	1	0	2		5	72		10	157
Ceredigion	1	0	0		8	15		21	32
Conwy	1	1	2		9	53		21	118
Denbighshire	1	0	1		1	53		0	118
Flintshire	1	0	1		0	58		0	124
Gwynedd	1	0	0		2	10		3	18
Ynys Mon	1	0	0		1	22		3	51
Merthyr Tydfil	1	0	0		1	11		4	22
Monmouthshire	1	0	0		3	19		8	42
Neath Port Talbot	1	0	0		12	29		22	56
Newport	1	1	0		19	31		39	63
Pembrokeshire	1	0	0		2	26		4	50
Powys	1	0	0		4	9		9	19
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	0	1		34	61		75	127
Swansea	1	0	0		6	29		11	53
Torfaen	1	0	0		4	17		8	35
Vale of Glamorgan	1	0	0		12	42		25	97
Wrexham	1	0	2		1	28		1	52
Out of Wales	0	0	3		0	0		0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>2609</b>	<b>189</b>	<b>794</b>	<b>4144</b>	<b>388</b>	<b>1693</b>

## ***Table 1b - Data caveats and explanation***

### Number of registered foster care services

- 1.2 Although each local authority has its own fostering service, all work together within the national network of Foster Wales. The number of local authority fostering services will therefore always remain at a maximum of 22, in line with the number of local authorities.
- 1.3 Independent fostering agencies (IFAs) are non-local authority fostering services that can be both for-profit and not-for-profit. CIW register independent fostering agencies in Wales but not fostering services provided by local authorities. There are three for profit fostering providers who are located out of Wales but provide services in Wales and are therefore registered in Wales.

### Number of registered foster care households and maximum number of foster places

- 1.4 The 4Cs asked all IFAs on the Children's Commissioning Support Resource (CCSR) system to provide information on the number of registered fostering households and maximum number of places as of 31 March 2025. 20 out of the 22 registered IFAs provided data. Data shows the number of fostering households by the local authority area in which they live. Data was not available for the remaining 2 IFAs as they are not registered on the CCSR system.
- 1.5 From the most recently available figures (as at 31 March 2025) there are 6 non-LA run not-for-profit fostering services and 16 for-profit fostering services in Wales with a total of 983 fostering households offering 2,081 places. Of these 794 households and 1,693 places are for-profit.
- 1.6 The total figures for local authority fostering services provided by Foster Wales are national figures for the reporting year ending 31 March 2024. The current reporting cycle means that the data for 2024/25 will be available for the next report. The 22 local authority run fostering services in Wales provide 2,609 fostering households and 4,144 fostering places.

### Secure accommodation services

- 1.7 As at 31 March 2025, there is one secure accommodation service registered in Wales. This is local authority operated and registered for a maximum of 14 places. However, this facility services both the secure estate in England and Wales and as such receives referrals and children from across both countries.

## Section 2 – Market entrants and exits - children’s homes

Table 2a Registered children’s home services entering and leaving the market from 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025

Source: CIW

	Number of registered <b>services entering the market</b>			Number of registered <b>services leaving the market</b>		
	Not-for-profit - Local Authority	Not-For-Profit - other	For-Profit	Not-for-profit - Local Authority	Not-For-Profit - other	For-Profit
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bridgend	0	0	0	0	0	2
Caerphilly	1	0	1	0	0	0
Cardiff	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	1	0	0	0
Ceredigion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conwy	0	0	1	0	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flintshire	1	0	4	0	0	0
Gwynedd	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ynys Mon	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	1	0	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	0	0	2	0	0	0
Newport	0	0	2	0	0	1
Pembrokeshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	0	3	0	0	0
Swansea	0	0	2	0	0	0
Torfaen	0	0	3	0	0	1
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wrexham	0	0	2	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>21</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>4</b>

2.1. Table 2a shows the number of registered children’s home services entering and leaving the market in Wales between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025 as recorded by CIW. ‘Entering the market’ is defined as services being registered by CIW as a children’s home over the same period. ‘Leaving the market’ is defined as those entities ceasing to provide a service and therefore being deregistered by CIW.

2.2. The table shows a total of 25 children’s home services were registered in Wales between over the reported period. 21 services were for-profit, the remaining 4 were not-for-profit and registered to the relevant local authority. During the same period 4 for profit services ceased providing children’s home services. Therefore, during this period market entrants far exceeded market exits with most market entrants during this period coming from for-profit services (21 for-profit entrants out of 25 total representing 84% of the entrants during the period).

**Table 2b Registered Children’s Home places added to and removed from the market between 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025**

*Source: CIW*

	Number of registered <b>children’s home places added to the market</b>			Number of registered <b>children’s home places removed from the market</b>		
	Not-For-Profit (Local Authority)	Not-For-Profit (Other)	For-Profit	Not-For-Profit (Local Authority)	Not-For-Profit (Other)	For-Profit
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bridgend	0	0	0	0	0	3
Caerphilly	2	0	1	0	0	0
Cardiff	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	4	0	0	0
Ceredigion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conwy	0	0	4	4	0	0
Denbighshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flintshire	1	0	4	0	0	0
Gwynedd	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ynys Mon	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	1	0	0	0	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	0	0	8	0	0	0
Newport	0	0	5	0	0	2
Pembrokeshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	0	9	0	0	0
Swansea	0	0	4	0	0	0
Torfaen	0	0	8	0	0	2
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	0	0	0	0
Wrexham	0	0	5	0	0	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>52</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>

- 2.3. Table 2b shows the number of registered children's home places added to and removed from the market in Wales between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025 as recorded by CIW. For context services can have multiple places as part of their registration which is why the figures within this table are greater than those in Table 2a.
- 2.4. Table 2b shows a total of 57 children's home places in Wales were added over the period. 5 of these were not-for-profit local authority homes but the majority (52 or 91% of all entrants) were for-profit places. During the same period 4 local authority places and 7 for-profit places left the market. Therefore, during this period far more children's home services and places were added to the market than those that left it.

Table 2c Registered children's home services and places net gain/loss between 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025

Source: CIW

	Children's home services			Total registered places		
	Not-For-Profit - Local Authority	Not-For-Profit - other	For-Profit	Not-For-Profit - Local Authority	Not-For-Profit - other	For-Profit
Blaenau Gwent	0	0	0	0	0	0
Bridgend	0	0	-2	0	0	-3
Caerphilly	1	0	1	2	0	1
Cardiff	0	0	0	0	0	0
Carmarthenshire	0	0	1	0	0	4
Ceredigion	0	0	0	0	0	0
Conwy	-1	0	1	-4	0	4
Denbighshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Flintshire	1	0	4	1	0	4
Gwynedd	0	0	0	0	0	0
Ynys Mon	0	0	0	0	0	0
Merthyr Tydfil	1	0	0	1	0	0
Monmouthshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Neath Port Talbot	0	0	2	0	0	8
Newport	0	0	1	0	0	3
Pembrokeshire	0	0	0	0	0	0
Powys	0	0	0	0	0	0
Rhondda Cynon Taf	1	0	3	1	0	9
Swansea	0	0	2	0	0	4
Torfaen	0	0	0	0	0	0
Vale of Glamorgan	0	0	2	0	0	6
Wrexham	0	0	2	0	0	5
<b>Total</b>	<b>+3</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+17</b>	<b>+1</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>+45</b>

## Section 3 – Market entrants and exits - fostering

### Fostering services entering and leaving the market

**Source:** *CIW* - between 1 October 2024 – 31 March 2025

3.3 No fostering services entered or left the market between 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025.

### Table 3a Fostering households registered with a local authority entering and leaving the market (April 24 - February 2025)

**Source:** *Foster Wales* – (National Figures only)

Number of local authority <b>foster care households added to the market</b>	Number of local authority <b>foster care households leaving the market</b>	<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>
131	137	-6

### Table 3b Local authority fostering places entering and leaving the market (April 24-28 February 2025)

**Source:** *Foster Wales* – (National Figures only)

Number of local authority <b>foster care places entering the market</b>	Number of local authority <b>foster care places leaving the market</b>	<b>Net Gain/Loss</b>
170	194	-24

#### **Notes:**

- 3.4 The local authority data above has been provided by Foster Wales. No comparative data is available for other (non-LA) not-for-profit or for-profit provision. The data on numbers of fostering households and places tends to fluctuate and is not currently captured as part of registration requirements by CIW.
- 3.5 More generally, work will be undertaken within the workstreams underpinning the removing profit programme to further develop the reporting data and its comparability across the whole fostering sector.

### *Mainstream Approvals – Local Authorities*

- 3.6 The local authority fostering data included in this report covers mainstream foster carers only. It does not include connected persons (often referred to as kinship carers) foster carer data, because the data collection schedule is different (as explained below). Mainstream foster carers are those approved to take a range of children of varying needs that the local authority may seek to place.
- 3.7 The number of mainstream local authority foster carer approvals in 2023/24 increased by 11% compared to 2022/23. Foster Wales reported 137 mainstream households left the market. This is compared to 167 households that left the market in 2022/23, a reduction of 18%.

### *Households entering and leaving the market.*

- 3.8 The figures provided are for all registered local authority foster carers, i.e. the total of approved mainstream foster carers only. Both the figures for fostering households and placements entering and leaving the market cover the period 1 April 2024 to 28 February 2025 and are the most recent available.

### *Connected persons (not provided in this report)*

- 3.9 Connected persons foster carers are generally court-directed and provide placements for specific children, usually part of the child's family / network. These figures are not provided in this report, as they are submitted annually as part of Foster Wales' annual data set and should be available from July. Anecdotally, however, the number of these placements continues to grow, the level of assessment activity was three times higher in 23/24 than for mainstream foster carers. These assessments are often afforded higher priority than mainstream assessments but do not provide placements that are generally available.
- 3.10 As part of Foster Wales reporting cycle, it will be able to provide information on connected persons in future reports.

### **Notes:**

- 3.11 The 4Cs has provided the current figures, as received at the end of March 2025, for the (non-Local Authority) not for-profit and for-profit households and placements, rather than net entrant/leaver figures. This will act as a benchmark for net comparisons in future reporting cycles. The data relates to 20 foster care providers out of the 22 providers registered with CIW. All figures are self-reported by the independent foster agencies and are not verified by the 4Cs.

3.12 The data provided by the 4Cs is the number of fostering households by the local authority area in which they live; the for profit/not for-profit status of the agency they work with and the number of maximum beds they are registered for.

## Section 4 – Stability of Placements

Table 4a Number of placements experienced during the year by children looked after on 31 March 2024 (as a number and percentage)

*Source: StatsWales*

Local authority	Number of children with 1 placement	Number of children with 2 placements	Number of children with 3+ placements	Percentage of children with 1 placement	Percentage of children with 2 placements	Percentage of children with 3+ placements
Blaenau Gwent	160	30	10	80	15	5
Bridgend	280	65	25	76	18	6
Caerphilly	355	85	35	75	18	7
Cardiff	735	210	90	71	20	9
Carmarthenshire	185	50	20	72	20	8
Ceredigion	105	25	5	75	20	5
Conwy	155	50	20	69	23	8
Denbighshire	145	45	25	68	21	11
Flintshire	170	35	30	73	14	13
Gwynedd	225	35	20	80	13	7
Ynys Mon	120	20	10	81	13	6
Merthyr Tydfil	165	25	10	83	13	4
Monmouthshire	150	30	20	75	15	10
Neath Port Talbot	195	40	15	78	16	6
Newport	240	75	35	69	21	10
Pembrokeshire	185	45	30	71	17	12
Powys	170	45	30	69	18	13
Rhondda Cynon Taf	500	90	45	79	14	7
Swansea	365	90	35	75	18	7
Torfaen	255	60	35	72	18	10
Vale of Glamorgan	235	60	40	70	18	12
Wrexham	220	55	35	71	18	11
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>5,315</b>	<b>1,265</b>	<b>620</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>9</b>

\*To note the total percentages do not add up to 100% as a result of rounding to the nearest whole numbers

### **Notes:**

- 4.1. The data comparisons focus on two key measures related to children looked after in Wales. The first measure tracks the total number of children looked after on 31 March 2024 who have experienced either one, two or three or more placements during the year. The second measure is the percentage compared to the total number of children looked after in the locality. Figures (but not percentages) are rounded to the nearest 5 for disclosure purposes.
- 4.2. This metric is crucial for understanding placement and market stability. Children who experience multiple placements often face exacerbated feelings of separation and loss, making it harder for them to form meaningful relationships with their carers. The ability to monitor these moves is vital for improving outcomes, as research suggests that children with a high number of placement moves are less likely to achieve academically and fare worse in terms of their psychological, social and health outcomes.
- 4.3. Having a range of options for the appropriate placement of a child is key to stability and permanence. Children who become looked after suffer from feelings of separation and loss, even if they have been maltreated prior to being looked after. Children who go on to have multiple placements can find these feelings exacerbated.
- 4.4. However, not all moves within the system are negative. Some moves are necessary to meet the needs of the child and when consider their own wishes and feelings. In some cases, a movement of two or more placements is considered a healthy sign of timely care planning rather than drift. A very low proportion of moves can, conversely, indicate a lack of placement choice to allow children to move positively as set out in their care plans and to meet their needs.

### **Data**

- 4.5. The data shows that there are a substantial number of placements with stability across various local authorities. The national picture is that the vast majority (74% or 5,310) of children have had one placement. 18% (or 1,265) of looked after children have experienced two placements. 9% (or 620) of children experienced 3 or more placements during the reporting year.
- 4.6. The average number of children experiencing one placement in a local authority is 241. 58 children experienced two placements and 28 children experienced three or more. There are notable differences at a local level for example, Blaenau Gwent had 160 children experiencing one placement, by comparison Cardiff has 735. However, this information does not take account

of the size of each local authority area and its children looked after population.

- 4.7. The highest overall numbers of children who have three or more placements are in Cardiff with 90, then Rhondda Cynon Taf at 45 and the Vale of Glamorgan at 40. However, children with 3+ placements in Cardiff and Rhondda Cynon Taf are of a lower proportion compared to other local authorities, at 9% and 7% respectively. The highest proportions of children who had 3 or more placements occur in Wrexham, Powys, Flintshire and Pembrokeshire at levels between 12-13%.

## Section 5 – Offers of Advocacy

Table 5a Numbers taking up the active offer of advocacy during the year 2023--24

**Source:** StatsWales

	Active Offers made during the year	Active Offers made and where an Independent Professional Advocate was provided
Blaenau Gwent	97	45
Bridgend	71	64
Caerphilly	202	149
Cardiff	265	172
Carmarthenshire	96	59
Ceredigion	..	..
Conwy	494	38
Denbighshire	118	27
Flintshire	156	4
Gwynedd	21	6
Ynys Mon	15	10
Merthyr Tydfil	60	54
Monmouthshire	98	24
Neath Port Talbot	62	55
Newport	171	109
Pembrokeshire	45	35
Powys	485	223
Rhondda Cynon Taf	144	96
Swansea	91	72
Torfaen	166	40
Vale of Glamorgan	76	33
Wrexham	118	30
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>3,051</b>	<b>1,345</b>

### Notes

- 5.1. The Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 stipulates that an active offer of advocacy is made to all children and young people who become looked after and all children subject to child protection enquiries that lead to a child protection conference.

- 5.2. Children who are in care are also entitled to access independent professional advocacy throughout the time they are cared for. The child, social worker or Independent Reviewing Officer can request a referral be made to an independent professional advocacy service to support the child to have their voice heard as part of the care planning process. This is referred to as 'issue-based advocacy'.

*"Active Offers" during the year*

- 5.3. The first measure in the above table helps local authorities assess the take-up of advocacy services, enabling better future planning and commissioning of those services. Advocacy services assist individuals in receiving care and support and ensure their views are accurately conveyed irrespective of the advocate's or others' opinions.
- 5.4. It is defined as the sharing of information about the statutory right and entitlement of a child or young person to access an independent professional advocacy service.

*"Active Offers" made and where an Independent Professional Advocate was provided*

- 5.5. The second measure in this table focuses on the total number of "Active Offers" of advocacy during the year where an independent professional advocate was provided. This metric also enables local authorities to assess the take-up of advocacy services and helps Welsh Government monitor the provision of advocacy to entitled children.
- 5.6. These measures provide valuable insights into the stability and support provided to children looked after in Wales, highlighting the importance of monitoring placement moves and the take-up of advocacy services to improve outcomes for these children.
- 5.7. The information provided only refers to where an active offer is made and an independent advocate is provided. Children who were not given an active offer are not included even if they were provided with an independent professional advocate. Equally children in care who have been referred for independent advocacy as a part of the care planning process will not be included in these figures.

## Data

### *Number of offers*

- 5.8. Amongst those local authorities with the highest number of active offers, Powys has 485 active offers, Conwy has 494, and Cardiff has 265. Those with the fewest number of active offers included Ynys Mon with 15 active offers, Gwynedd with 21, and Pembrokeshire with 45.

### *Proportion of advocates provided following an active offer*

- 5.9. Proportionally Bridgend saw advocates provided in 64 out of 71 (90%) of active offers, Merthyr Tydfil also had a similar ratio with 54 advocates from 60 offers and Neath Port Talbot had a proportion of 89% with 55 advocates provided from 62 active offers.
- 5.10. Flintshire had the lowest ratio of advocates provided to offers, with 4 (3%) out of 156 of active offers, Conwy had 38 (8%) advocates out of 494 offers and Denbighshire had 27 (23%) advocates out of 118 active offers. No official data was available for Ceredigion, as solutions to capturing the data were still being explored at time of compilation.