

By e-mail

19 January 2016

Dear Ann Jones

Life in Residential Care: exploring the experiences of Welsh looked after children and young people

I am writing to inform you of my intention to report on the experiences of looked after children and young people in residential care homes, consistent with my remit derived from the Care Standards Act 2000 and the Children's Commissioner for Wales Act and Regulations 2001. I will be looking into children and young people's experiences of placements within residential care to consider how effective they are in safeguarding and promoting the rights and well-being of children and young people.

Aims for the project:

Enabling Welsh children and young people living in residential care to share their experiences of the care they receive; and

Exploring the rights of children and young people in residential care and their perspectives on how these are realised, including:

Participation: how children and young people are involved in decision-making about their care plans, as well as everyday decisions about their lives and within their home;

Protection: how children and young people are kept safe while living in residential care; and

Provision: adequacy of provision in residential care including planning for independence, access to education and health services, therapeutic interventions and leisure and cultural activities.

The project will be conducted using the following methods:

An initial consultation phase meeting with a large number of key stakeholders including young people and professionals, to identify the key rights issues facing young people in residential care. (This phase was undertaken during the second half of 2015).

Meet and listen to the experiences of around 50 children and young people living in a range of residential care settings across Wales. This may also include Welsh children and young people who are residing in homes based in England.

Evidence exchange with key stakeholders to draw themes and issues arising together.

-2-

Additionally, the project will be informed by ongoing quantitative studies on placement trends and patterns, including analysis conducted by CSSIW, CASCADE and the Care Council. Their work includes consideration of numbers of looked after children and their placement journeys, and a reflection of the workforce in residential care.

The project will not include the following –

Respite placements

Placements in the secure estate

Boarding school placements (education arrangements rather than social care placements)

The project team will select a broad sample of homes to visit, based upon information provided by CSSIW on all registered children's homes, in order to ensure a wide range of provision and perspectives are included within the research. Residential care homes will be invited directly and asked to confirm whether the young people in placement are willing to engage in the project. Written information will be shared with children, young people and residential homes to assist with their decision making.

Interviews with children and young people will take place in group settings or individually as desired, following a standardised and structured format. All staff involved in the project have an enhanced DBS check and are experienced in working with and listening to the views of children and young people. The fieldwork will take place during the first quarter of 2016 with the evidence exchange to follow. A report of the findings will be published later in 2016.

Thank you in anticipation for your cooperation and commitment. Please contact my office should you require further information and wish to discuss this work.

Yours sincerely



Sally Holland
Children's Commissioner for Wales
