

Albert Heaney
Director of Social Services and Integration
Welsh Government

31 January 2020

Dear Albert,

Care Experienced Children and Young People

Further to our follow up session with you on 13 January 2020, the Committee welcomes the work currently being undertaken across a number of areas to improve the outcomes for Care Experienced Children.

We particularly note the approach of the Welsh Government to extending Corporate Parenting across Public Services, which was considered by Cabinet on 6 January 2020. We welcome any efforts to deliver an improved public sector response to the needs of Care Experienced Children and look forward to hearing more about how this is being taken forward.

In the meantime, we seek clarity on the following points which you agreed to send further information on as action points:

Out of County and Out of Wales Placements

During evidence you told us that as at 30 September 2019, non-validated figures stated there were 1,388 out of county placements and 243 out of Wales. It is not clear at which point in time these figures were taken, what the starting point for the 3 year reduction target for these types of placements is and whether these figures have decreased since the period within which the Welsh Government is targeting its reductions.

Please could you clarify the starting point of the 3 year reduction targets, whether the unvalidated figures from September show progress against those targets and



how the Welsh Government is going to monitor progress against these targets in the future.

Please could you provide details of the reasons for why 243 children are placed outside of Wales.

Disclosures

Confirmation of whether there are any processes in place for local authorities to disclose to the Welsh Government and/or Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) instances of placements in unregistered facilities. Similarly, are there any requirements to disclose exceptional placements where the costs involved are above a specified threshold.

Data on Educational Attainment

The Welsh Government publishes data on the attainment of all children with the most recent data available relating to the academic year 2018/19. However, the additional analysis for those receiving care and support is delayed. If the attainment of Care Experienced Children is a priority this information should be available more quickly.

Please could you clarify the reasons for this lag in additional data being published?

Evaluation of the Looked After Children (LAC) Pupil Development Grant (PDG)

We were interested to hear about whether there are any requirements on regional consortia to report against regional targets for improving the attainment of looked-after children and although we heard some examples during oral evidence on monitoring progress against targets we would like to see evidence of the PDG has contributed to this progress and details of the impact of consortia spending on LAC PDG.

CAMHS

There is no specific data published with regards to CAMHS waiting times for Care Experienced Children. Referral to treatment times are published on StatsWales, which tells us in part, how Local Health Boards are performing. These figures tend to fluctuate significantly, and the Wales Audit Office data tool published alongside



the Auditor General's reports on the well-being of young people identifies trends in the data.

It would be helpful for the Committee to have a breakdown of the figures for each month from the last 12 months including averages in relation to waiting times and the maximum and minimum waiting times for the last 5 years. We would welcome this data being provided on a Local Health Board basis too.

Ministerial Advisory Group (MAG)

You agreed to share an update report from the MAG, due in June 2020, with the Committee.

Finally, you also agreed to write to us with details of the evaluation the Welsh Government has undertaken of the 'Reflect Programme' and the [Buurtzorg approach](#) to children's social services in England which Jenny Rathbone AM referred to.

Yours sincerely,



Darren Millar AM
Chair (Temporary)

