

ISLE OF ANGLESEY COUNTY COUNCIL	
Report to:	The Executive
Date:	26 November 2018
Subject:	Development of Small Group Homes for the Children of Anglesey
Portfolio Holder(s):	Councillor Llinos Medi
Head of Service:	Fôn Roberts, Head of Children and Families Services
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Local Members:	Relevant to all Members

A –Recommendation/s and reason/s
<p><u>Background</u></p> <p>In order to promote more appropriate placements, reduce significant overspends and also allow for the children and young people who are from Anglesey to continue to receive care on the Island, a range of alternative services are required. It is clear that there are a significant number of children who are looked after currently living ‘out of county’ who are unlikely to be reintegrated or placed with family, friends, foster or adoptive families in the foreseeable future. In order to ensure that these children are not ‘left behind’ and to ensure that children can remain living on the Island and to continue to attend mainstream schooling, there is therefore, a need to develop alternative residential care services. This will also make significant savings.</p> <p>As part of considering alternative residential care services, the concept of Small Group Homes (SGH) is considered to be the best option for Anglesey. This would involve children living together in ‘homely’ surroundings and functioning in a similar way to children at home i.e. going out to school, living in the community, having neighbours and friends and so on. It is recommended not to use the term ‘Family Group Home’ since this implies living with substitute parents and functioning as a family, which will not be the case.</p> <p>SGH are designed to provide care in the least restrictive environment and to integrate children and young people into the community, improving their quality of life and to reduce stigma for children who are not living with their families or with Foster Carers. This will also ensure that key outcomes for children are met as far as possible in that they remain living on the Island and continue to attend local schools. This will also “de-institutionalise” care arrangements for children and young people who may otherwise be placed in residential settings which are a long way from Anglesey.</p> <p><u>Summary of the Model</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> SGHs should be developed in Local Authority houses that are located in desirable residential areas in close proximity to schools and nurseries, health services, bus

services, shops and other community amenities.

- The houses should be dispersed throughout the Island, enabling the resident children to merge more easily into the community and to ensure that local schools and services are not saturated by the increased demands that SGHs may create.
- Each house should accommodate a maximum of two children.
- Each SGH should be staffed by a small team of local residential care workers, ensuring continuity of care for the resident children.
- Residential care workers do not have to be professionally qualified Social Workers but should have previous experience in working with or raising children. They should be committed to caring for children and demonstrate the capacity to understand and pro-actively work with the special needs of children resident in SGHs.
- All the staff involved in the SGH service must be committed to actively promoting contacts between resident children and their parents and other relatives, friends and any other persons who are important to the child's identity and well-being. It is important that key outcomes for individual children are met and that what is important to them are delivered.
- The SGHs should be managed by a Central Management and Support Unit (CMSU) that provides overall human and financial resources management and administrative, technical and domestic support.
- Children resident in the SGHs should be enabled to integrate into the local community by attending local educational establishments such as schools and colleges and by involvement in all aspects of normal community life.

Maximum Number of Children and Profile per SGH

Each house or apartment (SGH) should accommodate a maximum of two children.

This is to allow the provision to 'fit' into the local community and not being considered as a 'children's home'. Care and consideration needs to be given to inform the local community about the proposed SGH in their local area. Local (suitable) staff must be encouraged to apply to work at the SGH. It is recommended that jobs are created for local people who know the communities well.

The recommendation also supports the proposed model of care, that SGHs should be situated in ordinary residential areas and should resemble as far as possible typical Isle of Anglesey family homes.

Generally, children under the age of 8 should not be placed in a SGH, unless there are exceptional circumstances – e.g. that this will allow placement with siblings. In all cases the individual needs of the child must be balanced with the needs of the group as a whole

and the capacity of the staff to manage those needs.

Each SGH should also aim for a balanced gender mix that takes into account appropriate sleeping arrangements, the ages of the children concerned and their individual needs.

It is likely that many children will remain in the SGH for the duration of their childhood. These children will therefore grow up within the initial placement group and could possibly, if appropriate, to be considered to take on the tenancy of the SGH once they are of an age and the Social Work assessment supports this. The level of staffing provided would reduce to meet the needs of the young person.

Transferring a tenancy to one or both of the young people would also reduce the risk of a SGH becoming a 'permanent fixture' within a community and would also allow the young person to remain living in that community, taking full advantage of the support networks they would have developed over the years.

It must be acknowledged that the majority of children currently placed in residential care have special care needs. These may include health and developmental needs, special educational needs and emotional needs that are reflected in lack of attachment and behavioural problems. Again, the management of individual children's needs should be considered within the context of the group, for example it would not be sensible to place a number of children with extreme behavioural problems together. Such children will be better placed in a setting where positive patterns of behaviour can be supported by staff that are not overwhelmed by too many conflicting demands.

SGHs would need to be staffed in accordance with Care Inspectorate Wales' requirements and these staff would need to be new staff i.e. there is no capacity to release existing staff to work in the SGHs.

SGH Properties

The type of properties needed to create SGHs would come from existing 'stock' within the Isle of Anglesey County Council. The most important factor will be the location of the SGHs in terms of access to services, including transport services. The SGH would need to embed into the local community and be indistinguishable from other homes within the local area.

The major consideration for any existing property that is proposed for a SGH should be the amount of available living space and whether the space can accommodate the desired maximum of two children, as well as facilities for the staff required to support them.

The property would be maintained by the Isle of Anglesey Housing Department.

Potential Local Authority homes have been earmarked to be adapted in to SGHs. There would be work required to adapt the properties to make them suitable, and to meet the individual needs of the children that will be living there.

Costings and Savings

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A scoping paper has been completed by an external consultant who has looked at all costs and implications. Registration for the SGH would be needed in order for the homes to be able to operate.

The Local Authority would make significant savings if SGHs were developed. The current lack of provision and the need to place children Out of County does cost Children and Families Services a significant amount of money. By developing SGH and keeping or returning children to the Island, the costs per child will be significantly reduced.

The following financial modelling has been produced by the Service and Finance Department and is based on key assumptions by the Service. The key assumptions are as follows:

- That the current average annual cost of Out of County residential placements per child is £212,744;
- That the Support Workers will be paid on the Local Authority pay scale on Grade 4;
- That 1 worker will be present 24 hours a day and that a second worker will also be present during times when the children are at home (otherwise 1 worker will suffice). This is based on the preferred staffing structure of the Service;
- That registration is in place and that the first SGH opens on the 1st April 2019.

If any of the key assumptions were to change, this would have an impact on the costings:

Total Annual Estimated Cost of a SGH	£279,765.11
Total Annual Cost per Placement (2 in placement)	£139,882.55
Average Annual Cost of Out of County	£212,744.18
Potential Annual Saving per Placement	£72,861.63

The following figures are based on looking at developing 2 SGHs that will be a home for 2 children in each.

SGH Potential Savings 2019 / 2020
£73k saving per child and £30k set-up cost per SGH.
Based on setting up 2 x SGH from 01/04/19:
Saving = Saving cost per child - set up costs.
= (£72,862 x 4) - (£30,000 x 2)

= £291,448 - £60,000

= £231,448 savings in Year 1

The budget for looked after children for 2019/2020 will be reduced by this amount to reflect the revenue savings achievable in Year 1.

SGH Potential Savings 2020 / 2021

£73k saving per child and £30k set-up cost per SGH.

Based on setting up a further 2 x SGH from 01/04/20:

Saving = Saving cost per child - set up costs + 19/20 set-up costs *

= (£72,862 x 4) - (£30,000 x 2) + (£30,000 x 2)

= £291,448 - £60,000 + £60,000

= £291,448 savings in Year 2 (in addition to Year 1 saving of £231,448).

The budget for looked after children for 2020/2021 will be reduced by this amount to reflect the further revenue saving achievable in Year 2.

** Note that there is an additional £60,000 saving from the first two SGH set up in 2019/2020 in Year 2 as there is no need to purchase furniture, cars etc. for these SGHs in the second year.*

We also need to bear in mind that the savings per child from Year 1 continue in to Year 2 and future years.

The total savings over the first two years = £231,448 + £291,448 = £522,896

If no further SGHs are set up in Year 3, the total revenue savings for the project =

Saving = Saving cost per child

= £72,862 x 8

= £582,896

This is achieved in full by 2021/2022 when there is no set-up cost for the 4 SGHs.

Recommendations

➤ It is recommended that approval is provided for Children and Families Services to go

ahead and seek appropriate accommodation and complete Care Inspectorate Wales Registration requirements in order to open a Small Group Home provision on the Island for local children who are looked after.

B – What other options did you consider and why did you reject them and/or opt for this option?

No other options have been considered at this point as the SGH provision is deemed to be the best approach in alternative residential care services for children and young people who are looked after.

C – Why is this a decision for the Executive?

This is a decision for the Executive as their approval is needed to allow Children & Families Services to apply for registration and to release funding to adapt current Local Authority stock housing in to SGHs.

CH – Is this decision consistent with policy approved by the full Council?

Yes.

D – Is this decision within the budget approved by the Council?

Yes.

DD – Who did you consult?

What did they say?

1	Chief Executive / Senior Leadership Team (SLT) (mandatory)	This was approved by the SLT on the 22 nd October 2018.
2	Finance / Section 151 (mandatory)	As above.
3	Legal / Monitoring Officer (mandatory)	N/A
4	Human Resources (HR)	
5	Property	
6	Information Communication Technology (ICT)	N/A
7	Procurement	
8	Scrutiny	
9	Local Members	N/A
10	Any external bodies / other/s	N/A

E – Risks and any mitigation (if relevant)

1	Economic	N/A
2	Anti-poverty	N/A
3	Crime and Disorder	N/A
4	Environmental	N/A
5	Equalities	N/A
6	Outcome Agreements	N/A
7	Other	N/A

F - Appendices:
N/A
FF - Background papers (please contact the author of the Report for any further information):