

Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (Wales) Regulations 2015: Amendments to the regulations and code of practice in respect of secure accommodation and placements of children out of area (WG32791) Contribution by ADSS Cymru

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General Comment

The Association of Directors of Social Services (ADSS Cymru) is the professional and strategic leadership organisation for social services in Wales and is composed of statutory Directors of Social Services and the Heads of Service who support them in delivering social services responsibilities and accountabilities; a group of more than 80 social services leaders across the 22 local authorities in Wales.

ADSS Cymru welcomes the opportunity to comment on the proposals the Welsh Government has set out in its consultation. ADSS Cymru welcomes the changes in principal but there two key areas that require some additional clarification.

Panels

The new regulations place importance on the role and functions of a ‘panel’ to make an assessment of the child placement after the placement has been made and a timeframe of 25 days as been allocated to the convening of that panel. ADSS Cymru would like further clarification of the panel, its role, remit and functions and whether the panel is one that is convened by the Responsible Authority or by the Area Authority.

There are already multidisciplinary panels in place across Welsh local authorities that would examine the complex needs of a child in this situation. Therefore, it would be helpful to understand whether the panel identified, would be in addition to these panels or part of the local authority’s current processes and procedures.

Elected Members

ADSS Cymru does have a concern in relation to the panel reporting mechanism that is being proposed. In the consultation document, it states:

*“The panel’s decision, either to confirm the placement or to place the child elsewhere, should be recorded with reasons and endorsed by the senior officer of the placing authority. **This should also be copied to the lead member for children’s services in the placing authority.**”*

We would question why this level of operational detail would be required by the Lead Member, in their capacity as strategic lead. Therefore, it would be helpful to understand further the rationale behind this element of the proposed regulation changes.

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