

Removal of profit lunch and learn webinar summary – 8 September 2026

1. Introduction and overview

Sarah Day, ADSS Cymru Business Unit Lead, opened the fifth removal of profit lunch and learn webinar for social care teams across Wales.

The session focused on residential care: support for providers transitioning to not-for-profit models, the emerging picture across Wales, and Conwy's approach to recruiting and developing its workforce.

Speakers included:

- Branwen Ellis – Cwmpas
- Gwilym Morris – ADSS Cymru
- Sharon Garland and Emma Thomas – Conwy County Borough Council
- Faye Newman – residential childcare worker, Conwy County Borough Council

Sarah emphasised the importance of sharing learning and keeping children's outcomes central. Live Welsh-to-English interpretation was available.

2. Provider transition support and engagement (Branwen Ellis)

Cwmpas support

- Welsh Government funds Cwmpas to help private residential care providers and fostering agencies explore re-establishing as not-for-profit organisations
- The service provides professional, impartial and confidential conversations to help business owners understand their options

The sector picture

- Approximately half of providers had contacted Cwmpas
- Providers generally understood the purpose behind the Act, but many were concerned about the changes
- Some had begun planning, while others intended to wait until nearer the 2030 deadline

Practical help available

- Advice on establishing a not-for-profit organisation and the process of selling a business
- Planning for staffing, contracts, premises and governance
- Support tailored to the size, nature and circumstances of each business
- Close working with Care Inspectorate Wales, Welsh Government, the 4Cs, other sector partners and finance providers to help providers plan with confidence

- Learning from individual conversations is building a clearer picture of challenges and opportunities across the sector

Key message

- Begin discussions early and encourage providers to seek support: an initial confidential conversation can help them understand the steps involved

Contacts

- branwen.ellis@cwmpas.coop
- rhys.williams@cwmpas.coop
- www.cwmpas.coop

3. The changing residential care picture across Wales (Gwilym Morris)

Purpose and principles

- Gwilym reiterated that the move away from for-profit provision is grounded in Welsh legislation
- Children's needs, safety and outcomes must remain central, with safe, stable care close to their communities wherever appropriate
- New provision must be financially sustainable and realistically staffed, taking account of location and workforce availability

Changes in provision

- Some existing providers will transition to not-for-profit models; others are expected to leave the market
- New not-for-profit providers are showing interest in operating in Wales
- Local authorities will own and operate more residential provision, changing relationships and ways of working across services
- Partnerships with the third sector will become increasingly important

Priorities for development

- More local provision to reduce avoidable placements far from home
- Care for children with higher and more complex needs, developed with health, education and other partners
- Crisis support, transitions and step-down provision, including support for a return to family environments
- Short breaks and specialist support, including provision for disability, autism and complex medical needs

Building on what works

- Use existing regional partnerships, evidence and effective models of care
- Retain experienced staff by creating opportunities to move into local authority or not-for-profit provision
- Plan services locally, regionally and nationally, with greater collaboration for the most complex needs

Key message

- The opportunity is to develop care that better meets children's needs, with sustainable services and active involvement from staff and partners across Wales

4. Local practice example – Conwy's residential career pathway (Sharon Garland and Emma Thomas)

Context and challenges

- New residential settings required a larger workforce, including a service supporting three young people with complex learning disabilities
- Competition for experienced, qualified staff risked reliance on agency workers and delays in providing care
- Conwy developed a values-based recruitment approach, opening opportunities to people with empathy, commitment and a willingness to learn

The career pathway

- A visible route from level 1 worker through levels 2 and 3 to deputy and registered manager roles
- Level 1 includes a month-long induction and a six-month placement, with two protected college days each week towards the Level 2 Health and Social Care Core qualification
- Practical learning alongside experienced staff, with mentoring and responsibilities increasing as competence and confidence develop
- Progression to a level 2 role and higher salary following successful completion, with support towards the Level 3 children and young people practice qualification
- Further development for level 3 workers, including shift leadership, mentoring and potential management progression

Support and delivery

- Two cohorts recruited, with shared learning and peer support
- The second cohort used more targeted recruitment for the complex learning disability setting
- A dedicated mentor provides regular contact, pastoral support and progress reviews
- Protected learning time, placement support, business support and grant funding are essential; level 1 workers are additional to the staffing establishment

Progress reported

- 144 appointments into roles over approximately two and a half years, including internal progression counted as separate recruitment processes
- 86 staff reported as still in post
- Seven workers progressed from level 1 to level 2, with a further five or six potentially progressing in November
- Two workers progressed to level 3 and three level 3 workers moved into deputy manager roles

Lessons learned

- Align recruitment, induction and placements with realistic opening dates for new settings

- Ensure consistent college delivery and clear understanding of what level 1 workers can do
- Allow dedicated time for mentoring, recruitment checks, coordination and progress tracking
- Coordinate qualification evidence, competency sign-off, available posts and contracts to avoid delays in progression

Key message

- Investment in staff, structured support and clear progression are helping Conwy build a more stable and skilled residential workforce

Contact

- sharon.garland@conwy.gov.uk

5. A worker's experience of the pathway (Faye Newman)

Entering residential care

- Faye previously worked in business support within Conwy social care and wanted a role making a direct difference to children
- A lack of relevant qualifications and experience had created barriers to entering residential care
- The pathway offered practical experience, a recognised qualification and support through a significant career change

What made the difference

- A month of initial training helped build understanding and confidence before placement
- Combining practical work with college learning helped connect knowledge with experience
- Learning alongside a cohort provided reassurance and opportunities to share concerns and successes
- Regular mentoring helped Faye recognise her progress and discuss worries openly

Progress

- Faye completed the level 1 pathway, gained her level 2 qualification and had been working in a level 2 role for nearly a year
- She had started studying towards her level 3 qualification

6. Q&A highlights

Why providers may delay transition

- Branwen described concerns about complexity, the cost of mistakes and being the first to transition
- Some providers were still hoping the change would not happen or that exceptions might apply
- Her message was to begin planning and seek support rather than delay

Future capacity and uncertainty

- Gwilym described planning scenarios ranging from no providers transitioning to around half transitioning; these were working assumptions, not confirmed outcomes
- Local authorities and the 4Cs are monitoring the position and encouraging good-quality providers to engage with transition support
- Work continues to raise awareness of the changes among colleagues in England

Attracting staff into social care

- Conwy had not identified particular competition from health and had attracted applicants from health, education and other backgrounds
- Staff valued the clear career pathway, support and investment in their development
- Word-of-mouth recommendations were helping recruitment

7. Close

Participant feedback

- Sarah noted a shift towards more positive responses, while acknowledging continuing uncertainty and anxiety
- Webinars and existing communications were viewed as useful, with some attendees wanting more information and interest in interactive online workshops
- Feedback will help shape future content and communications

Key themes

- Keep children and young people at the centre of the changes
- Provide the right support at the right time for providers and staff
- Get involved locally, raise questions with managers and heads of service, and share ideas with ADSS Cymru

Opportunity

- The ADSS Cymru communications reference group is seeking new members from social care teams across Wales
- The group meets quarterly and helps identify and address gaps in communications

Next webinar

- Tuesday 12 January 2027
- Focus: practical information to help staff share updates and answer questions with their teams, alongside workforce planning