

Practice Statement

In North Wales, the safeguarding of children and young people is a high priority for today's Councils. We now place very few children in residential care, and where we do, children's needs are reviewed and monitored carefully.

Health and Educational outcomes for Looked After Children are improving, we do recognise that there is room for improvement and Local Authorities have made significant steps to ensure their duties as corporate parents are taken seriously.

Since the publication of Lost in Care, there has been wholesale change in respect of statutory legislation and guidance for Looked after Children. This has transformed the landscape of care provision and recognises the rights and voice of the child at the centre of all that we do. This is evident in relation to changes around safeguarding, care planning and the introduction of the role of the Independent Reviewing Officer for Looked After Children.

Some significant areas of performance and protection are:

- Wales now has an independent Children's Commissioner.
- In North Wales we commission advocacy services to ensure children in care have a voice.
- Every Social Services department has an appropriately qualified Children's Complaints Officer.
- We have clear whistle-blowing procedures in place, enabling members of staff to make complaints and raise matters of concern affecting a Looked After Child.
- Children are regularly visited and each have an allocated Social Worker; they are also seen alone, at intervals, away from their residential or foster home.
- Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) organise a variety of specialised training for staff working with children.
- Local agencies work closely together on safeguarding issues, particularly in relation to children who are missing from home.
- Rigorous procedures are in place for recruiting foster care and residential staff.
- Local Authorities continue to support care leavers into adulthood. We plan with care leavers to help them prepare for independence and this is at an older age than it used to be. We continue to support them into their early 20s and check regularly if they have suitable housing and whether they are in education or work.

On behalf of: Conwy County Borough Council, Isle of Anglesey County Council, Gwynedd Council, Flintshire County Council, Denbighshire County Council, Wrexham County Borough Council.