

# CYNGOR SIR CEREDIGION COUNTY COUNCIL

**Report to:** Cabinet

**Date of meeting:** 3 December 2024

**Title:** Withdrawal from the Innovate Managed Social Work Team Contract

**Purpose of the report:** To seek cabinet support to end the Innovate Managed Social Work Team provision

**For:** Decision

**Cabinet Portfolio and Cabinet Member:**  
Councillor Alun Williams, Cabinet Member for Through Age Wellbeing

## **Introduction and background**

In the summer of 2022, it became evident that the Planned Care Children's Team, Porth Cynnal was struggling to maintain a stable qualified social work team to deliver a safe service to support and protect children.

Leadership Group and Cabinet supported the proposal to commission and implement a managed team solution to address the recruitment issues to maintain a safe service.

The Innovate Team facilitated by Sanctuary Personnel commenced work in Ceredigion in September 2022 to provide a professional social work services. The team to date has been undertaking all aspects of statutory child protection care and support and family court duties.

The Innovate Team comprises one Team Manager and seven qualified social work practitioners.

Whilst the Innovate Team has fulfilled the brief to deliver the service it has become increasingly evident that Ceredigion now needs to look at other solutions for case management.

Sanctuary Personnel are seeking an increase in the cost of the contract that makes this option unrealistic in the current financial climate.

Analysis of the current agency social work market demonstrates that it is realistic to recruit social workers on a spot purchase basis more cost effectively. This approach enables us to screen potential candidates and negotiate the hourly rate for each worker fairly.

There is no pretence that this is a cheap option but will help us source the most cost-effective, high-quality option available at the time. This will prevent us entering a further period of expensive managed team contract provision. The continuation of a

commissioned service of this type would perpetuate our dependence on the managed team solution.

Sanctuary Personnel have agreed to end the existing contract by mutual consent without penalty on either side.

A withdrawal plan has been devised and the Innovate Team will be able to finish in Ceredigion on 13 December 2024.

The identification of backfill agency social workers is going smoothly with four new social workers ready to commence duties when the Innovate Team withdraw.

The backfill will reduce as we recruit directly employed social workers.

The Council want to achieve self-sufficiency in Ceredigion and will continue to make every effort to recruit permanent social workers.

**Wellbeing of Future Generations:**

The withdrawal of the contract does not impact on or change policy relating to the wellbeing of future generations.

**Summary of Integrated Impact Assessment:**

<b>Long term:</b>	No policy change
<b>Collaboration:</b>	No policy change
<b>Involvement:</b>	No policy change
<b>Prevention:</b>	No policy change
<b>Integration:</b>	No policy change

**Recommendation(s):**

**That Cabinet approve the ending of the Innovate contract to pursue other options to service the Planned Care Children’s Specialism.**

**Reasons for decision:**

**The reason for the decision is to end the contract and implement more cost-effective alternatives, in light of a proposed increase, for the continued delivery of a safe service.**

**Overview and Scrutiny:**

Not applicable

**Policy Framework:**

Not applicable

**Corporate Well-being Objectives:**

Creating Caring and Healthy Communities

**Finance and Procurement implications:**

As set out in the report

**Legal Implications:**

Social Services and Wellbeing (Wales) Act 2014  
Regulation & Inspection of Social Care (Wales) Act 2016

**Staffing implications:**

To continue to have a suitably qualified professional workforce to perform statutory social work duties.

**Property / asset implications:**

None

**Risk(s):**

The contract was put in place to avoid the risk of an unsafe service. The solution selected as an alternative to the contract will serve the same purpose with no increase in risk.

**Statutory Powers:**

Statutory Powers relating to all aspects of safeguarding in the county.

**Background Papers:**

Cabinet Report 4 July 2023 -

<https://council.ceredigion.gov.uk/documents/s5276/Report>

**Appendices:**

None

**Corporate Lead Officer:**

Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynnal

**Reporting Officer:**

Audrey Somerton-Edwards, Corporate Lead Officer: Porth Cynna

**Date:**

11 November 2024